

Praising God Through The Valleys

by Dan Young

This sermon emphasizes the importance of praising and blessing the Lord, especially during the night seasons of life when faith is tested the most. It highlights the significance of being watchmen in the house of the Lord, standing firm in faith even in challenging times. The message encourages believers to lift up their hands in the sanctuary, bless the Lord, and trust in His guidance and provision, even in the midst of uncertainty and trials.

Scripture: Psalm 134:1, Isaiah 61:1, Habakkuk 2:1, Isaiah 51:3, 1 Chronicles 9:33, Mark 13:34, 1 Peter 5:6, James 1:2, Matthew 5:14, Hebrews 13:15

Topics: "Praising God in Trials", "Faithful Watchmen"

Description

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Transcript

It says, Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord who stand by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands to the sanctuary and bless the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth.

It's amazing, he doesn't say, Behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord who stand by day or serve by day in the house of the Lord. He actually says it to the servants who serve by night in the house of the Lord. You would think that that would be the last time that you would want to serve the Lord or stand and praise his name, but it's in the night seasons of our life that we really get our faith tested.

It's easy when the light is shining and we can stand on the mountaintops of victory and our heart is full of faith to praise the Lord. But it's more difficult when you don't see what's in front of you, you don't know the outcome and the circumstance of your life, and you're serving by night in the house of the Lord, where your heart isn't full of faith, your heart is troubled, or you're in despair, or you're in darkness and you can't see the direction ahead of you. And that's more the test of faith, and that's when he says here that, behold, bless the Lord, all servants of the Lord who stand by night in the house of the Lord, that they can praise him in that season too, rather than praising him in the seasons of good times, but also being able to praise him in the seasons of the valleys.

And the valleys are what really humble us. The valleys are really, it's called almost like the valley of humiliation. You guys have probably maybe even seen the Pilgrim's Progress movie or there's a little kid's movie called Pilgrim's Progress or even read the book, but there's a valley of humiliation where the Lord takes his Christian through a season of almost, of pure humility, and teaching them to that they need to subject themselves, they need to humble themselves under the mighty hand of the Lord.

And those are night seasons, when the Lord takes you through a season that doesn't make any sense. And you have to be able to say, Lord, I'm not going to trust in myself, I'm going to trust in you who raises the dead. I told that a couple weeks ago, and it's encouraging that in the psalm, that the psalmist here wrote that you who stand by night in the house of the Lord, you know, back in First Chronicles, actually, he would appoint people to praise the Lord.

Some people would be praising the Lord in the daytime, and some people would be praising the Lord throughout the night. We talk about another person who stands by night in the house of the Lord is the watchman. The watchman were appointed to stand on the corners and to be able to look out into the night season to see if people were coming to attack the city.

And the watchman, they would say, Oh, you watchman, what have you heard? It says in Habakkuk, what have you seen a watchman? And he's talking to them who are in the night seasons, people who are watching when no one else is watching. That's a special task that God can devote to each person. Sometimes you get woken up even in the middle of the night and you can't sleep and you're wondering why and you're anxious or something's going on.

Sometimes those are the best times that the Lord can speak to you. I remember when I was young, I had two young children. Actually, we had our third.

It was Kara. And they were the two older ones would sleep through the night, but the youngest one wouldn't sleep through the night. And I worked very early in the morning and I would have to drive quite a long ways to get to work.

And so I needed my rest. But you know what? Sometimes my wife didn't get much rest. And there were times where I would have to be up with the child in the night helping.

And those were times where I used to really not like. In fact, I would get very upset because I would be up for an hour or two and I couldn't sleep. And I knew that I had to be up at five thirty when I went to bed at midnight.

And and, you know, so I would take care of and I would take some of the other ones and I would put them in the van and I would go for a drive. I would drive in the city in the middle of the night. There's nobody on the road, but it would be the night season where the Lord would speak to me.

And I found that because it was so busy, it was an opportune time. And the Lord turned me from from not liking those seasons. I mean, I still don't like it and wake it up in the night.

Nobody does. But it was still a time where the Lord and me would have fellowship together. And I valued those times.

And now that's a specific instance. But then there's also the night season of the soul where you're going through dark times and you don't understand what the future holds. We need to at that time lift up our

hands and bless his name.

We need to praise the Lord. It says that their job who stood by night in the house of the Lord was to lift up your hands in the sanctuary and to bless the Lord. That was their job.

So some people may be going through trials. What is the solution in that is to lift our hands and to bless the Lord to praise his name. May the Lord bless you from Zion and he who made heaven and earth.

It's encouraging that he says to lift up your hands in the sanctuary. We sing that song, lift up the hands that hang down. That's in Isaiah.

Let's turn there. Isaiah 51. Actually, it's in Isaiah 61, sorry.

Isaiah 61 verse 1, it says the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners to proclaim a favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. Here's another opposite of what we would say here.

He was talking to those servants who stood by night in the house of the Lord. Their job was to praise the Lord in the night season. Their job was to give thanks.

It's not the day season that he asked them. He asked them in the night season. And here's another one that he says here, the proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance.

Now, we would not talk about the day of vengeance as the favorable year of the Lord. Some people in the church community, they long for the day of vengeance or the judgment of God will come and they will, his wrath will be poured out and everybody will be cheering. No, that's not a day to be longing for.

The Bible specifically, Isaiah says, woe to those who long for the day of the Lord. It will be a day of sadness and not gladness. It will not be a day of rejoicing.

It will be a day of mourning. It's going to be a terrifying day when the Lord returns. With his angels, it says the nations of the world will mourn because they will look upon him whom they have pierced.

And it's not going to be a good day. But here's a good day that he's talking about here to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, the day of vengeance of our God. This is a day of vengeance where God comes to proclaim this, bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the broken hearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives.

This is a favorable year, but it's also called the day of vengeance. Isn't that amazing that God's vengeance was to come and to set people free from the bondage and the things that they were struggling with, the sin, the bondage of the enemy, the oppression of the devil. He came to set them free from it.

And this was the day of vengeance for our God, to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning. So here's another, it's a parable, but it's an opposite what you would call here. And you would think that the day of vengeance would be something where God's wrath is poured out, but it's not.

Here in this situation, he gives them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. And they will be called oaks of righteousness. Now

an oak tree is something that you would look at an oak tree, when you build and you do woodworking, I like doing woodworking, but when you use oak, oak is very expensive.

So I don't like to use oak. Nowadays, wood is like at a price that you've never experienced in your life. It's more valuable than gold, it almost seems like.

And it's going to get even more valuable. And so literally, when I would go to the wood store, because I want to build a desk or a table, and I would go to cut my wood, and I'd say, how much is the oak? And they would say, that's about \$16 a board foot or something like that. I would say, have a nice day.

How much is the cheap maple you got in the back? Okay, we can do that for three bucks a board foot. Okay, thank you very much. Let's choose the maple.

And we would make maple. But the oak, the oaks of righteousness here, these were ones that were planted by the Lord, that he may be glorified. An oak tree is something that's very strong.

It is a hard wood. It has been seasoned. It has been tested.

When you cut oak with a table saw, you better make sure that that table saw blade is very sharp. Otherwise, you're going to chip the wood. Otherwise, you're going to damage the wood.

But you know what happens after you cut one piece of oak, you need to almost clean your blade because the blade is so burnt from all the heat, because the oak takes so long to cut through. That's how hard oak is. It's something that's seasoned.

It's something that's tested. It's something that stood through the storms. An oak tree is also one that in the midst of the storm is the winds are beating against those trees, and they're going like this and they're swaying, but they're not falling down.

There's something that's standing. That is an oak tree. That is somebody who's tested, who's been refined by the Lord, who's somebody who can be useful.

When the Lord desires that some of us here, to stand by night in the Lord means that you're going to be able to carry burdens. To be a watchman in the house of God, somebody who's used by him is going to be somebody who's required of something. He's been entrusted with much, and so he's going to be required of much of that person.

A person who's not an oak, a person who's not a watchman who can stand in the night gets so upset when the littlest thing happens. Gets so angry when one little circumstance happens, almost like spilt milk. I remember a while ago, one of my children, they dropped a thing of milk and boom, the jug burst and went everywhere, all over the hardwood floor.

I was like, oh my goodness, I got mad. And as I'm down there on the ground, I'm cleaning up the milk, the Lord spoke to me and he says, are you upset over spilt milk? And I just was like, oh Lord, have mercy on me. Have mercy on me.

Some of us, we get so tossed to and fro by such a little circumstance. We get so upset by some disruption in our day to day life. That's not what it means to be a seasoned and tested Christian.

That's not what it means to be somebody who would be faithful enough to be accounted as somebody who could be a watchman. A watchman needs to be somebody who is responsible for the people, who is responsible for souls, but he's also able to sound the alarm when he sees the alarm or the situation coming. It says of the watchman that if he warns the person of their sin and tells them that they shouldn't keep doing those things, but that person continues in the rebellion and doesn't, that watchman or that person who's committing the sin will be held accountable for his own sin because the watchman warned him.

But the watchman who sees the army coming and he doesn't sound the alarm, he doesn't warn the people and those people die in their sin, it will be held accountable to that watchman. And so you know what, for me, I would rather have somebody who's been appointed by God, who is able to speak the truth, even though it hurts, even though it's hard, even though it's difficult message, I'd rather have them because I know that they're being watchful over my soul versus somebody who lets me continue in the stubbornness and the rebellion that I have. I don't want that.

I want somebody who will be able to speak the truth to me in love, but also speak the truth to me, even though it may hurt sometimes to protect me from going down the wrong path. That is somebody who can stand in the night seasons and praise the Lord. That is somebody who can be appointed by God as a watchman, and that is somebody who can be an oak.

An oak is a strong tree, somebody who's been through the fire, who's been through the trials, who's been tested, who's been planted by the Lord, and that person will be useful to the master. That's what we want. We want somebody to say, you know what Lord, even though these situations are hard, even though I'm getting up in the night season, help me to turn from grumbling to praise.

Help me to turn from complaining to being thankful. Help me to turn from being upset to being worshipful, to being worshipful. I remember those night seasons of just thanking the Lord, and I would drive for an hour to two hours sometimes, and I would just have sweet fellowship with the Lord.

It was a season in my life, and I remember saying, Lord, right now I don't like this, but help me to welcome this as a new season in my life, to help me to learn to thank you, to praise you, to worship you, to be somebody that you can refine, and thankfully, you know, the Lord used those times to be able to minister to me, and the next day, you know what, I found many times during the next days that the Lord would give me enough strength to get through the day. He would give me enough strength. Some of us, we don't like having to be pushed too much.

We don't. We don't want to be pushed. We want to go at our pace that we want to go at, but you know what, sometimes the Lord wants us to push.

He wants us to move forward with Him. Some of us, we like to sit on a chair and not do anything. I know my kids, they would love to, throughout the day, they would love to just sit on the chair and not do anything, because that's so easy to do, but that doesn't mean that you're growing.

It doesn't mean that you're moving forward to the Lord. It doesn't mean that you can be entrusted with responsibility later. I wouldn't.

If I saw a person sitting on a chair or taking their time, I wouldn't entrust certain things to them, because I know that when I'm not around, they're not going to be the one who's going to push the envelope, I guess

you would say, or to be that one who's going to lead the charge. That who's the Lord looking for. His eyes are running to and fro to find someone, a young man, someone who is in the midst of it and says, you know what, I could sit down, I could put my feet up right now, I can do that, or I can sit down and I can say, you know what, Lord, what shall you have me do at this time? And if it means that you worship Him in the night season, it means you worship in the night season.

If it means that, you know what, He says, okay, I want you to go do this, then I want you to go do that. I remember once I was at work, and I'll finish here, and I asked the Lord, I said, Lord, what shall you have me do? And He told me, I want you to go and serve your boss. And so we used to have, I would run parts all day to the different mechanics.

And then at the end of the day, I worked for two very old men. One was 74, the other one was 71. And they were responsible for all the receiving of all the goods that came into this RV dealership.

And they would literally, like skid, semi-truck after semi-truck. My job, their job, they would unload it with forklifts, and they would just drive it in the warehouse, but they would never put it away. And so I remember I owed so much money at the time, I was making 13 bucks an hour.

And I remember just being like, Lord, my time is up, and I want to go home. My time is up, and I want to go home. And the Lord said, Dan, I want you to go the extra mile.

So I asked the boss, I said, sir, can I stay late? And he says, sure. And so you know what happened was, when everyone would go home, my job and parts would go home, I would stay late for an extra three, four hours, and I would put away the goods that were in the warehouse. I would do all the receiving as much as I could.

And then I would work Saturdays, and I would do that. And you know what, I always asked the Lord, I said, Lord, why are you asking me to go this extra mile to do this extra little bit? And he says, it's not about doing this and doing that, it's about, I want to see if you're willing. I want to see if you're willing.

If God isn't looking for somebody who is doing all these things, he's just looking for a willing spirit. Can I just be willing? And you know what, the Lord was so faithful with me, I actually started to enjoy those times. I would have the whole shop and warehouse to myself, nobody would be there.

And I could sit there, and I could thank the Lord, I could have the Jesus music on. And then I could praise the Lord, and I could put away all this receiving, and I would have just an alone time with the Lord. And he was there with me.

Some people think that you need to go and for spend some alone time, I need to pray for eight hours a day and do this. No, if you're at work, or you're alone in the midst of it all, Jesus can be right there with you. You don't have to be in some cabin somewhere fasting and praying.

No, you can be at your day-to-day job, and you can be having communion with the Lord. You can be having fellowship with him. Even if it's a difficult situation and a trial that you're going through, a night season, you can thank the Lord and praise the Lord.

Even though it seems that you're being overwhelmed with the amount of work that you need to do and all the tasks that need to be done, you can still praise the Lord. You can still worship him in that season. And so I learned to, and you know what happened over time was at making \$13 an hour, the Lord helped me

pay off my debt in two years, \$25,000 to all for my student loans.

It was a good testimony of what he could do. But in that season, he taught me some spiritual principles that, Dan, you don't have to be in this situation. You can praise the Lord in the night season that you're going through, even though it's difficult.

And I remember I grew a lot spiritually then, and I was thankful for that. And so when the Lord puts you through trials, or he's taking you through a season of refining, it almost seems humbling. It almost seems humiliating.

Learn to give thanks in that time, because that's a time that you can have fellowship with him. Just remember that Jesus was humiliated. He was humiliated.

And he was humbled. And he sometimes would go alone to a solitary place, and he would thank the Lord in the night season. And we can look to his example to find this and give us encouragement and strength during our time.

And he can finish the work that he's starting. And that's the only way that you will become spiritual is if he takes you through a night season. It's the only way that you will grow spiritually.

I'm serious. You can have roses and flowers and cookies, and you think you're growing spiritually, and you're not. The only way that you're going to grow spiritually is if you humble yourself under his mighty hand and allow him to take you through those times of suffering and difficulty.

And he will teach you something more about himself, and you will begin to know him more.

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