

Praise and Worship

Feast of Tabernacles 2022

“For thus says the LORD, “Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations. Cry out, give praise and say, ‘O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel.’”- **Jeremiah 31:7**

We discussed this topic in March of this year. It seems fitting for a re-visit with our discussion this week to highlight some basic responsibilities that will carry over into the millennium.

We do it every week. We’ve all probably done it in some form or another in every church service and denomination we’ve ever attended. Clearly, I’m referring to praise and worship. With the numerous churches I’ve attended in my life, I’ve seen a variety of formats and displays of praise and worship. Personally, I’ve seen the monotonous recital of a Catholic missal (no not an ICBM), to a near Rockettes performance by a choir with tambourines and dancing in the isles. Then there’s the Pentecostals who continue in the same verse or melody over and over again until they’re successful in “calling down the spirit” like God’s Holy Spirit is kept in a box until It’s needed to edify the group. Or, their efforts further yield someone in the congregation to “speak in tongues” or “prophesy in the spirit” in some form of babbling gibberish. If they really get the spirit out of the box, someone else in the

congregation may give an “interpretation” of the gibberish everyone heard.

Chauncey and I have both witnessed folks at The Haitian Church in Immokalee singing their hearts out playing sour notes on a busted organ. I’m sure The Lord smiled on their effort from their hearts but to anyone else, it was likened to a cat in a blender. So, what is praise and worship? Why do we do it and does God really hear us?

According to the Free On-line Dictionary, Praise is defined as: to *glorify, exalt, acclamation, compliment*. Worship is defined as: the reverent love and *devotion* accorded to a deity, an idol, or a sacred object. Of course, we are only concerned with praising and worshipping our Creator and Sovereign God.

Why?

If we pause to think about the “why” we praise and worship God, just hold your breath. After about 30 seconds and on towards a minute or two, if you don’t pass out, you’ll burst from trying and suck in that life giving air we all need for life.

“Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”- **Genesis 2:7**

Genesis 6:17- “And behold, I, even I am bringing a flood of waters upon the earth in order to destroy all flesh—in which *is* the breath of life—from under heaven. Everything which *is* upon the earth shall die.”

Genesis 7:15- “And they went to Noah into the ark, two *by* two of all flesh in which is the breath of life.”

Genesis 7:22- “*And* all who breathed the breath of life, of all that *was* upon the dry land—died.”

Job 33:4- “The Spirit of God has made me, and the *breath of the Almighty gives me life.*”

Beginning with Him giving us the breath of life, everything after that is a bonus. But only our God could go beyond just merely giving us life, He gave us His only Son Who died for our sins adding the hope and promises of eternal life in His Kingdom. He gave us Prayer, His Holy Spirit, His Sabbaths, His Holy Days, and His Commandments. He is most *worthy* to be Praised. “I will call upon the LORD, *Who is* worthy to be praised. And I shall be saved from my enemies.”- **2 Samuel 22:4.**

Psalm 18:3- “I will call on the LORD, Who is *worthy* to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.”

Revelation 4:11- “*Worthy* are You, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power because You did create all things, and for Your will they were created and exist.”

This is quite a short list but I’m glad we will have *all eternity* to praise and thank Him for the infinite blessings He bestows upon His children.

The Free On-line Dictionary defines “worthy” as: Having worth, merit, or value: a worthy cause. Honorable, admirable, a worthy fellow. Having sufficient worth deserving, worthy to be revered, worthy of acclaim. Knowing the manner in which Jesus gave His life for us and endured the shame and crucifixion upon the cross, this definition while complete, definitely falls short of just how worthy He truly is.

We *glorify* God through our praises. To *glorify* means to give glory, honor, high praise or exalt. **Psalm 86:12-** “I will *praise* You, O LORD my God, with all my heart, and I will *glorify* Your name forevermore,” **Psalm 22:23-** “You who fear the LORD, praise Him; all of you, the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and stand in awe of Him all of you, the seed of Israel,”

Luke 18:43- “And immediately he received sight; and he followed Him, *glorifying* God. Now after seeing this, all the people gave *praise* to God.”

1 Chronicles 16:35-36- “And say, ‘Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us, and deliver us from the nations, so that we may give thanks to Your holy name, and *glory* in Your *praise*. Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel forever and ever.’

And all the people said, ‘Amen, and *praised* the LORD.’”

Isaiah 43:21- “This people *that* I formed for Myself; they shall declare My *praise*.” It’s apparent that praise and glorify are two sides of the same coin.

Praising God is a frequent theme in the Psalms, the Hebrew title of which is "Praises." Yet praise is a theme that saturates all of Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation, direct and indirect praise can be found in Exodus, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Daniel, Ephesians, Revelation, but particularly throughout the Psalms. Many of the synonyms of praise we have already mentioned (bless, exalt, glorify, magnify, etc.) are also used. Praising God calls attention to His glory.

We usually begin our fellowship by playing a few songs or hymns as music has been used for centuries, especially in the area of praise and worship. There is a book by William Law, titled “A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.” Law was an 18th century minister in the Church of England. In a brief excerpt from chapter

15, he writes: “You are to consider this singing of a song as a necessary beginning of your devotions, as something that is to awaken all that is good and holy within you. That is, to call your spirit to its proper duty, to set you in your best posture toward heaven, and tune all the powers of your soul to worship and adoration. For there is nothing that so clears a way for your prayers, nothing that so disperses dullness of heart, nothing that so purifies the soul from poor and little passions, nothing that so opens heaven or carries your heart so near it as these songs of praise. They create a sense and delight in God, to awaken holy desires, they *teach* you how to ask, and they prevail with God to give. They kindle a holy flame, they turn your heart into an altar, your prayers into incense, and carry them as a sweet-smelling savor to the throne of grace. A man singing of a song though not in a very musical way, may yet sufficiently answer all the ends of rejoicing in and praising God. Our Savior and the Apostle, sang a hymn, but it may be reasonably supposed that they rejoiced in God, rather than made fine music.” God knows our heart

Psalm 44:21- “Shall not God search this out? For **He knows** the secrets of the heart.”

We will be praising God for all eternity but continuing to learn as well. **Rev. 5:12-**

13- “Saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing.” “And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the

earth, and those that are on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying, “To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty *into the ages of eternity.*”

We will continue to learn forever. **Ephesians 3:18-21**- “*And* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, *And* to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. This is an excellent focus on why we sing songs as praise unto God.

Setting the Stage

Music is a powerful medium, one in which we have given extraordinary regard to throughout history. It has been used in all facets of culture. Some primitive peoples thought music to have the power of the gods working through musicians, actually possessing the minds of the listeners. The Greeks and the Romans with their intellect, later scoffed at this idea as silly. They deemed music as a powerful tool, that could embody the morality and ethics of their society. Other cultures in the Orient viewed its use in more of a cosmic spiritual sense.

Music also provides a vital part in the history of mainstream Christianity. In the Middle Ages, theologians attributed to music the exclusive purpose of worshipping God. This view was held until after the Protestant Reformation in 1517, when musical composition expanded into an art form. This was seen as man's ability to participate as individuals within God's creative power. There certainly has been a focus on individuality in contemporary music although the connection to religious devotion has faded.

When we are setting the stage with our praise and worship, are we focused on worshipping God? Are we concentrating on the lyrics of what is being sung? Or are we wanting something to make us feel all warm and fuzzy within ourselves? It is critical we pay attention to what we sing due to the significance of The One to Whom we sing. So many of the songs nowadays are fixated on what God can do for us rather than paying reverence and our loving devotion to our Creator Who gives us all things. **1 Timothy 6:17-** "Charge those who are rich in this present age not to be high minded, nor to put *their* hope in *the* uncertainty of riches; but to put *their hope* in the living God, Who abundantly gives us all things for *our* enjoyment;"

I remember seeing people leave a church service complaining because the Praise and Worship service was inadequate. They'd say "I didn't feel anything." We would see a variety of music performed by the choir but often, many thought that

they were up there just to entertain them. Praise and worship are not for our entertainment. It is to honor and worship our Heavenly Father and prepare our hearts and minds to receive God's message for the day.

If someone's motive to attend a church is to be entertained, they'd be better off staying at home. It was a Sunday church anyway so in either case, staying at home is worthwhile.

As we mentioned a few weeks ago, when we arrive for fellowship, we are entering God's sanctuary. *It is the Sabbath*. Do we leave the world outside the door and focus on meeting with God? Or do we bring up Facebook or Fox News and talk about what politician told the biggest lie for the week? It's okay for fellowship and conversation, but try to leave the world outside as much as you can. *It is the Sabbath*. Is your heart and mind truly focused on Him and what He wants us to learn? Do you praise and worship Him in spirit and in truth? Do we genuinely with all our hearts offer God the sacrifice of praise? **Hebrews 13:15**- "Accordingly, let us offer *the* sacrifice of praise continually to God through Him; that is, *with the* fruit of *our* lips openly professing *our faith* in His name." **Psalm 27:6**- "And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies round about me; therefore I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy in His tabernacle. I will sing; yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD."

Jeremiah 17:26- “And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and grain offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise to the house of the LORD.”

Jeremiah 33:11- “The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who shall say, “Praise the LORD of hosts, for the LORD *is* good, for His steadfast love *endures* forever;” and the voice of those who shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will restore the fortunes of the land, as at the first,’ says the LORD.”

I’ve mentioned previously of a TV Evangelist show I skimmed past one night channel surfing. They played the same song over and over and over again for longer than 20 minutes. I know as I switched channels and came back 20 minutes later to the same song. During this time, one of the participants was running up and down the isles like he’d stepped in Fire Ants. I don’t know if they called down the spirit or not but it wore me out watching this “worshipper” doing his holy aerobics. Now dancing before the Lord is not wrong as King David did so. **2 Samuel 6:14-** “And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might. And David *was* girded with a linen ephod.”

Much like some of the Hillsong renditions of praise and worship songs, they play a continuous melody over and over and over again to the point of monotony. The group of folks on stage are all playing different instruments but, I'm no musician, they all sound the same. The guitarist is strumming away like he's playing with The Who and some of them are bouncing up and down like they're doing cross-fit. I know from the Pentecostal church Andrea and I used to attend, this is all done to "call down the spirit." Again, it's as if the Holy Spirit of God Almighty is a genie in a bottle and with the right amount of monotonous music and bouncing antics, the bottle will be rubbed just right and someone may speak in tongues when it shows up. Again, we are blessed to have been given God's Holy Spirit when we were baptized. Our communication lines are wide open through our Savior Jesus Christ who gives us direct access to the Throne. **Hebrews 4:16-** "Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

What words are we singing?

The lyrics of the songs we sing have a tremendous impact on our fellowship with God. We need to keep in mind that God does not want us to just lift up our voices because it is a "requirement" or "procedure" but a genuine act of our devotion to

Him. We know how powerful words can be (“Let there be light”- **Genesis 1:3**) and the lyrics to a song can have a significant impact on our study.

Have any of you ever attended a rock concert? Most of us have at one time or another. I’m sure we’ve all seen at least films of one or two if we’ve never been to one. People are moved by the music they are experiencing. Music has the power to transform our mode of thinking from stress to peace, anxiety to ease, and just the opposite, calm to “wound up.” Music can be used to help heal people. It can cheer you up, it can strengthen your faith. If you need an example of music’s influence, try listening to relaxing spa or classical music when driving as compared to rock and roll. Driving in southwest Florida is stressful enough without adding Led Zeppelin to your traveling. Save that for the gym when the adrenaline is needed. It can be a destructive rhythm, and it can move people in the wrong direction. So much of today’s music has an incredible amount of satanic influence. Imagine the lyrics to AC/DC’s Highway to Hell “I’m on a highway to hell” which should, in biblical terms, would be “I’m driving to the grave.” It’s doubtful even the lost would think it’s still cool. It is reflecting an increasingly self-centered, divided, and confused nation. That is why it is so important to be mindful of the lyrics of any praise and worship songs. Even some of our most beloved tunes are not all up to par with the Word of God. Songs that sing of going to heaven, even the Old Rugged Cross contains more than questionable lyrics. Remember, God is not a

respector of persons. **2 Chronicles 19:7**- “And now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Be careful and act wisely, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of a bribe.” (**2 Samuel 14:14, Acts 10:34**).

In our *willing* participation we fill our hearts and minds with the sentiment of the music. We humble ourselves before God. However, because of music's significant influence, we should consider all of the music we listen to, questioning what spirit it carries and transfers. Are we our feeding flesh or our spirit? Granted it would be a difficult cardio workout listening to Zamfir play his pan flute...Satan has special musical talents and can confer his defiant attitudes through the art. **Ezekiel 28:15-16**- [“You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you. By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled your midst *with* violence, and you have sinned. Therefore I will cast you as profane from the mountain of God, and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from among the stones of fire.”](#)

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A song can be a teaching vehicle. It primarily is in the instance of our praising God. God's primary reason for having music. When we are singing, we are not to be just lip-syncing, but we need to be thinking about the words, because the words

come from our heart and are imparting to us knowledge that is necessary for our life. God has endowed us with great gifts for music, but unfortunately so much of it is wasted on perverted and mindless trash. Again, we must always remember Who we are singing to.

Does God really hear us?

Psalm 22:3- “Yet You are holy, O You *enthroned* upon the praises of Israel.”

(AFV) The King James Version renders the scripture as ‘But thou art holy, O thou that *inhabitest* the praises of Israel.’ By His Word we know He hears and is *in* the praises of His children. We can also know that God provided a collection of songs that expresses His nature and relationship with us, the inspired Psalms and the Song of Songs. We will be given new songs to sing in our walk with Him.

Revelation 5:9- “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book, and to open its seals because You were slain, and did redeem us to God by Your own blood, out of every tribe and language and people and nation,”

Psalm 40:3- “And He has put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise to our God; many shall see and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.” We put a great value on music. So does God! A quick study of music in Scripture reveals God *loves* music.

Music is widespread in the Old Testament as essential to life in ancient Israel.

They used songs to praise and worship God.

Psalm 66:1-5- “To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm. Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth. Sing forth the honor of His name; make His praise glorious. Say to God, “How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power, Your enemies submit themselves in obedience to You. All the earth shall worship You and shall sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name.” Selah. Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men.”

Isaiah 44:23- “Sing, O heavens; for the LORD has done *it*. Shout, O lower parts of the earth. Break out into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.”

Understanding the use of music and how we praise and worship God gives us insight to the importance of the *way* we sing unto our Creator. Music can move and change us if we have the proper focus. It can transform our mental and emotional state. It can also, more importantly, unify the minds of an entire group. Just look at all the patriotic songs played around the 4th of July. Or how about the National Anthem played in a stadium? I remember standing at the top of the Olympic Stadium for the opening ceremonies of the 100th Olympic Summer Games in

Atlanta, GA in 1996. There were 85,000 people in the stadium, Presidents and Prime Ministers from 197 countries. There was a 200 member Baptist Church choir that sang the Star-Spangled Banner, complete with a US Air Force Thunderbirds roll-over the stadium at the “rockets’ red glare” (accompanied by fireworks from two stadiums of course). My dear friend from Australia, who recently passed away, was crying! Why was he crying? Because music reaches a depth of feeling that is far beyond the spoken word, so far beyond that there is no comparison. Talk about music moving you!

Singing praise unto our God as we worship Him in spirit and in truth should have more importance to us, considering Who He is and what He does, has done, continues to do for all of us and will do in the coming Kingdom and beyond. For the duration of our praise and worship portion of fellowship, we can be in harmony, mentally and spiritually with God and our brothers and sisters in His family. Hopefully, when fellowship is over, we carry that unity forward throughout the coming week. If you hit a snag midweek, try listening to praise music (with good lyrics) and sing to yourself (or out loud if you’re by yourself like me). Just see if God doesn’t meet you where you’re at and ask, “how are you, my child?” He already knows anyway.

I hope that with this insight we have a little more understanding of the importance of praise and worship as part of our devotions to God in our Sabbath fellowship.

By singing praise and worship to our Father God, we are of one accord in the Body of Christ, ready to receive His message.

1 Kings 8:56- “Blessed *be* the LORD, Who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promises which He promised by the hand of Moses His servant.

Colossians 3:16- “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. We have much to look forward to His coming Kingdom and our future roles. *Together, we will be ready.* Amen.

BL-10/15/22

