

A PRAISE WORTHY SERVICE

Continuing on in this series on Worship, we have considered the kind of worship Jesus spoke of in **John 4** that expresses affection for God which is of great worth in His sight, as well as worship that He mentions in **Matthew 15** that God views as worthless when ritual and man-made traditions replace responsibility to love others, and also the acceptable worship service that Paul writes about in **Romans 12** that stems from being a living sacrifice.

This morning, I'd like to ask you to consider a word that is often thought to be a synonym for "worship." It's the word "praise." Before reading our text in **Psalm 150** today, prepare to learn these things: 'Who' we are to praise. 'Where' we are to praise, "Why" we are to praise, and 'How' we are to praise.

¹ Praise the LORD. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens. ² Praise Him for His acts of power; praise Him for His surpassing greatness. ³ Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, ⁴ praise Him with tambourine and dancing, praise Him with the strings and flute, ⁵ praise Him with the clash of cymbals, praise Him with resounding cymbals. ⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

The Greek word translated as "praise" here is "επαινος" and it means to "give abundant praise, accompanied by applause and/ or cheers. It was used in the culture of the day to refer to a standing ovation, honoring one who held a high position or had achieved some great victory."

"Who" deserves such praise? Many of you have probably seen the video of how Steve Harvey proposed that he would introduce Jesus. In spite of what you may have heard it was NOT delivered to a secular audience but to a room full of believers at a TD Jakes' conference. Here is my adaptation of his address...

"Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honor to introduce One who needs no introduction. He hails out of a manger in Bethlehem of Judea by way of Heaven. Though the Creator and Controller of the Universe, He was born of a Virgin. His Father is the father of all living things and the Author of the greatest Book ever written.

His credits are too many to list for He has done the impossible time after time. He fed thousands of hungry souls with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. He healed every manner of sickness and even raised the dead. He walked on water and turned water into wine. He sends daily rain and sunshine and sometimes calls fire from the sky. He was hailed the Wonderful Counselor, the King of all kings and Lord of Lords. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Bright and Morning Star, the Rose of Sharon, the Prince of Peace, and the Savior of the world. He lived a perfect life, yet was crucified as a criminal on a cross. He conquered the grave after just 3 days before ascending to glory where He has prepared a place for you in His Father's house. He personally knows the name of every man, woman, and child across the globe, but loves us all in spite of our faults and failures. So, get up on your feet, church - and put your hands together to show your love for the one and only Son of God. Praise Jesus!

Harvey admitted sometime afterward that this was first written as a joke - though he became deeply convicted as he spoke it aloud by the thought of "Who" he was referring to. Friends, this is no laughing matter. **Jesus deserves a standing ovation** and the Apostle Paul calls for one in **Romans 15:11** when he says, **"Praise the Lord, all you nations, and sing praises to Him, all you people."** The word he uses refers to that loud cheer with a standing ovation and roaring applause.

Now, I know that we don't all have the same temperament. It's more difficult for some of us to get up, let alone stand up for any length of time. Yet, I think it's sad that many believers insist everyone should stand for the pledge of allegiance, but won't get off their seats to praise Jesus. It's a shame when Christians applaud their children and grandchildren when they receive an award, but hardly acknowledge the honor their Father in Heaven is due. It breaks my heart that many saints will jump up and down to celebrate their team crossing a goal line, but think it's somehow undignified to show great appreciation for the One who conquered the grave. Who are we to praise? His name is Jesus!

Can't I praise Him on my knees with my head bowed as I quietly pray?

Absolutely. Yet, the Psalmist is emphasizing the need to unashamedly proclaim praise to God publicly without concern for what anyone who sees us might think. He deserves some “*enthusiasm*” in our praise. By the way, that word means being moved by the “*God within us.*”

Where are we to praise Him? The psalmist says “**in the sanctuary and in the heavens.**” That means everywhere! The word translated heavens here is literally the expanse of all creation. Wherever we are at church, at home, in our car, at work, at school, or at play – everywhere every day - we are to praise Him.

Why? Because of the Lord’s “**surpassing greatness and for all the He’s done.**” He spoke the heavens and earth into existence. By His word, He hung the stars in the sky and parted the land from the sea. He said “**Let there be light**” and it pierced the darkness. He made man and woman in His image and gave them every good and perfect gift in a glorious garden. And when they messed that up, He sent His Son Jesus to save mankind from their sins. Why praise Him? Why wouldn’t we?

How shall we praise Him? The psalmist says stand up and praise Him with whatever you got – be it drums and cymbals, a stringed instrument or a keyboard, a horn, a harp, or a flute. If you have no more musical prowess than I do, a kazoo will do. Just praise Him! Nothing in your hands? Then raise them high or clap them together. Dance for joy and with great enthusiasm. How shall we praise Him? Sing and shout and let the praise ring out. Praise Him with all you got.

Hopefully you can see how praise is directly linked to worship. It expresses how much worth we ascribe to God. The more worthy we believe He is, the more praise flows from us. Now, let me call your attention to **Ephesians 1:11-14...**

“In (Christ) we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will,¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised

Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of His glory.

The same word for exuberant praise is used twice in these few verses.

Yet, pay close attention to what Paul says the Lord views as such praise. It's not what I called for earlier in our service, as meaningful as that can be. It is people who stand up for Him, declaring the truth that we are His children who celebrate Him in the way we live. We are to be **the praise of His glory.**

May it never be said that we lift our hands in worship, but won't lift a finger to help our fellow man. May it not be true of us that we would raise our voices in praise, but remain silent in the face of tyranny and evil. May no one ever be able to accuse us of merely lip syncing old songs, but may our service to God and others be suitable lyrics for **"a new song - the song of the redeemed."** For as **Revelation 5:9** says, He has purchased us from every nation by the Blood of Jesus. Let us offer Him a sacrifice of praise that brings glory to His name.