

Sunday, March 15, 2026-UNLEASHING THE POWER OF INTENTIONAL PRAISE- Pastor John Henry Raskin

Intentional praise is a deliberate, proactive act of worship that honors God regardless of circumstances—and it releases spiritual power, shifts perspective, and invites God’s intervention.

What Is Intentional Praise?

- A choice, not a feeling
- Worship and gratitude before the breakthrough
- Praise that focuses on who God is, not just what He does
- A spiritual weapon against fear, heaviness, and discouragement

“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” — Psalm 34:1

Why Intentional Praise Matters

- Shifts focus from the problem to God’s sovereignty
- Breaks chains of fear, depression, and helplessness
- Clears the spiritual atmosphere for God to move
- Releases faith and aligns our hearts with God’s truth

God’s Pattern for Praise in Crisis (2 Chronicles 20)

Jehoshaphat’s “Battle Map” for Overwhelming Times:

1. Seek the Lord first – acknowledge dependence on God
2. Remember God’s faithfulness – proclaim what He has done
3. Admit human limits – “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You”
4. Worship before the victory – bow, praise, and trust
5. Put praise first – singers led the army
6. God fights the battle – the enemy was defeated as praise rose

Biblical Foundations of Praise

- *Psalm 50:15* – Call on God in trouble and glorify Him
- *Psalm 100:4* – Enter God’s presence with thanksgiving and praise
- *Hebrews 4:16* – Come boldly to the throne of grace
- David praised continually; Paul and Silas praised in prison—and chains were broken

Practical Applications

- In health crises: praise replaces fear with faith
- In financial pressure: praise shifts focus to God’s provision
- Praise dismantles the enemy’s lies and strengthens trust in God’s truth

Heart-Check Questions

- Who are the “singers” you put at the front of your battles—fear or faith?
- Are you saving praise for *after* things improve?
- What would happen if you praised God while the walls are still standing?
- If God never changed the circumstance, would He still be worthy of the song?

Make the decision now—before the crisis comes—to live a life of intentional praise. Praise is not a response to victory; it is often the pathway to it.

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF INTENTIONAL PRAISE

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we continued our spiritual intentionality series and addressed how to experience intentional spiritual breakthroughs.

We discovered that by agreeing with God's Spirit and allowing Him to break through the shells of fear, pride and past trauma we become more able to see God move.

We learned that when we break through the self-defense, self-reliance and selfishness of all kinds, we allow the fragrance of Christ to be released in our lives.

Today we're going to continue our study of intentionality and talk about the power of intentional praise.

The Bible contains over 360 verses referencing praise.

Many of these are found in the Psalms, particularly the Psalms of David.

As we studied in January, one of the reasons that God called David a man after His own heart, despite his flaws, was that David lived a life that honored God.

He lived to praise the Lord.

Psalm 34:1

**"I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth"**

Intentional praise is a deliberate, proactive act of worship and gratitude toward God, regardless of circumstances or emotions.

We are going to look at what the Bible tells us and what experience will show us about the power of praise if we become intentional about practicing it.

We will see that when we praise God in the midst of trials and life's storms, it shifts our focus from our problems to God's sovereignty, breaking the chains of heaviness, helplessness and depression.

When we begin to praise Him as soon as troubles arise, it shifts our focus from the size of our mountains to the size of the Mountain-Maker.

Intentional praise is also a proactive spiritual weapon.

When we praise God for His goodness when troubles come, it acts as a spiritual weapon that cuts through the enemy's attack strategy and turns the tide in our favor.

Psalm 50:23

**Whoever offers praise glorifies Me;
And to him who orders his conduct aright
I will show the salvation of God."**

Intentional praise is the act of celebrating who God is before the breakthrough happens and He shows us what He will do.

Worldly people do not think to come to God when the Tax Bill comes, or when the Doctor gives them or a loved one some bad news, or when the boss tells them they are going to be laid off.

Usually, these kinds of troubles cause them sleepless nights filled with anxiety and fear because they do not believe in God's goodness and have not felt the loving Presence of the living God that those of us who follow Jesus know.

But this is what God tells us who do believe.

Psalm 50:15 NIV

**Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”**

When we are in trouble, He instructs us to call upon Him.

And then He invites us into His Presence and gives us careful instructions as to how we are to enter.

Psalm 100:4 NIV

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.

When we are in desperate need of His intervention we needn't stand outside His gates trembling.

He says “Enter” but He tells us how to enter so that we can be in His Holy Presence and see His deliverance.

He says “Enter My Gates with thanksgiving”.

He wants us to come to Him in gratitude.

Before praising Him in His courts, He desires our gratitude.

Why? Because we cannot hope to receive something from Him unless we first acknowledge His goodness and faithfulness that He has shown us in the past.

The biggest mistake that the people of Israel made was after their supernatural deliverance from their Egyptian enemies through the Red Sea,

they immediately began to complain because they did not know where their next meal was coming from when all they had to do was remember God's faithfulness and ask for food.

When we are grateful for our lives, grateful for who He is, and for what He has done for us, not only on the Cross, but what He has done to deliver us from past storms in our lives,

He opens wide the Gates of His Presence.

Then He receives us into His courts. Into His Throne Room.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And what does **Psalm 100:4** say we should praise in His courts?

We should praise His Name.

Interestingly, the name of the Lord was unpronounceable in David's day in Hebrew and so he used the name Yah, Yahweh or Jehovah which stood for the unpronounceable Name of God.

When we say Hallelujah, what we are actually saying is two Hebrew words. "Hallelu", which means "let us praise" and "yah".

Hallelujah means "praise the Lord".

When referencing Messiah, David uses the Hebrew word "Adonai" which translates as "My Lord".

When we say "praise the Lord" we are praising our Lord and Master.

His name is Yeshua H'amasciach, Jesus Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

As we know, His is the Name above all Names and as the song we just sang says, "He is worthy of our praise".

As an example of the power of intentional praise, let's go to the histories of the Old Testament, specifically the book of 2 Chronicles chapter 20 and see the deliverance of the Lord to one of Judah's good Kings, Jehoshaphat.

This Chapter provides the "battle map" for intentional praise.

This isn't just a Sunday School story; it's a strategic manual for when you are outnumbered and overwhelmed.

It's a long story and so I will recap it for you

First, there is the Crisis:

2 Chronicles 20:1

It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat wasn't dealing with a minor inconvenience; he was facing a "vast army" from three different nations.

While we should praise the Lord with our every breath, the kind of intentional praise we are about to see here isn't for the comfortable times.

It is specifically designed for the moments of crisis, times when the math doesn't add up and the odds are stacked against you.

To make Jehoshaphat's dilemma more relatable, this is the "3:00 AM Phone Call." It's the moment the doctor uses the word "malignant,"

the HR director says "restructuring," or the bank sends the "final notice." It's when the problem is bigger than your paycheck and your pedigree.

You get the picture. This is a story from the Bible, but it can happen to all of us.

Verse 3 tells us how Jehoshaphat responds...

2 Chronicles 20:3

3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

When crises hit the first thing that we should do is “set ourselves to seek the Lord”.

The next thing that Jehoshaphat did was to gather all of Judah together and proclaim a time of fasting unto the Lord.

Now I'm not saying that we have to fast every time that we seek the Lord in the middle of difficulties, but sometimes fasting gives us clarity and peace.

Fasting adds an element of sacrifice that can increase the power of our prayers.

2 Chronicles 20 5-7

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, 6 and said: “O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?

7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?

Now Jehoshaphat gathers the people and proclaims the greatness of God and the things that He had done for them in the past.

This is the next thing we should do in a crisis.

Proclaim all the reasons to trust in His ability to deliver us from the storm.

Gather your family, your friends, your employees together, and remind them of God's greatness, His goodness and His deliverance in times past.

And then ask God to intercede on your behalf.

2 Chronicles 20:12

12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."

When your problems are way bigger than you are, the best thing that you can do is to acknowledge to God that you do not have the power nor the wisdom nor the resources in hand to overcome but you trust that He does.

Then the Word of the Lord came to Jehoshaphat through a Levite prophet.

2 Chronicles 20:15 b

Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Now you may not have a Levite prophet handy, but you do have our Lord and Savior, King Jesus, interceding for you from the Throne of Grace.

Worship Him.

Praise His Name.

That is what Jehoshaphat and his people do next.

2 Chronicles 20:18

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord.

And then they receive a strategy of praise...

2 Chronicles 20:19

19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.

Listen... if you're not much of a singer, I'll bet you still sing in the shower.

If you can sing in the shower you can sing in your prayer closet or wherever you get alone with God to pray and read His word.

Sing praises to the name of Jesus. If you really can't sing then shout to the Lord.

The lesson here is when you seek the Lord and He reveals Himself to you worship Him and thank Him for what He is about to do and sing praises to His name.

And when He has given you wisdom to know what to do, don't hesitate...

2 Chronicles 20:20

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

Encourage those who are counting on you to provide a plan that you trust the Lord and that they should too, and when they do, that they will see His deliverance, His salvation from the crisis.

True faith always requires you to go out on the limb of trust.

2 Chronicles 20:21

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever."

God's battle plan was counterintuitive. He didn't tell them to sharpen their swords or check their armor first.

He told them to put the singers out in front of the soldiers.

Praise precedes the breakthrough because praise creates the atmosphere for God to work.

Now we come to the part of the story where God's plan delivers His salvation to Jehoshaphat and Judah.

Chronicles 20:22-23

22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

One of God's favorite ways to overcome our enemies is to set them upon each other so that they tear each other apart.

Now you may think that there isn't a contemporary or realistic example of this that I can offer... but I have seen miracles.

In a Cancer Diagnosis:

Rather than letting fear dominate, focusing on worship and thanksgiving can "confuse" the enemy's agenda of despair and destruction.

Praise then fills your internal environment with God's presence, which can break the power of fear and hopelessness releasing faith.

Jesus told those that He healed in the Galilee that their faith had made them well.

When we praise God, it releases our faith and our faith releases God's healing power.

In a Financial Crisis: Praising God for His provision shifts the focus from the burden of debt to God's faithfulness, which deconstructs the fear and stress that the enemy uses to keep you in bondage.

When the bonds of fear and stress are broken, it is easier to hear from the Lord and get the wisdom that you need to provide a real-world solution or potentially, a supernatural deliverance.

Satan operates by creating strongholds of lies in the mind, such as "I am going to die," or "I will never get out of this debt".

The "enemy" uses fear and confusion to take your eyes off the most real solution to your problem.

When you replace these lies with God's truth (e.g., "by His stripes I am healed," or "God will supply all my needs"), the enemy's lies contradict themselves and crumble releasing your faith to believe clearing the way for resolution.

Please know that I'm not saying that praising God will automatically fix all of your problems.

God has specific reasons for everything He allows.

Some storms and trials are meant to grow us or God will let us go through a season of trial or a storm because He has a better plan which He will reveal in His perfect time.

The enemy's plan may be to use cancer to destroy a life.

However, God can use that diagnosis to bring a person closer to Him, or to strengthen their character, or to spark a miraculous healing as a witness to His power, making the enemy's purpose for evil fail.

As we all well know we are living in very uncertain times and while we may be comfortable now, the future is unknown and will require trust in the One who holds the Future.

The power of Praise stirs up in us the comfort and guidance of the Holy Spirit to replace the fleshly fear that the enemy wants to use to distract us from God's saving power.

Today we've seen the plan, based on 2 Chronicles chapter 20 that the Lord gave Jehoshaphat to overcome his overwhelming crisis.

Here are some more takeaways on the power of intentional praise...

- **Praise is A Choice, Not a Feeling:** Intentional praise is a premeditated, willful decision to honor God, even in the midst of pain or confusion.
- **Intentional Praise Unleashes God's Power in Trials:** When life is difficult, intentional praise builds a "gate of praise" that brings God's presence into the situation, often exceeding the difficulty itself.
- **Scriptural Precedents of Intentional Praise:** Include King David, as noted in scripture, proactively when he brought the Ark of the Lord into Jerusalem with joyous, intentional worship.
- Paul and Silas singing praises while in prison, resulting in an earthquake that broke their chains.
- **The Effects of Intentional Praise:** It shifts focus from, "the spirit of heaviness" to God's goodness, thereby changing our perspective and transforming the atmosphere.
- **Intentional Praise Results in a Lifestyle of Gratitude:** It involves actively recognizing God's blessings and thanking Him, which strengthens our faith and deepens our connection to Him.

So, here are a few questions that you can ask yourself about how you will respond when overwhelming trouble comes?

God told Jehoshaphat to put the singers out in front of the soldiers.

Who are the "Singers" you are putting out at the front of your battles?

Are you leading with anxiety, Google searches, and your "Plan B," or are you leading with a declaration of God's character and remembering what He has already done for you?

Be honest with yourself. Make a decision before the Three Army Crisis comes against you about where you will place your faith and trust and more importantly in Whom.

God gave Joshua the plan for the Armies of Israel to shout to the Lord before He made the walls of Jericho fall down flat.

So, ask yourself this...

What is the "Shout of Praise" you've been holding back?

Is there a praise you've been "saving" for when things get better?

What would happen if you released that shout while the walls were still standing?

And finally answer this question...

If God never changed the circumstance, would He still be worthy of the song?

Does your worship have an "expiration date" based on God's performance, or is it rooted in His Person?

This was David's answer to that question.

Psalm 34:1-4

I will bless the Lord at all times;

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

**2 My soul shall make its boast in the Lord;
The humble shall hear of it and be glad.**

**3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
And let us exalt His name together.**

**4 I sought the Lord, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.**

Let's pray...