

Praise and Worship: What does it mean?

Sometimes, I sit down late at night and reflect. Not as a wise man would reflect, but rather as a beaten-down soul with nowhere else to turn. Don't get me wrong...I am confident and courageous. I don't second-guess myself too often, but I just feel that when I am thinking, I am only thinking about solutions to all my many problems. What I should be thinking about is submission!

I am reminded that David fought the very thing that troubles me. He shined in most instances and was praised by God for it. He even received countless amounts of praise from others that seemed to give him the confidence and courage to keep moving on. However, there were times when he questioned how God could be near when nothing seemed to be right in the world. I wonder if David would ever give up one thing for another. Do you think that David ever wished he was that "little shepherd boy" once again and beloved by his "father" again? Things would seem so easy if he just reverted back to the days when he could feed the sheep, and they would just follow him. I am faced with that same decision! No, it has nothing to do with feeding the "sheep", but rather about leading the "sheep".

As a minister, I am called to "lead others" in worship to God that involves both praise and worship. The praise is heartfelt! I feel every ounce of Spirit that rises from our songs of praise. Why do we praise? Because God has done "immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine" Eph. 3:20. Think about it! God has blessed you beyond what you can comprehend. I don't feel that my praise is for anyone but God! However, I am a living testimony of what God has done in me, through me, and in spite of me. I lead praise to God because of what he has done in me, and when people join in praise to God in the assembly, they join because of what God has done in them. We, as Spirit-seekers, must rise up and with every ounce of our being and become "praisers" of the Lord Most High! Why? Because we are blessed by God to do so. We raise our arms and hands in praise to Him because it is our gift to God. What else is this "tired, old body" good for? Making money? Possessions? Popularity? No! This is our gift to God because no one has done more for you and me than He has!

What is worship? I think it becomes clear when we revisit the Old Testament. Remember in Exodus 17 when Moses and the Israelites fought the Amalekites? It was one of many battles that were fought to secure the "Promise Land". The story is told that as long as Moses held up his arms and hands, the Israelites would win, but if he dropped his hands, they would lose. I can't imagine the enormous weight that was put on his shoulders! How did he hold up his arms for that long? Reading further, we see he was broken! He became tired! He didn't know how he would carry the load when so much depended on him. This is when Aaron and Hur carried the load. They held his arms up for him when he couldn't. Brothers and

Sisters, we are beaten every day with the burdens of this life. Worship becomes the epitome of brokenness when we realize that we are but children reaching for our Father. When he lifts us up, we realize that it is not any part of ourselves that “is our source of refuge and strength” Psalm 46:1. Rather, it is our Father, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our Beloved Jesus Christ who hung those “burdens” on the cross that “shoulder” the burden for us. David may have been a man after God’s own heart, but he also knew about “brokenness”. In his striving for perfection and recognition from God, he was disappointed to find out that God’s plan was not “his plan”. God didn’t want him to build the temple. He wanted him to fight the battles. That was not easy for David to fathom! Nor is it easy for us to fathom that when we worship God in our assembly, our homes, our cars, and our bodies, we do it as imperfect people who are reaching to God for help!

So, I reflect! I still stay up late at night! I still worry about problems because it is in my nature to do so! But, I know that God’s plan is not necessarily my plan, and my problems won’t go away. So, I give them to God. He gives me “a rock to sit on”, family and friends to “ease my burden”, and a Son whose hands were held up by “nails”. I can always reflect on my problems, but Jesus Christ has taken my “brokenness” and made it a victory already. Praise and Worship: What does it mean to you?

Psalm 43:5

Why are you downcast, O my soul?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

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