

Proclaiming the Gospel

Message
of
Jesus Christ

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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In Bondage? Then Sing!

Part I

The Psalmist cried, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?" (Ps 42.5,11; Ps 43.5)

Have there been similar cries from your heart to the Lord? Have you felt "cast down," discouraged, alone? I have. Have you tried to pray, but no words would come? Perhaps you could think a prayer, but your mouth could not speak it. You felt "blah," spiritually dead, but knew of no un-confessed sin in your life. Satan loves to make us feel that God has deserted us, that His Presence is far from us. We are unable to pull ourselves up.

Notice the next lines in these three verses. "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him..." The Psalmist gives himself a command to hope in God and declares that he **will** praise Him. In the midst of this "cast down" feeling, it is necessary to put our hope and trust in God and to praise Him.

There are several ways to build up ourselves in the Lord such as being in prayer, reading the Word, worshiping, sitting quietly in His presence, and praising Him. I would like to address one method of praise, that of singing.

In the Scripture, much importance is put on praising the Lord with singing.

Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. (Ps 47.6)

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. (Ps 57.7)

But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. (Ps 59.16)

I will praise [thee], O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. (Ps 9.1)

Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation. (1 Chr 16.23)

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, [even] praise unto our God: many shall see [it], and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. (Ps 40.3)

I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. (Ps 104.33)

God's strength while caring for my elderly mother at a time when my health was failing.

God's renewed strength when He, in my senior years, called me into a new ministry of encouraging the Body of Christ as He places them in the path where He leads me day by day.

Can you not relate to these experiences and sing unto the Lord a new song?

Singing to the Lord lifts our spirits and keeps the awareness of God's presence in our hearts and minds. How many times have I sensed God's presence in my car as I drove and sang to Him! Not always were they songs that I had learned, but often words and melodies of my own from my heart to Him. Jesus is there; when you praise Him, the enemy has to flee.

If you feel "cast down," **Sing, Sing, Sing!**

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *[shall]* continually *[be]* in my mouth.
My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *[thereof]*,
and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.
I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. (Ps 34.1-4)

Consider the Israelites (II Chr 20) when faced with a formidable enemy. Jehoshaphat was afraid and called upon God for help: “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *[are]* upon thee” (verse 12). Sometimes we do not have the strength, nor do we know how to fight the forces of the enemy; but when our eyes are upon Jesus, He will fight for us. On the Word of the Lord, Jehoshaphat took the Israelites to battle. Notice in verses 21 and 22 that he appointed singers to go before the army to sing and praise the Lord.

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy *[endureth]* for ever.

And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

There is power in singing and praising the Lord when it comes from a heart surrendered and a life committed to the Lord, one that trusts in Him. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Ja 4.7).

It was no longer the Israelites’ battle; it was God’s battle. The singers – **NOT** the warriors with weapons – faced the enemy first. They were an affront to the enemy.

Paul and Silas in prison prayed and sang praises to the Lord out of hearts filled with love and accustomed to praising the Lord, praises that welled up and poured forth with the force of an artesian well. They had just suffered a cruel beating, received many stripes, their feet put in stocks (Acts 16.23-24) yet praises came forth (Acts 16.25) out of the bruising much as the fragrance exudes from a crushed rose.

Saints, are you in bondage? Is your spirit in bondage? Has the enemy bound you with feelings of discouragement, failure, guilt, fear, uselessness...? Then sing! I challenge you to sing even when you do not feel like it. As you go about your chores, find a hymn or chorus based on Scripture – and sing.

If you cannot carry a tune, the yard you are mowing or your dirty dishes will not care. Your song of praise still will be sweet to the Lord. Make it a constant part of your waking hours, and soon the praises of the Lord will flow as an artesian well with strength and power. You will find yourself lifted above the attack of the enemy. The Lord inhabits the praises of His people (Ps 22.3). There is the presence of the Lord in a song given from a heart seeking to worship and praise the Lord.

Sing praises to the Lord for His goodness. Be specific. Praise Him for Who He is (Ps 136.1-4), for His mighty creation of heaven and earth (vv 5-9), for His

salvation and His works for man (vv 10-26), and for many, many other experiences in your daily life.

Psalm 136:

Verses	Reason for Praise	Scriptures to read and pray
10, 11	Salvation	Exodus 12.22, 23; John 3.16
12	Strength	II Corinthians 12.10
13, 14	Going before you	Joshua 3 and 4
15, 17-20	Conquering the enemy	II Chronicles 20; Isaiah 59.19
16	Guidance	Joshua 1.5-11, 16; 3.1-4
21, 22, 25	Provision	Matthew 6.25-34
23, 24	Redemption	Isaiah 51.11; 62.11, 12; Psalm 107.1-3
26	O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy <i>[endureth]</i> for ever.	

God gave the Israelites memorials to help them remember miracles He wrought for them. The 12 stones taken from the middle of the Jordan River when they crossed it is an example. It would help them re-live the experience of God’s mighty hand to save (Jos 20, esp. vv 20-22).

When the death angel passed over the children of Israel in Egypt, God instructed the Israelites “And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations...” (Ex 12.14).

When Israel fought with Amalek, Israel prevailed as long as Moses held up his hand. The Lord instructed Moses to “Write this for a memorial in a book...” (Ex 17.8-14).

The feast of Purim was established in remembrance of God’s deliverance from Haman and those under the Persians (Est 9.25-28).

You may say, “But, I do not know hymns or choruses that address the blessings unique to my life.” Invite the Holy Spirit to form in you a new song as you bring to remembrance the mighty acts of God in your life, His mercy, His protection, His guidance... We each have memorials. Let us each one re-live experiences of God’s grace and mercy as we sing praises to Him.

I remember:

God’s mercy when He awakened me and saved me, a teenager, from a house fire; and I am able to serve Him today.

God’s protection when my car broke down at night as I was in route alone to a Christian college where I taught, and the Lord protected me from a man with a gun demanding that I get out of the car.

God’s call confirmed when the fear of teaching my first class in college left as I stepped into the classroom.

God’s provision when my husband and I sat in an empty parking lot and the *wind* blew three one-dollar bills in front of us – when they were very much needed.