

Articles and Sermons :: The Life of Praise - Stanley frodsham

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The Lord has declared, "The just shall live by the faith." And real faith in our faithful Saviour will constantly manifest itself in psalms of praise. Abraham was "strong in faith," and the result was that he was constantly "giving glory to God." Rom. 4:20. If our hearts are filled with faith, praise and thanksgiving will be constantly springing forth as water from a living fountain.

But where there is a heart full of unbelief, murmuring and complaining will be issuing out of the same. That is why it is so important that we keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of the heart come the issues of life. Songs come forth from a heart full of faith, and murmuring and complaining come from a heart full of unbelief. The children of Israel in the wilderness spoke against God and against Moses, making complaint, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." Loathing the bread of heaven! The Lord let fiery serpents come into the camp of discontented complainers. And these serpents inflicted terrible bites so that as a result, many died. Start to murmur and complain, and you invite that old serpent the devil and his hordes of demons, who will surely make havoc of your life.

Israel repented of this evil. They said to Moses, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." There is a greater than Moses to whom we can confess our sins, One who knows all our weaknesses and who ever lives to make intercession.

The Lord instructed Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." Wonderful picture of Calvary, where that old serpent the devil, was brought to nought, and where sin was judged. Look away unto the Saviour who went to Calvary for you. There He was made sin for you that you might become the righteousness of God in Him. What an exchange! Himself taking our sins and giving us His righteousness. Believe the record that He took your sin, and then by simple faith take His righteousness. This is the remedy for all the bites of the serpents. As we look away to this wonderful Saviour and Redeemer and accept what He has provided, a song of praise will ascend from grateful lips to Him who has redeemed us out of the hand of the enemy. Henceforth let us take this attitude, and say like the man after God's own heart, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalm 34:1.

In Psalm 68:19 we read these words, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits." What should be our attitude to Him who bestows on us these daily favors? David gives us the answer in Psalm 103:1, 2, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Did you ever command your sluggish soul to bless the Lord and to recollect all His benefits? You can. And you will find a response of praise within. It is a great blessing to continually do this. David then recounts some of the benefits the Lord bestows: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Later on in this Psalm he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." That is surely something to bless the Lord for. All the way through this Psalm he tells us the things for which we should praise, and he finishes up with the further command to his soul, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." By an act of will, constantly command your soul to praise. You will find this a great spiritual secret. Constantly sing to the well within, "Spring up, O well," and you will find the well of praise springing up.

How often should we praise? The Psalmist says, "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised." That means a life of continuous praise. And a life of continuous praise means a life of continuous victory. The first message the writer ever heard in tongues and interpretation was this: "Praising the Lord puts the enemy to flight." It was twenty-eight years ago that I heard this message and for twenty-eight years I have been proving the truth of it.

There is one thing that will effectually hinder the praise-life "that thing is sin. David, the sweet singer of Israel, sinned with a most grievous transgression. And then his song ceased. In Psalm 51 we hear his prayer of penitence. Listen as he petitions for forgiveness, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions . . . wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Hear him as he further prays on for a new condition within: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

The joy-note had been absent for a long time, but now he pleads, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit." Hear him as he cries for the return of a life of praise: "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

Have you lost the joy note, the note of thanksgiving and praise out of your life? Make a full confession of sin and failure to Him who delighteth in mercy. He will not fail to forgive; and when He forgives, remember, He forgets. He will not fail to restore your joy "it will come in greater fullness than ever as your repentance is genuine and deep. And He will restore the lost song of praise to your lips.

Have you noticed the large place of thanksgiving in the Epistles? You will find this note everywhere. To Colossians, Paul wrote, "Be ye thankful." To the Thessalonians, he wrote, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." You may say, "That is absurd. How can you give thanks when everything is going wrong?" God declares, and it is positively true always, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Believe and know of a certainty that every circumstance that "seems all wrong" is working for your eternal good. They looked all wrong when Joseph was put in the pit, later sold to the Ishmaelites, taken down into Egypt; and, because of purity and refusing to sin, cast into jail. But was it all wrong? No, a thousand times no. Hear his testimony, "God meant it unto good." And those testing circumstances, those shocking losses, those fiery trials, those tremendous upheavals, are working for your eternal good and God's eternal glory. Believe it "all things . . . for good," and thank Him. Someone has aptly said, "Do not say, 'How can I get out of this hard circumstance?' but 'What can I get out of this hard circumstance?'"

I remember being with a missionary in South Africa who had lost his only son, a child of whom he had great hopes. He conducted the funeral service himself, but as we parted he read in my eyes the words, "Oh, the pity of it!" He answered with these simple words, "My Father never makes mistakes."

Praise is the most practical thing I know of. Twenty-five years ago when my dear wife and I were married, we had a large motto made, "In everything give thanks." We looked to the Lord that we might not only have that text on our walls, but that He would put it into our hearts also. Many times, in the years that followed, we have proved that praise and thanksgiving bring victory.

One time He put us to a special test. The house in which we were living caught fire, the roof was soon ablaze, and since a tremendous wind was blowing it looked as if in a few minutes the whole place would go up in smoke. Although the building was insured, our belongings were not.

But the Lord helped us to praise and give thanks. Someone on the outside had seen the fire before we had, and sent in the alarm. Soon three fire engines were on hand. We went into a quiet outhouse. Going up and down with arm upraised, we gave thanks to God for this fire "one of the 'all things' that was working for our good. Suddenly that fierce wind went down. Said one who watched the fire, "With that terrific wind blowing I knew the place would soon be burned to a cinder, but to my amazement the wind dropped in a moment." The Lord of miracles was on hand to rebuke that wind and there was a great calm. In a few minutes the firemen put out the fire.

What was the sequel? The insurance company was very generous and paid splendid compensation. Some saints came in and undertook repairs at a nominal cost, and there was a large and much needed sum put into the Lord's treasury over and above the sum spent for fixing up the home.

You ask, "How can I praise when I do not feel like it?" The Lord has not said, "The just shall live by feeling," but "The just shall live by faith." Rom. 1:17. Faith recognizes that the Lord never changes. He is just the same in fine weather and in what folk call foul; for many folk do not recognize the truth that Ruskin emphasizes, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather." And because of the continual goodness of our Lord we can render "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name," having full assurance that with such sacrifice God is well pleased. Heb. 13:15, 16.

You want to please Him, don't you? I know you do. Then offer the sacrifice of praise to Him continually. As your heart longs and desires to do this, He will purify in the Spirit of grace to enable you to do so.

It is written, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." We must all confess this. We also read, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." The blessed Holy Spirit will enable us to pray as we ought, and will enable us to know what "praying in the Holy Ghost" really is. And what is true of the prayer life is also true of the life of

f praise. We know not how to praise as we ought, but the blessed Holy Spirit will provide the enabling. Eph. 5:18 is translated by Weymouth: "Do not indulge in wine a thing in which excess is so easy but drink deeply of God's Spirit." What will be the effect of taking great draughts of God's Holy Spirit? The song of praise shall start. Our mouth will be filled with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and we shall find ourselves singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, and though the blessed Spirit's presence we shall find it easy to give thanks for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Once more let us look away to our blessed Lord Jesus, the smitten Rock, and drink and drink and drink of that blessed stream of the Spirit that flows from His wounded side; and the song of the Spirit will soon arise from our heart and our lips. A constant looking to Jesus will bring a constant stream of the Spirit and result in a constant song of praise.

This is the simple secret of a victorious, Spirit-filled life coming constantly to the Lord for a fresh infilling of His Spirit. As a result you will find yourself constantly giving thanks to the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.