

Call to Worship

Psalms 22:3 (God inhabits the praise of His people)

Doctrine

Ex. 15:1-2 (Moses praise of God)

Sermon Text.

Rom. 8|Means of Grace,Pt IV; Praise

Intro.

Look specifically at Rom. 8:28 'all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose'

When we think of praise what comes to mind? The songs we sing, the life we live, the things we cherish and adore?

Praise is about singing, but it is not only about singing.

Songs of Praise in the Bible.

Moses records numerous hymns of praise in the OT.

Hannah sings a song of praise in 1 Sam 2, to give thanks to God for the birth of her son, Samuel.

Mary sings a similar song at the knowledge of the Immaculate Conception, being filled with the Holy Spirit and the conception of Jesus Christ. Called **the Magnificat**.

In the OT, there are two books given to us that are specifically about the praise of God; Psalms and the Song of Solomon/Song of Songs.

Psalms and Song of Solomon are two books organized between OT Israelite History and OT Prophecy.

Psalms and Song of Solomon are two of four books organized in an order of 4 books known as wisdom literature, to include Job and Proverbs.

It seems obvious that it is **wisdom to praise God**.

Psalms is the largest book in the Bible with 150 chapters. Some of the Psalms are prayers but as we will see next week, **prayer and praise** for the Christian is like inhale and exhale is to breathing.

Psalms is a large book of Praise, and Song of Solomon/Songs is often a confused book of praise.

Being it is nestled in the OT, it is often forgotten and tucked away. Even when it is pursued it is often misunderstood because of the rich OT illustrations of love between a husband and a wife.

The illustrations, though, are very similar to the point about the Law that we looked at last week in Rom. 7:1-4, which is not about a human relationship but is a metaphor for God's relationship to His people.

For example, in **Rom. 7:1-4**, Paul uses the illustration of a marriage in order to explain the **extent of the Law**. Paul draws the conclusion that the law has no application to a dead person.

In complete contrast, Song of Solomon/Songs, is about the love of God to God's people. You could say that it is about God's love to Israel, you could also say that it is about Christ's love to His church.

In ancient Israel, as in any culture, it gained the language and words necessary to express the regulation and enforcement of its laws, and the heights and depths of its praise to God.

Sometimes, on occasion, the event of praise to God was so significant, so incredible, of such great magnitude that someone such as King David could not even contain in words his praise, all David could do was dance.

The Song of Songs, depicts this praise of God's love in spontaneity, beauty, power, exclusiveness. It is a unique praise of God's love.

We see that here in Romans 8.

The Praise of God's love ranges from experiences of separation and intimacy, anguish and ecstasy, tension and contentment.

At the end of Romans 8 we see for those who are in Christ, there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God.

In ancient Israel, expressions of praise came out in reverence, gratitude, anger against wrongdoing, sorrow in the midst of suffering, trust in uncertainty, friendship, commitment, loyalty, hope, wisdom, moral outrage and moral obedience, and repentance was an act of praise to God.

Jesus said that 'the angels in Heaven rejoice over the repentance of one soul' Lk 15:10

Praise is a matter of acknowledging and even being inclined to all of these expressions of life in a right way before God.

Praise is singing, but more so, it is about our life singing of the character of God.

Praise is the acknowledging the work of God and knowing that it all works for good despite the circumstances.

The Bible shows us that **God's wisdom and God's love** are mutual gifts that come from God to God's people.

The Song of Songs uses the feminine voice, much like Proverbs contrasts wisdom in the metaphor of **Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly**.

These are human illustrations of being on the right side of praise, the right side of God's love, and the right side of God's wisdom.

I say this initially to give a perspective on worship and praise. I especially want to say this with regard to worship music.

But I do not care spend too much time on this because it's only one segment of praise.

True Worship and False Worship.

As a principle, There is no right way to worship the wrong god, however, there are many wrong ways to worship the right God.

There has been a lot of criticism in recent years about the Christian music industry. And rightfully so.

Just in the past year there have been numerous, well-known Christian music artist's fall away from the faith.

People who say 'I am no longer a Christian' yet they wrote popular Christian songs.

People who say 'I don't believe any more' yet there are people that claim to have come to faith because of some of these people's songs.

To say the least about this, a person **never comes to faith by praise songs.**

Instead, it is a person's faith that leads them to praise songs.

A person's faith in Christ has been pre-determined by God. We see that in v. 29 'whom He foreknew ,He also predestined'

The way by which that person comes to faith has also already been determined by God as well.

'Faith comes through hearing and hearing by the Word of God' Rom. 10

It is the Word of God, also called the Word of Faith, that produces faith that results in worship and praise.

As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as right worship without right knowledge. Look at ch. 10 'they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge'

Even at Mars Hill, Paul was astounding by the confident ignorance of so many who worshiped false gods, with passion and sincerity, yet doing so without knowledge.

Paul says to them, 'Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.'

Therefore what you worship in ignorance this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent because He/God has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man/Jesus Christ whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.' Acts 17:22-31

These people worshiped idols they couldn't even define. They could list the false gods attributes. This was the extent of their false praise and this place was considered an epicenter of human wisdom!

Knowledge of God is an act of praise.

Repentance to God is an act of praise.

And right knowledge and right repentance will always lead to the right reasons for bringing God praise.

Ultimately these are things that acknowledge the Sovereign work of God, 1. To Know rightly and 2. To turn away from the things of this world.

Faith in God is an act of praise.

Love and Obedience of God ultimately leads to a lifestyle of praise.

Look at this back at Rom. 8

We are 'under obligation' to praise God.

3x in the book of Romans, Paul says he is **under obligation**.

Rom. 1:14 'I am under obligation both to the Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So for my part I am eager to preach the gospel'

Paul's 1st obligation is to preach the Good News of the saving effects of the Gospel.

Rom. 8:12 'under obligation not to live by the flesh but by the Spirit'

Paul's 2nd obligation is to live according to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rom. 15:27 'yes they were pleased to do so, and they were indebted/under obligation to them'

Paul's 3rd time he shows that he is in debt to the people of the church in the sense that he is to serve God's people, v. 25 'serving the saints'

V. 27 'if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things they are indebted to minister to them also in material things'

In other words the church is under obligation to care for each other.

I'm not so sure people see their praise to God as an obligation. Of course, people want to see that they are making a decision by the power of their own free-will. Really that's not the case.

A Christian does not have free-will.

'Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? Rom. 9:21

Are not some vessels of mercy and others vessels of wrath.

Paul uses the examples of Jacob and Esau, and the Egyptians and Israelites.

But the point I want to highlight here, is that the praise of God is not an option among a list of things a person might choose on the Lord's Day. It is an obligation, that the Holy Spirit works through the individual believers life.

Praising God is a grace of God. It is a demonstration of His favor.

'The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God' Rom. 8:7 - the flesh, the world, carnally minded. Temporally minded. Temporary, non-eternal matters. These things are hostile toward God.

Obviously, not praising God.

Doesn't the world consume its time and attention with these worldly minded things? Yes.

But we do have a lot of people that love what they see is praise music but they reject the Word of God.

The point of true praise is not that it's from 200 years ago or that its old. The point is that it is accurate. For something to be true, it must be true. For something to be right, it must be right.

And I can't begin to define or explain why

Another distinction between true praise and false praise is a **matter of maturity**.

A person who knows God rightly will have a deep understanding of God. That deep understanding elevates their praise.

The richer an understanding of God the higher the praise of God. It becomes a matter of maturity.

Marriage example.

If I do a wedding ceremony of two, 20 year olds, I don't doubt the love and wisdom of their union, but the depth of that union is yet to be seen.

It might be true, but time is required to reveal that.

But there is a difference between the love seen at a 20 year olds wedding and the love seen at a 20 year Anniversary.

The major distinction between that love is **maturity**. This is likened to praise. Maturity is an important tenet of True Praise.

Childishness is not a good marker of giving reverence to God.

The big difference between the love of a 20 year olds marriage and a 20 year anniversary is **Maturity**.

The aim of a Christian life is praise, but it is praise that is elevated from a mature understanding of God and why you even bring praise to God.

I hope you can see, that threaded into the tapestry of God's grace in marriage is used as an illustration of **union with Christ**.

Rom. 7 - not about marriage but a pretty good illustration of its importance

Eph. 5 - not specially about marriage but an illustration about the church and marriage is a great physical example.

Song of Songs- not primarily about marriage, but about God's love, which is typified in a marriage relationship.

Marriage, Church Membership, and Maturity are 3 M's that go together like a 3-fold cord that is not easily broken.

Biblical Marriage and Biblical Church Membership always develop Biblical Maturity.

In become a mature Christian, you will grow in Grace if you are doing these things.

Go through job losses, tireless nights with kids, money fights, overbearing or unsupportive in-laws, contradictory and rebellious teenagers, not to mention your own personal sin sprinkled into the circumstances.

Go through the loss of your parents, maybe the loss of your spouse. Go through a couple bouts of cancer. The loss of your children to sickness, death, or spiritual apostasy. Saving for years to go on a dream vacation being ruined by TSA.

Go through these things and God will naturally design your life to not love the things of the world.

And you'll have to, as a mature Christian, arrive at the conclusion that 'God works all things together for His good.' Rom. 8:28

Then your praise gets to a point where you can say like the Psalmist, 'It was good for me that I was afflicted.' Psalm 119

I'm not here to say that true praise of God has this instrument and not that one. I'm not interested in that.

BUT, I am saying it does have one mindset over another mindset. And that mindset is the mind set on Spiritual Things.

Praise has to do with affection/love.

Divisions occur because of the difference of affection/love.

'Demas left us for love of the world has deserted me' 2 Tim. 4

Demas mind was focused on fleshly things. Demas was carnally minded. What bait was it that hooked Demas by the cheek and reeled him in?

We do not know specifically the fleshly item that Demas bought but we do know the result that it cause on Paul. It left Paul deserted. Abandoned. Without help and support.

This term deserted means to 'utterly abandoned' specifically at the most important and opportune time.

What can you make of man like that, only that Demas was a fair-weather disciple.

Paul was working out His praise of God through His ministry commitments.

Paul's view of praising God was not a 3-minute song on the radio, it was a 30 year ministry where some of the people closest to him deserted him.

Paul's view of praise was not songs it was service. It was not drums it was doing. It was not guitars it was grinding.

Paul's view of praising God was not bongo's and bondon's, it was bible preaching and brotherly love.

Unity also occurs because of love/affection.

Look at this in John 15. The Disciples Relationship to each other and the Disciples relationship to the world. V. 12-26

V.12-17 'This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give you.

This I command you, that you love one another.'

Obedience is the highest act of worship. Obedience is where you do what God or your god tells you to do.

That act of worship is accompanied by the second highest act of worship. Prayer.

Praise. Prayer. Preaching. All come together in one unified view of worshipping God.

Praise is done in obedience.

Praise is done in prayer.

Obedience and Prayer is what shows the world the distinction of who we Praise.

V.18-27 'If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

He who hates Me hates My Father also.

If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.

But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.'

Let's look back at Romans 8.

How do we worship God? Why do we worship God?

There is no shortage of information regarding this topic. But suffice it to say, we worship God because of the Spirit Of God that is in us.

We worship God because of the work of God in us.

Read this chapter next week. Take the time to meditate on its truth. Do that and then try to not have a worshiping heart and mind.

To know this chapter is to know why we praise God. How we praise God. The extent to which we praise God.

This chapter is 39 verses about God's Love to you. Read all 39 verses and then ask the question, How much does God love me?

Then go back to the 1st verse and ask, **Q: Why do I praise God?**

Read v. 1 'there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' - now ask, Why do I praise God?

Read v. 2 'for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death' - and ask, Why do I praise God?

Read v. 3 'For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.' - then ask, Why do I praise God?

Two things I don't understand. How can a person know this and then misrepresent it? And on the other hand, how can a person know this and then care about trivial matters?

Funny how that works because Paul moves to that in the next verses.

V.4 -8 'so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.' (Why do we praise God? Because His very spirit is doing it through us)

'For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.' (Why do we praise God? We can't help it, it's who we are, it's who God created us to be.)

'For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.' (Why do we praise God? It is our very life, it is the peace of our soul.)

Why do I praise? Because no weapon formed against me will prosper. Because I battle not against flesh and blood.

Why do I praise?

V. 7-8 'because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so and those who are in the flesh cannot please God' Why do I praise? Because I want to please God!

'They will know we are Christians by our love' John

The primary distinguishing feature of praise is love and the primary distinguishing feature of love is the direction of it.

BUT love what?

What is love directed toward? That is a great way to determine what the object of worship is.

Once you get down the **direction of love**, then you have to work on the **protection of love**, then you get to establish the **perfection of love**.

A person can ultimately love themselves, love things, or love God. Those are ultimately the two options.

Rom. 1 'they worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator'

Love for self knows endless possibilities. Love for God knows only one way.
Love for self boasts a variety of options and outlets. Love for God can only be expressed in 'spirit and truth' John 4.

Self-love is fairly easily achieved. It's not hard to accomplish self-love.
Self-less love requires effort. It requires sacrifice. It requires forgiveness. Ultimately, self-less love requires maturity.

Praise rises and falls with its view of God.

Doxology follows Theology.

It's really ironic, it's sad, but it's some real irony, when I finished preaching a little over a year ago, when at the end of the service a man on the staff resigned under the idea that quote 'I preach too theologically'

Just after that, I came home and in my mailbox was the Expositors magazine, and on the cover it said, 'You must become a Theological preacher.'

Praise goes as High as the knowledge of God goes deep.

Doxology.

Doxa; glory. The study of Glory.

At its root, praise is really about who gets the glory. That's really what that is about.

Who gets recognized? Who gets honored? And here's another important aspect, is that person being recognized and honored for the right reasons.

Look at Romans 8, it is about the extent of God's love.

If the beginning of Romans 7 tells us the extent of God's law, Romans 8 tells us the extent of God's love.

Let's look at that extent.

Rom. 8:35-39 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.'

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Proper Doxology results in proper Knowledge of God and that leads to unbreakable praise.

Praise is a means of God's grace.

Small Group Questions.

1. What does it mean that doxology comes from theology? How does praise derive from knowledge and not the other way around?
2. Do we have rich views of praise in our age or are the views of praise shallow and often insignificant? Isn't that because the outcomes of shallow praise come as outcomes of shallow knowledge?
3. How does praise of God work as a means of His grace and how does it protect our lives? Consider the Israelites who were set free to worship. Did they have to leave worldly desires in order to worship?
4. Have a discussion about why we praise God just asking the questions of 'Why do we praise God?' from each verse in Rom. 8:1-15.
5. Do you long to make your life an act of praise to God? How can you submit your life to walking in the Spirit and give up aspects of the flesh?