

Why We Praise

by Jim Cymbala

Praising God is essential for our well-being, the well-being of others, and it is a way to worship God, and God specializes in taking broken things and making them beautiful.

Duration: 41:40

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:21, Matthew 21:16, Luke 19:40, John 4:23, 1 Timothy 2:8, Hebrews 13:15

Topics: "Praise"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of praising the Lord and expresses his frustration with the Western mentality that discourages emotional expression, especially in religious contexts. He compares the enthusiasm and emotional outbursts seen in sports events to the lack of freedom to worship and praise God without judgment. The speaker encourages the audience to prioritize praising and thanking God in the coming year, disregarding what others may think. He concludes by reminding the audience that Jesus is always present and deserving of their heartfelt praise and worship.

Transcript

So I wanna give you something now that will help you in the new year. Simple but profound. You know, the deepest things of God are not complex.

If you need two years of college to figure out a man's sermon, it can't be God. Because Jesus said, except you become like a little. But the things of God are simple, but have a depth that nobody's ever plumbed.

They're never complicated. Most things that are complicated are not deep, they're muddy. And we want clarity but depth.

The last five Psalms of the Psalter, the Psalter is the Hebrew word for the collection of 100, and how many Psalms are there? 150. The last five are grouped together in their own little collection, and they're called the Hallelujah Psalms by some of the commentators. Why? They all begin with the word hallelujah, and they end with the word hallelujah.

And we're gonna just read from Psalm 147, which is the second of these five. It's 146, 47, 48, 49, 150. They all begin with hallelujah, and they end with hallelujah, which is translated praise the Lord.

Let's look at it. Psalm 147. Praise the Lord.

It's good to sing praise to our God. It is pleasant and right to praise him. The Lord is restoring Jerusalem.

This is from the Good News Bible. The Lord is restoring Jerusalem. He is bringing back the exiles.

He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds. He has decided the number of the stars and calls each one by name. Great and mighty is our Lord.

His wisdom cannot be measured. Let's go back and read it again since it's so brief. Praise the Lord.

That's hallelujah. It is good to sing praise to our God. By the way, why is it good to sing praise to God? Because first of all, it's fitting.

God deserves the praise. Listen, look at me for a second. Number two, it's good for us when we praise the Lord.

That's why we were created. We were created not to earn money and go on vacations, have babies and whatnot. We were created to praise and worship God and enjoy him forever.

So it's good to praise God because he deserves our praise. Amen? It's good to praise God because it's good for us. And number three, it's good for the people who hear us praise God.

When you praise God and you thank God, it has an effect on the people around you, even though you're not cognizant of it always. So it is good to praise God, as the Psalm says. Let's go back.

It is pleasant and right to praise him. The Lord is restoring Jerusalem. He's bringing back the exiles.

He heals the brokenhearted, and he bandages their wounds. Notice the jump. He heals the brokenhearted.

He bands up their wounds. And the next thing you know is he not only created all the stars, but he numbered them. That is a jump.

You talk about different categories. One is delicate work in my heart. The other one is the stars.

My goodness, every year they're finding like thousands of new stars with the new telescopes we have. They can't count the stars. And he calls them each one by name.

Great and mighty is our Lord. His wisdom cannot be measured. Now, the reason the psalmist wants us to praise God are for some of the reasons that now follow.

I want 2014 in my life and yours to be a year of more praising of God. How many want to praise God more this year and thank him more this year than you ever have in any calendar year? This is important. This is in the scriptures, both Old and New Testament.

This is not an Old Testament teaching only. The Bible talks in the New Testament about giving him the calves of our lips and our tongues, giving praise to God. When Jesus came into Jerusalem the last time on what we call Palm Sunday, they were shouting, praising God, yelling, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And they said, tell the kids to be quiet and not to be yelling and praising God. That's like some churches are. You can get excited about anything, the Super Bowl, baseball, anything, but about God, keep it down,

keep it down.

That cannot be right. All due respect, that cannot be right. That's a tradition we've developed, never found in the Bible.

And when they said to Jesus, tell the kids to be quiet or the people to stop shouting, he said, if they don't praise me, the rocks will cry out. So there are moments in life where we're to be meditative. There's moments to listen to a sermon.

As the Bible says, there's a time for everything under the sun. But sometimes we are to do nothing better, nothing more than just praise God. With our lips, these psalms talk about singing praises to God and also making noises on instruments, Psalm 150, the trumpet and the cymbal.

The psalmist now, though, is saying not just praise the Lord because praising the Lord, saying hallelujah can get dangerous when it becomes a mantra, when it becomes something that we think that by repeating it, we're gonna work up ourselves into some frenzy. Hallelujah, hallelujah, everybody shout hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Well, that's good, let's say hallelujah, but let's know why we're saying hallelujah.

Someone once said that there's three words found all over the world in other cultures and other languages, amen, hallelujah, and Coca-Cola. That's the truth. You go to a lot of countries, they will know amen.

I've traveled a little bit, and they will know hallelujah. Other languages have derivations of this word, even in their worship, and then Coca-Cola is just about everywhere. Now, hallelujah is translated, usually in our English Bibles, praise the Lord, or as a command, listen, praise ye the Lord.

Not just I'm praising the Lord, but the psalmist says, come on, wake up, praise the Lord. Don't you know what he's done? What are you sitting there like a stock of wood? Praise the Lord. That's why worship leaders sometimes have to just not lead the people in singing.

They say, come on, let's praise the Lord, because sometimes we're distracted. Other times, we're discouraged, we're despondent, and we forget that praising the Lord is all important because God inhabits the praises of his people. There are special blessings that come in our lives only when we're praising the Lord, only when we're praising the Lord.

And after we pray and ask God for things, it's good to put in thanksgiving in the middle of our prayers, and then praise him at the end, even before we see the answer come to our prayers. So, the psalmist here, as in so many of the psalms, hallelujah, that comes from halal or alel, which means praise, and then jah, J-A-H, which is a shortening for Jehovah. So, praise Jehovah.

Praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord. I'm not just gonna praise the Lord.

I want you to praise the Lord, because once you start praising God and you realize who he is, you want others to join with you. You don't wanna do it all by yourself. And I was noticing, as we were being led beautifully and praising God today, that so many of you, you inspire me.

I walk in this building sometimes. I hear a problem, or I'm trying to help someone, and I get distracted during the day, and I walk in here, and they don't know the door's gonna open, and praise and worship is going on, and I walk right in that door, and I see the people right against that column there, and they have

their hands up. They don't know I'm walking in.

They're not doing it for me. They got their hands up, and they're praising God, and so many times, as God is my witness, I can't wait to get to my spot, so I can praise the Lord. They inspire me.

When you see someone praise the Lord, it's like quietly telling you, come on, you praise the Lord, too. Come on, isn't God worthy to be praised? He's worthy to be praised. Now, there are certain church traditions that have developed that have done away, basically, with praise.

That it's just sing a couple psalms in a mental kind of way, and then the sermon or whatever, and then you go home, but that is not a New Testament pattern or an Old Testament pattern. God inhabits the praises of his people, and Jesus said, forget Jerusalem. Forget a temple.

Forget any place. He struck down thousands of years of Hebrew history when he said the Father is not seeking anybody to go to Jerusalem to a temple. He is seeking those who will worship him in spirit and in truth, from inside here, inspired probably by his spirit, from our hearts, and in truth, in sincerity, really meaning it.

So, as I was watching you all praise God, I was getting inspired like I do when I walk in the building. BT Kids, we're teaching our children, your children, the importance of praising God. We saw that a number of weeks ago when they took over the three o'clock service.

They were really praising the Lord, and they're uninhibited, and they don't care about shouting glory to God and all of that. We've learned this fake system of being reserved and conservative because we're in church, but that's not found in the Bible. That's something we've developed.

How many are not ashamed to praise God out loud? Lift your hand, or to lift both your hands up. Come on, let's lift both our hands up. Pastor Simba, why would you want us to do it? I didn't ask you to do it.

The Bible says lift up holy hands in both Old and New Testament that God somehow loves when we lift up our hands. If he loves it, let's do it because worship is not about your comfort zone. Worship is not about how you feel.

Oh, come on. Worship is for God. He's the audience.

Come on, one more time. Let's clap our hands. He's the audience, but as I was saying, worship can become by rote.

You know by rote is mechanical. Rote is when you just do things and there's no connection with your mind and your heart what you're doing. You're just doing it.

That's why it's very dangerous to have a leader just yell at people and tell them what to do. You can suggest it to them, but that's how cults operate and pagan religions that by repetition of words and chanting, they work themselves up into a frenzy. Not so with God.

He's looking for worship in spirit and in truth. The cure to this is understanding, according to the psalmist, why we're praising the Lord. Why should you praise the Lord? Why should I praise the Lord? And the psalms are full of reasons behind the hallelujah.

Why the hallelujah? In other words, not just hallelujah, but hallelujah, praise ye the Lord. I praise the Lord. I praise Jehovah.

Hallelujah. And here's why. And then the psalmist gives us some reasons why we should praise the Lord.

And he tells us that it's good and comely and proper to praise the Lord. In the Western mentality, where we have made, structured most of our lives only from our minds, praise and any show of emotion is, makes certain people very uncomfortable. Very uncomfortable.

Especially when it comes to things religious. Now as I said before, a baseball game, oh, the bowl games will be on January 1st. The national championship on January the 6th.

Florida State versus Auburn. And they'll be going nuts. And no one says, these people are crazy.

They're jumping up and down. They're screaming. Girls are crying at the end of the game.

Men are crying. Why are they doing that? Are they crazy? What happened? It's a game, nobody remembered in 10 years. But no one says that about them.

But just do it about God. And people say, what are you, a holy roller? What are you, like a fanatic? What are you, in that church with Jim Cymbala? What, Jim Jones? Jim Cymbala? Some kind of cult that he's operating? No. But the Bible tells us to worship God.

To praise. And to be free to worship and praise. What does it matter what anybody thinks? You think if Jesus was standing here and walked out on this stage and I ran over to the side out of awe and then he said, come on, stand and sing praise.

Guess how you would sing if Jesus was standing here? Oh yes, and he would look at you, young lady with the blonde hair, and you'd be, oh, he's looking at me. Oh, I love you, Jesus. I praise you, Jesus, right? Right? But guess what? He is here.

He's here, he's listening to my words. Come on, is he not? So praise ye the Lord. Hallelujah.

This year, you gotta remember now, every day has to have praise and worship in it. No, but I'm not in church. Now, that's another stumbling block to us.

Many of us only praise God when we're around other people in church. We need the sound of the organ. Or we need the sound of other people singing.

But praising God is not a weekly thing, Sundays and then Tuesday night. No, it's every day. Giving out hallelujahs, praise God.

Haven't you, one day I was in a line at a drugstore, just think about how good God was. I was about the third person. I must have lost consciousness of who was around me.

And I'm just waiting there and I'm not a fanatical kind of person, I don't think. And just the third on the line and I remember just going, hallelujah. And everyone turned like, what, what did you say? Haven't you ever had a hallelujah just kind of pop out without even thinking of it? Or just praise the Lord.

God is good. Hallelujah. So now the psalmist wants us to think of three reasons that I want to put together.

And I want you not only to see them as present tense, that he has, is doing that. And it's strange that from the Hebrew text of the Psalms, we have in the English Bible a change in the tense because it's hard to know from what I understand exactly what the tense is of what's being said. So it says, the Lord is building up Jerusalem.

The Lord is restoring Jerusalem. But some translations have it, the Lord has built up Jerusalem. See, past tense.

The Lord has restored Jerusalem. Now others, the Lord is, some translations have it, the Lord will build up Jerusalem. The Lord will restore Jerusalem.

Now because of that wording in the Psalm, we date this Psalm, the experts date it as not a Psalm of David, but hundreds of years after David. So let's get the timing of it probably. The timing of it is after God sent prophets to warn his people, turn away from worshipping idols.

Stop dishonoring me. Stop forgetting me. And he sent prophets to warn them, if you go that way, there's gonna be judgment come upon you.

And sure enough, the Babylonians attack the southern kingdom and they surround Jerusalem and there's a long siege. But finally, the Babylonian forces, the biggest empire of that day, they prevail. And now the Bible tells us that they're not only conquered, but they're sent all over the Babylonian empire.

This is how men like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, young men and Daniel and others were whisked out of Jerusalem. They got all the key people, the brightest minds. And for 70 years, they languished, singing, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I can never forget you.

Because that's where the temple was, no longer was because it had been destroyed. The Babylonians got rumors like the Romans did hundreds of years later, that there were jewels and precious things in it and they just totally devastated the temple and some of the walls and Jerusalem was left a bunch of rubble. But after 70 years, the call went out through the providence of God under King Cyrus of the Persian empire that the Jews who wanted could go back to Jerusalem.

Now they were scattered all over, settled down 70 years, a long time, couple generations. Now they're making money and they're doing all kinds of things and marrying and intermarrying and now the call comes back. Who wants to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the city? Who wants to go back and rebuild the temple? Who wants to go back and restore God's original purpose for our lives? Alas, we sinned, we violated God's command and we were sent away and dispersed.

But now God in his mercy has brought us back. We can go back and they went back. This is during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, two books of the Old Testament.

Well, when they went back to the land, this is when they date this psalm from because notice what the psalmist is saying. The Lord is restoring Jerusalem. The Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem.

It was once, then it was knocked down, now he's rebuilding it. You know, I love that about God. He not only builds, he rebuilds.

You know the great problem was when we got this building? We couldn't build up into the air. We had to restore what was already here and this was built, this structure, in 1917. One year before World War I

ended.

And the contractors and developers will tell you, building up into the open air is a piece of cake. There's no surprises. You just build.

Or on unused land, you just build up into the air. Ah, but when you have to remodel and restore, oh my goodness, the problems you run into. This theater had been turned into a quad by Cineplex.

There were two theaters in the balcony, two theaters downstairs. It was built in 1917, 4100 seats, the largest theater in North America when it was built by a famous architect. The Three Stooges played here live.

Hey, listen, I can brag about whatever I want to brag about, right? Moe, Larry, and Curly were all here on this stage. But now when we got it, a mess. These boxes had been torn out.

Ceilings had leaks and water coming all over. Water damage, totally destroyed. Cineplex had just walked out on their lease and the building laid vacant.

And oh, what the contractor and the expense involved in rebuilding. And someone told me, but Pastor, be encouraged because that's what God's gonna do in the building through the gospel of Jesus. He's gonna rebuild lives that are broken.

But rebuilding is harder work than building. Building new is a lot easier. Oh, this building was a disaster.

You're sitting in it, looks nice today. You ought to see it when we first closed on it. I had close friends visit here, David Jeremiah, Tony Evans, and others who came and saw it before we started the work.

And they told me, in fact, David Jeremiah just recently when he was here, he told me, Jim, the truth is, when my wife and I left, Don and I left, we thought, he's our friend, but he's lost his mind. He's lost his mind. It was so dank and dark and looked so impossible.

So filthy, so beat down. No one cared. They had rats in this building so large that they had Abishai cases in New York Times under their little paws.

And they would just go in and out to the subway, go to work, come back. Big, big. And that's how Jerusalem was.

Listen to what God says. Why say hallelujah? The psalmist says, you know why I say hallelujah? Because God restores Jerusalem. God specializes in taking things that are broken down and smashed and ruined and depressing and there's no hope.

God specializes, Jesus more specifically, specializes in coming and taking lives and families and situations that were once beautiful and seemed to have promise and now nothing but rubble. Nothing but rubble. And you would walk by and say no hope like you would about this building.

But Jesus specializes in taking that mess and blessing it and building something beautiful out of it. So the psalmist says, yeah, let's put our hands together. Say amen.

So the psalmist says, the psalmist says, hallelujah. Praise ye the Lord for the Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem. He takes things that are hopeless and he makes them beautiful.

And when others walk by and say, get out of here, get out of here. That's messed up. Jesus, no, I'll fix that. I'll bless it up. It's not messed up. I will bless it up and I'll do something new.

And I want to tell you in 2014, no matter what you and I face, no matter what messes come our way, no matter who God runs us into, the Lord specializes in rebuilding Jerusalem. He loves to restore things that are messed up, damaged, ruined, darkened, sullied, just a mess, a mess. When you meet a mess, remember what the minister said on December the 29th.

Remember what I said. Oh, hallelujah. The Lord restores Jerusalem.

Now, but listen, listen. But why was it broken down? Why was it broken down? Because of their sin. Because of their sin.

He's gonna build up something that they brought on themselves. He's so full of mercy. Other people look and say, ah, you made your bed, now sleep in it.

See what a man sows, he reaps. There, you got it. You got what you deserve.

You messed up everything. No, Jesus weeps over things like that. He delights not in judgment, but in mercy.

Even though their sin had brought the destruction of Jerusalem. Even though he had warned them through prophets, don't do that, don't do it. Even though they did it, he's gonna rebuild it.

Because he's a God of mercy. Come on, let's give him one more hand. A God of love.

A God of compassion. No wonder. Let me finish.

No wonder. No wonder, hallelujah. No wonder, hallelujah.

The Lord restores Jerusalem. The people went about praising God and singing. The walls were rebuilt.

That's what he wants to do for you today. He wants to rebuild your walls. Your walls have been broken down.

Enemies been chipping away. It's not like it once was in your life. Look at me, those of you on the webcast.

It's not like it was once, you lost that first love. It's not so good right now. But don't despair.

Jesus rebuilds Jerusalem. He takes broken things and he makes them right. Not only that, but he brings the exiles home.

They came from hundreds and hundreds of miles. From what we now call Iran and Iraq. And he brought them back to where he wanted them to be, to begin with.

So the psalmist is saying, hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Why? He not only restores things that are broken and smashed, but he brings people who have drifted way far away.

And he brings them home. He returns the exile back to where the place of blessing is. That's what he wants to do maybe for some of you.

Wouldn't it be beautiful? Some of you, you're in church, but you've drifted in your, in su corazon, in your heart, you've drifted. Or maybe you have a relative you're praying for and the devil keeps telling you, no, they've gone too far. Nothing's too far for God.

As long as they're breathing their hope, there's hope. Because he specializes in bringing the prodigal home. Don't you get it? This is why we say hallelujah.

He not only restores and rebuilds the messes of our life, but he takes people who have drifted so far, far away. Not just saves them like Samar. Samar didn't know about the Lord.

He got ahold of a New Testament. And that was, as you're going to learn, the turning point in his life. But even after you know the Lord, don't you have a relative? Don't you have a friend, if it's not yourself right now, that has drifted? They're living in Babylon when they should be living in Jerusalem.

They should be living close to the Lord. And they're worshiping some strange God. Worshiping money and pleasure.

For what? For what? Does it bring fulfillment? Does it bring peace? Does it bring joy? Surely does not. That's why everyone has to get drunk on New Year's Eve. If they were happy in themselves, they wouldn't need a bit of liquor to make them feel good.

Am I right or wrong here? Why is this drug epidemic? Why is everybody losing themselves in oxycodone? Why is everyone doing that? Don't you get it? They're so unhappy with what is that they just want any substitute to numb them. But ah, the Lord doesn't need to get you drunk. He brings you back where you belong and He gives you joy unspeakable, full of glory.

Peace that passes. Listen, all understanding. It has nothing to do with you.

Don't try to have peace. Just let Him bring you back and He'll give you His peace. That's supernatural peace.

It has nothing to do with the circumstances of life. Oh, this worked out, that didn't work out. Will we get that house? Will we get that apartment? Will we get that job? That's going up and down, up and down.

The peace of God is just like a deep river. One last reason to say hallelujah. He not only restores and rebuilds broken, smashed, dirty, messed up things, but He also brings the exiles home.

That's why they used to sing that song. They don't sing that song. Someone ought to write a praise song.

You know, a lot of the praise and worship songs are just, they're just one level. They're not, they're not complex enough for me. You know, we used to sing that song, hymns of the church, like we were singing earlier today, Amazing Grace and some others, but coming home, coming home, never more to roam.

Open wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home. I love that about the Lord. He brings you home.

He brings you home. Now, a child just yelling out made me think of something I would just tell you. I love all my children and grandchildren, but some children, other children, not mine, can get very annoying.

How many have ever been, I'll close my eyes, so I don't want to lose respect for you, but how many have ever been around an annoying child? Just lift your hand, okay? The rest of you, I don't know if I could trust

you now, but I was in Florida in a food court, and I was all by myself because I'd been with Levi, four years old, and my other adopted son who you're gonna, grandson who you'll meet, Malachi, who grew up in a very bad ghetto in Cary, Indiana. And my oldest daughter has brought him into her home, and he's been there a year and a half now. Anyway, I was two or three hours with Levi and Malachi, and although Levi is the name of a priest, and although Malachi is a prophet, I was not having a godly experience at all, at all.

They were driving me nuts. But they're my grandchildren, so yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So you just play.

So I got him home. I was just like, ah, I can't take it. Because, you know, when you're younger, God gives you the nerves to have these children.

So I ended up at the food court again by myself with a USA Today and a little food, and I just, for the first time, was gonna just have some quiet. You ever get your nerves rattled from little children and all that? And I'm there, and there was a lot of annoying children in other parts of the mall, but I was safe, I thought. And then to my table comes, oh, you're gonna think bad of me, but I'm gonna tell this story anyway, a child about six or seven years old with a little buzz cut and looking up in there and never looking at me, comes right up as close as I am to the pulpit, and he just stands at the table.

I'm eating here, and here's the table, and he just stands there but not looking at me. And I just look at him like, why are you this close? You've invaded my space. This is my space.

You have invaded it. But he does not know. He's just looking around like an annoying child would look up in the air.

And he had a toy, a metal toy. And out of nowhere, he just started banging the toy. And I had a metal table with a metal toy.

Are you picturing this here with me? And he just bangs it while I'm trying to eat and read my paper and drink my Diet Coke. So I just think he'll go away. It'll stop.

He didn't. He kept intermittently just banging the table. What's with this little child, this kid? So I looked at him.

He had never made eye contact, and I said, what are you doing? And he just looked at me for a second, looked away, just looked around like that. Bang. Then he stopped.

About 30 seconds, 20 seconds later, bang, bang, bang. Look, even ministers have limits, right? I realized this is untenable situation. So I said, hey, kid.

He looked over. He said, what? I said, get out of here. And he went, mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy.

I don't care who his mother was. I don't care. I was going to read my newspaper and eat my food.

The third reason is he not only restores and he brings back from far away. But listen, the Lord heals the broken heart and he binds up their wounds. And then out of nowhere, the psalmist says, and he counts all the stars he created.

Now, how would you go from wounded heart, he heals the broken heart, to he numbers all the stars he created. When there's billions, trillions of stars, nobody knows how many stars there are. It shows that the God we serve, the Jesus, who is our savior, has all power, but he has the touch of a delicate physician.

Remember that when you face problems in 2014, and there will be some. He's the God who just speaks and it comes to pass, but he's also the savior who can go into areas of your heart and bring healing where no one else can touch. I'm all for Christian counseling.

I'm all for anything that helps somebody. But I assure you, I affirm today, Jesus can touch you in areas that nobody else. And what I love about this is he knows if you're broken hearted today.

Your spouse can break your heart. Your children can break your heart. Your parent can break your heart.

Your best friend can break your heart. To break your heart, you usually have to be close to a person. Strangers can't break our heart.

They could offend us, insult us, but they can't break our heart. But once you start to love someone and they turn on you, they can wound you. And the Psalmist says, Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord.

He restores Jerusalem. He brings the exiles back from so far away. And then he heals the broken heart.

What would they be broken hearted about? Over their sin? When you hear the gospel, you get broken hearted. When you hear about the love of Jesus, that breaks your heart. People close to you can break your heart.

There's a lot of reasons why people have broken hearts. I'm telling you today, let's praise him because he has this all-powerful essence. And at the same time, he can reach into your heart today.

I don't know if it was connected, but I had a bitter Christmas in a way because my brother called me on Monday night from Portland, Oregon, where he lives. I have a brother six years older to tell me that his oldest boy died that day, my nephew. And my dad, who had been an alcoholic for 22 years, when he sobered up and lived the last 10 years of his life sober, he always worried about Paul because Paul struggled with this.

And then he would serve the Lord and come to church. And then he would fall back. And then, you know, that kind of thing.

Well, he had boarded himself away from everybody. And for, I think, three months, my mother sent packages. He wouldn't receive them.

No emails, no letters, no anything. He wouldn't let his parents come in. He just, so my brother right now needs, he called me and said, how are we going to tell mom without it causing, at 99 years old, a bad reaction to her? But God had already given her a premonition and prepared her for it somehow supernaturally, I think.

But my brother needs that. He binds up their wounds. He heals the brokenhearted.

That's a rough Christmas. Are you with me on that? That's a rough Christmas. And Christmas, I don't think it was associated that, the holiday with Paul.

But you know what? Drinking, depression, suicide, all these things just go flying high during Christmas season. And people try all different substitutes to drink it away, pill it away, whatever. But I'm telling you, this awesome Jesus, he heals the brokenheart.

Could you close your eyes with me? I just wanna know, is there anyone who would say, Pastor, not gonna come to the altar, but obviously the Lord is where you are. Here in the top of the balcony, you're in overflow. You're watching on a webcast.

You don't need to get to me. I have my own problems. I'm not nobody's answer.

No, you need Jesus. You need Jesus, the one who restores broken and ruined things, the one who brings people far away back to where they belong. I'm talking spiritually and sometimes physically too.

By the way, there's some woman here who when the choir was singing, I know that I can make it. God wants you to know you're gonna make it. You're gonna make it.

I know you've been doubting it. You're like battling with depression. How can I get through this? I just felt the Lord prompt me and he just prompted me again.

You're gonna make it. You know who you are. You take it.

You take it. If the Holy Spirit makes that real to you, you take it home and just say, God's looking out for me. But if you're here today and you have a broken heart that you need the Lord to touch, God, you've been so good.

That's my way of saying hallelujah because you are restoring. You will restore broken, rundown things in my life and those I love. You're gonna bring the exiled, the people far away who have drifted out of God's purpose.

You bring them back. And Lord, finally, you heal the brokenhearted and I am smashed inside by stuff that happened even during the holiday season. Someone said something or did something that just is like a knife.

This Jesus who came to die for our sins, he also heals the brokenhearted. That's what he said when he stood up in the synagogue and he read from Isaiah and I've come to heal the brokenhearted. And he said, this day, this scripture is fulfilled.

I am the one who not only dies on the cross eventually, I'm the one who heals the brokenhearted. If you want me to just include you in the final prayer, just stand up where you're sitting. Just stand up and just stand there and say, God, you see me.

I'm stepping out in faith just to even stand up. I don't care what anyone thinks. Maybe you're coming home from far, far away.

Ah, hallelujah. He brings the exiles home. Maybe you have a mess on your hands.

You don't know what to do. Hallelujah. He builds up Jerusalem, the broken walls.

He heals the brokenhearted. Jesus, I am so happy that we can say hallelujah to you, not by rote, but with purpose, with gratitude of heart, because you, Jesus, are the one that rebuilds the walls that have been broken down. You restore Jerusalem.

You restore lives. You restore situations. You restore families.

You restore marriages. You restore every kind of thing. For with you, nothing is impossible.

I thank you, Jesus. Today, we say hallelujah because you bring the exiles back. You move people who have drifted and gone far, far, far away from where you originally purposed them to be.

And I thank you for that. Finally, Jesus, I thank you that you heal the brokenhearted. Those of you that are standing that need to do it, put your hand right now on your heart.

Jesus, we lay hands on our own heart, not the heart that pumps the blood, but the other heart, Lord. Our emotions, our nerves, our spirit, our innermost being. We pray you will heal that today.

In the name of Christ, God, I pray that healing of brokenhearts will happen right now, this very moment, as I say these words, let the healing begin. Let the comfort begin. I pray again for my brother, Bob.

I pray for Nancy. I pray for the other nephews. God of all comfort, Father of mercies, do your work.

Lord, bless your people as we leave this building, as we look to you for more grace and more mercy and more peace. We prayed in Jesus' name and everyone said, no more handshaking. Hug about three or four people.

Come on, hug a bunch of people.

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