

Praise

by James Smith

True praise is a grateful acknowledgment of God's mercies, glorifying Him for His goodness, and celebrating His excellencies with thankfulness.

Scripture: Psalm 113:3, Psalm 145:4, Isaiah 61:3, Romans 8:5, Hebrews 13:15

Topics: "Worship And Praise", "Gratitude To God"

Description

James Smith preaches on the essence of true praise, emphasizing the importance of gratitude, glorifying God for His goodness, and celebrating the excellencies of Jehovah with thankfulness. He highlights that praising God should be spiritual, lively, free-will offerings, with delight, sincere, humble, and constant. Smith stresses that praise elevates the soul, softens the spirit, and draws believers closer to the Lord, ultimately leading to a heavenly mindset and a preventative to many evils.

Transcript

True praise includes--a grateful acknowledgment of mercies--glorifying God for his goodness--and a celebrating the excellencies of Jehovah with thankfulness. In praise we confess ourselves unworthy, indebted, and laid under great obligation for kindness manifested; we adore the author, acknowledge that we received the favor, and give thanks with gratitude for the same. Our relation to God as creatures, calls for praise; as sinful creatures, spared, protected, and supplied, more; as new creatures, ransomed by the blood of Jesus, still more; but as new creatures, adopted into God's family, indulged with communion with Himself, blessed with all spiritual blessings, appointed to reign with him, and everlastingly enjoy him, most of all.

Yet so hard, so blind, so ungrateful, are our hearts, that unless the Holy Spirit works in us, and produces gratitude--we do not praise. We forget, we neglect, we lack the fire necessary to offer up such a sacrifice. A sense of our desert, a discovery of our Father's love, the enjoyment of the Savior's presence, the reception of some unexpected blessing, or the secret operations of the blessed Comforter, will set us praising. But without these we are generally dull, cold and negligent.

Praising God elevates the soul, softens the spirit, and makes the frame of the mind heavenly; it produces a sacred satisfaction, imparts indescribable pleasure, and is a preventative to many evils. It brings us near to the Lord, divorces the spirit from the world, and leads up the affections to things above. Praise is commenced on earth--but will appear in full perfection in heaven. It well befits the Christian in his present state of existence; when he considers his obligations, he sees that he should have begun praising--when

he began breathing; and have continued doing so ever since.

But though it becomes us below, and is commenced on earth, yet heaven is more particularly the place of praise; this is one of the principal employments of the spirits of the just men made perfect. Here on earth, we find many things to hinder, interrupt, or prevent us; but there in heaven, all is calculated to assist us in the delightful employment! There sin is completely and forever purged away, Satan is absent, the world is left behind, the body of sin and death no longer clogs us, ungrateful principles are forever eradicated from our natures; and the songs of angels, the presence of God, and immortal life, will incite and impel us. The beauty of the place, the excellency of the company, the happiness which abounds--will all conspire to constrain us to praise the holy Three In One forever.

The praises of a Christian should be spiritual; a natural man may make a natural acknowledgment--but a spiritual man must offer a spiritual sacrifice. This was a part of the design of God in our regeneration, as it is written, "This people I have formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." This is the design of God in our deliverance from guilt, bondage, and slavish fears; then Jesus gives "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." This is the command of God, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; and laud him all you people."

Our praises should be lively and vigorous; not dull and sleepy. How often may the Lord say in reference to our praises, "Would you offer this unto your king? "God's mercies come to us flying--but our praises scarcely creep! How very unbecoming are dull, sleepy, heavy praises; if such exercises may be called praises at all.

Our praises should be free-will offerings: "not by constraint--but willingly, of a ready mind,"--is a good rule respecting praise. A forced sacrifice is not acceptable to God; every man must voluntarily bring his offering, lay his hand upon it, and so deliver it unto the Priest. My soul, seek grace from your God, that you may "offer the sacrifice of praise continually, which is the fruit of the lips, giving thanks to his name!"

Our praises should be with delight; not only the understanding and the will should be engaged--but the affections also. The heart is the censer, grace is the incense, joy is the fire, and praise is the flame that ascends to our God. The heart is the lamp, grace is the oil, joy is the wick, and praise is the light which the real Christian gives. And while he burns, to God's glory he sings, "Thus will I bless you while I live, and praise your name forever and ever."

Praise must be sincere. Lip-labor can never be accepted. The heart must be affected with a sense of God's mercies, our own desert, and the love manifested in those mercies, before we can truly, sincerely, and gratefully praise God.

Our praises should be humble--the head should be hidden while the praise is ascending. It is not the honest tradesman paying his debts--but the poor beggar returning thanks for undeserved kindness. Humility generates praise; and praise increases humility. The humble Christian will be thankful, and the thankful Christian will never lack. The believer who is much in praise--he will be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. God calls for praises, the Spirit teaches thankfulness, and our adorable Savior loves to present our grateful acknowledgments.

Our praises should be constant--this is one of "the things of the Spirit" which we should "mind:" Romans 8:5. When is it that we have no reason to praise? When can we say, "I have nothing to praise for?" It is in God that we live, move, and have our being.

"To Him every mercy we owe

Above what the fiends have in hell!"

Our life, our health, our breath, our freedom from pain, our clothing, our home, our friends, our relations, our food, our civil and religious privileges, the light we enjoy, and ten thousand other mercies combine to call for constant praises. Therefore, said the apostle, "In everything give thanks." But if from temporals--we turn our eye to spirituals, and think of eternal love--redemption by precious blood--regeneration by the Holy Spirit--liberty through the gospel--joy and peace in believing--promises to comfort--invitations to draw--doctrines to support--warnings to caution--exhortations to quicken--and the sweet experience of God's presence in the heart; then indeed, we see cause to say, "O Lord, I will praise you! I will exalt you! I will extol you, my God, O King, and praise your name forever and ever!"

But in order to praise aright--we need grace from God to influence, direct and sanctify our service. Praise is compared to a sacrifice, "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually:" Hebrews 13:15. To a garment which should appear on us continually, Isaiah 61:3. To the springing up of a plant from the nourishment received, bespeaking the fruitfulness of the soil in which it grows, Isaiah 61:11.

Praise is the opposite to ingratitude, carelessness, and hardness of heart: it is contrary to pride, self-sufficiency, and self-importance: it is opposed to murmuring, discontent, and self-complacency.

Respecting praise, God says, "He who offers praise--glorifies me!" "One generation shall praise his works unto another, and declare his mighty acts!" Psalm 145:4. "From the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised!" Psalm 113:3.

And now, reader, may we not well cry unto the Lord that he would reveal to us more clearly--the nature, importance, and excellence of this duty; that he would give us to taste the sweetness of it, and abound in the exercise of it more and more. Ought we not to lament that we have thought so little of what God thinks so much; and mourn over our backwardness to praise and magnify his glorious name. O! for more heavenly-mindedness, more gratitude of heart; and may the Lord open our mouths, that our lips may show forth his praise! We have not rendered back, according to that which the Lord has done for us; we have been unmindful of his favors, and our memories have been the grave-yards of his mercies. May the Lord pardon his servants in this thing, and give us true repentance and his Holy Spirit. Amen.

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