

Praise the Lord, O My Soul!

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving

Prayer, Part 3

Open

- Ask the group: What do you think is the difference between praising God and thanking Him?
- The book of Psalms has so many prayers of praise and thanksgiving offered up to God, whether in times of joy or times of suffering. Even if we're suffering, we can remember all the wonderful things that God has done and how awesome it is that He is bigger than anything we encounter.

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

- Psalm 100 talks about how we come before God with joy, gladness, singing, praise, and thanksgiving. The psalmist who wrote this particular psalm did not mention anything that he was going through at the time; in the same way, our praise and thanksgiving offered to God is not dependent upon our circumstances.
- We get to rejoice in the Lord always, giving thanks for all that He has done for us, and being glad in the fact that we belong to Him. We praise God because He is worthy and faithful and good!
- This psalm says that we enter his gates and courts with thanksgiving and praise. Thankfulness and gladness in our hearts towards God is what allows us to come into His presence in humility, joy, and surrender. We acknowledge who He is and what He's done and lay our lives down in willingness to hear what plans He has for us.

COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL PRAISES

Praise Him Because of His Holy Name

Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. 1 Chronicles 16:10

- To glory in God's name is to boast, rejoice, praise, and exalt it as wonderful and powerful. It is the name by which all that belong to Him are called, and we can rejoice in Him because of that.
- When we pray, we pray in Jesus' name, because there is no other name by which we can be saved. It is because of His name that we can heal, bring deliverance to people bound in sin, receive salvation, and come before God in prayer. We rejoice in His name because there is power in it!

Praise Him Because of His Might

Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power. Psalm 21:13

- God is mighty! He has displayed His strength and majesty throughout all of history, from creating the universe to bringing a mighty flood upon the earth, and from rescuing the entire nation of Israel from slavery with signs and wonders to wiping out entire armies that sought the destruction of His people.
- Jesus defeated the devil, and because of this victory, we have victory in our own lives. God is our rock, fortress, refuge, and strength; He protects us and works for our good against all evil that tries to come against us.
- We also keep a fear of God in our hearts, recognizing the awesome power that God has: the power to save men and to cast them from His presence forever.

Praise Him Because He is Good

Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant. Psalm 135:3

- We know that God is exceedingly good! He does not have evil thoughts or intentions in His heart, but He thinks only good towards those whom He loves. He works all things together for our good and longs to fellowship with us and prosper us.
- God loves the poor, lonely, hurting, and outcast; He is good to them, hearing their cries and bringing hope to their lives.
- He desires peace, mercy, and justice; even when the world calls Him unfair, it is actually His ways that are higher than our ways.

Praise Him Because He's Worthy

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Revelation 4:11

- The Gospel of John says that "without him nothing was made that has been made." There is nothing in the entire universe that God did not create; He is the Maker of all things and the Giver of life. Nothing would exist without Him, and no living creature could live without His life-giving breath.
- He made us and gave us life, and those who know Him have been redeemed from death and destruction. For these reasons, He alone is worthy to receive our praise. Therefore, we praise Him for His goodness, mercy, strength, might, love, faithfulness, and holiness. He is perfect, and we can boast in no higher thing than God Almighty.

Praise Him Because We're Made To

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength. Psalm 8:2

- Even children know how to dance, lift their arms, clap, and sing when they are excited and full of joy. When we are full of joy and thankfulness because of our God, we naturally respond with expressions of praise because we are made to worship and adore.
- Besides praising God with words, how else can we lift Him up and worship Him?

ENTER HIS GATES WITH THANKS

Give Thanks for His Goodness

Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Psalm 106:1

- What does it mean that God is good?
- We have a God that is good, unlike the gods of many pagan religions and unlike many of the manmade idols we exalt in our hearts. Those idols do not care for the hearts and well-being of those who look to them, but our God is good and desires righteousness, holiness, and justice to be lifted up rather than selfishness, carnal pleasure, or pride.
- 1 John 4:16 says that God is love, and 1 Corinthians 13 says that love is patient, kind, not prideful or self-seeking, hopeful, persevering, not jealous or bitter, and unailing. If God is love, then He is these things as well; and we thank Him for showing us kindness and love and for giving us hope.

Give Thanks for What He's Done

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever. Psalm 30:11-12

- What are some of the good things God has done for all people? For His children?
- When we take time to reflect on all that God has done in our lives, we will see His hand working for us in so many places and at so many times when we needed Him, that we cannot help but to be thankful for all that He has done.
- In addition to the prayers God has answered, He also gave His only Son to die in our place so that we could be with Him and live forever in His presence. Jesus is in heaven for us preparing a place for us to go to when He comes back for us. God loves each of us so much that He gave everything for us and created everything for our pleasure and benefit. We should be full of thankfulness in our hearts at all times as we call to mind everything He has done.

Give Thanks when We Pray

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6

- As we come into God's presence during our quiet times of prayer, it is good to start out by thanking Him for all He has done, for all the prayers He's answered, and for showing us love and mercy when we did not receive it.
- When we ask for things in prayer, we are promised by Jesus that God will hear and answer us. If that is the case, then we should thank God that He's going to give us whatever we ask for in prayer when we ask Him for it. The verse above from Philippians says that we are to present our prayers and petitions with thankful hearts, rather than ungrateful, envious, and selfish hearts.
- One thing we can do to help us remember all that God has done for us is to keep a journal of answered prayers. When you ask God for something in prayer, write it down. When He answers it, mark it down and be sure to thank Him for hearing you, accepting your prayer, and for answering your request.

IT'S A SACRIFICE

An Offering of Praise

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. Hebrews 13:15

- There will be times when we feel that God is far away or that He is not looking out for our best intentions, and even though we know these things are not true, it may be difficult to feel like praising God with joy and gladness. However, praise is a sacrifice, and offering, that we make to God because of Him and who He is, not for our own benefit.
- In this verse we read that we are to continually—always—offer sacrifices of praise before God. Because it is a sacrifice, it will sometimes be a hard thing to do, but it will build our faith and love of God as we place our trust in Him who is good, loving, and holy. He will honor such an offering if it is from your heart.

An Offering of Thanksgiving

I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. Psalm 116:17

- In the same way, giving thanks is a sacrifice. Sometimes, it is easy to focus too much on ourselves. When this happens, we begin to think about what we want versus what God wants and what we do not have versus what God has given to us.
- Giving God a sacrifice of thanks takes the focus off of ourselves and puts it back on Him. We come before Him with thanksgiving and call upon His name to deliver us from whatever is bothering us and to help us in our time of need so that we may continue to bring glory to His name and to be full of His joy.

Close

Micah 7:18-19

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

- There is no one like our God, no one else who can wipe away our sins and make us clean and pure, who will have unfailing love and compassion for us, and who will fulfill every promise He has made to us.
- When we read the Bible, we learn so much about God our Father and find many reasons to praise Him. He gives us so many promises in His word that we can claim for our own lives and for which we can thank Him.
- Even when life gets tough or boring or lonely, we still have a God who never changes and is always ready to listen to you and care for you because of His love for you. Therefore, we always have a reason to give Him thanks and praise!