

In Favor of Praise: The Power of Praise

2 Chr 17:1 – 21:3

Introduction

Praise occurs about 420 times in Scripture; about 75 of the occurrences are in the NT
2 Chronicles 20 illustrates how praise and spirituality and interconnected.

Before the events of 2 Chr 20, we see traits in the heart and character of King Jehoshaphat that led him to praise God in the midst of pressures.

- He sought after a relationship with God, 20:3
- He was concerned about obedience to God, 17:3-4
- His heart was in the right place, 17:6; 19:6
- He was concerned about good thinking/teaching/theology, 17:9
 - Without good theology, worship at its best is shallow and sentimental, and at its worst is idolatrous.
 - Parallel to tree with roots and branches, have to have right roots to develop healthy branches
- He was concerned about their focus, 19:4

SEEKING THE LORD, 2 Chr 20:1-4

Praise never comes unless we are seeking God.

We were created for relationship with God

Relationship implies variations in the way we communicate. (If our communication is always the same, we may not be “in relationship”.)

Level 3 communication: motivation and persuasion

Level 2 communication: information and facts, math and science

Level 1 communication: intimacy and relationship, trust and hope and understanding, warmth, lovers

Praise is primarily level 1 communication, Ps. 42, 63; love, adore, need.

All three levels are needed in the public assembly.

PRAISE IN PRAYER, 2 Chr 20:5-12a

Began by acknowledging God’s greatness, power, rule, history, majesty

Jesus and Paul taught us by example to include praise in prayer

Fundamentally, prayer is communion with God.

Blessed is the one who longs for God more than for what God can do for us.

God transforms us when we praise Him in prayer.

HAVING THE RIGHT FOCUS, 2 Chr. 20:12b-13

No good looking around, or looking in, only in looking up.

We have majored in ministry, minored in adoration.

Have we learned to worship our praise, praise our worship?

Much of the current interest in worship has a wrong focus. It is true we need more heartfelt emotion, but emotion must never become the focus. What we do, or even how we do it, can never replace the one for whom we do it, who has told us what pleases him.

The focus of worship and praise must be God and Jesus.

Praise is primarily a response to God. We are not trying to get God’s attention.

BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, 2 Chr 20:14-19

The Holy Spirit activates worship.

He gives us access to the Father (Eph. 2:18)

He comes to pour God's love into our hearts so we can love in response (Rom. 5:5; 1 John 4:19)

He enables us to call God Abba, Father (Rom. 8)

He inspires prayer (Eph. 6:18; Jude 20).

If we are to praise acceptably and be formed spiritually, it will not be without the help of the Holy Spirit (Phil. 3:3).

Forms and rituals do not produce worship; there is no worship until Spirit touches spirit.

PRAISE THE LORD—JUST DO IT! 2 Chr 20:20-22

Sometimes we do not feel like praising the Lord ("fear in the camp"), so the phrase is appropriate regarding praise: just do it.

Likely their songs were psalms, repetitive, praise.

When we praise God, He blesses us (vv. 26-30).

CONCLUSION

Nothing has the power to continually transform our lives like genuine praise.

Let us with David proclaim the words of Ps. 103:1, Bless the Lord O My Soul, let all that is within me bless His holy name.