

Praising God

Ephesians 3:20-21, “*Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, **according to the power that worketh in us**, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*”

This verse teaches us that God is able to do **exceeding abundantly above** all that we ask or think – but note, that it states, “*according to the power that worketh in us.*” That’s what I want to talk about – “*the power that worketh in us.*”

Ephesians 1:4 states, “*According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world – [That is God, the Father chose us in Christ Jesus – for a purpose He had in His heart “even before the world was created. What was that purpose?] – that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: and that **we should be to the praise of His glory.***”

Look at chapter 1 and verse 12, “*God's purpose in this was that we should praise God and give glory to him for doing these mighty things for us, who were the first to trust in Christ.*”

Permit me to read chapter 5 and verse 20 from the Living Bible, “*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

What I want to share with you may be the most important concept a child of God can learn. It is this: **The act of praise releases the power of God into the circumstances, enabling Him to work.**

The truth of the matter is that our attitude can help or hinder the solution of a problem.

God will not force our thought patterns, or our attitude. His purpose for us – and has been “*from the foundation of the world*” – is to bring us into fellowship and communion with Him – that is, develop Christ-likeness within us – so, He allows those circumstances and incidents that will bring our wrong attitudes to our attention.

“*Praise*” is the highest form of communion with God – and, it also releases great power in our lives! We are to praise God, not because we “*feel good,*” but rather, we praise Him because it is an act of obedience! Sometimes it requires a setting of our will. But, if we will persist, the power of God is released into that situation. **This** is the “*power of God*” that worketh in us.

The *natural* thing for us to do is to grumble! When the day is rainy and gray – when the neighbor is cranky – when the boss is difficult – when the wife portrays certain qualities that rub us the wrong way – when parents are difficult to live with – when the children are rebellious – the natural thing to do is to gripe and complain.

In Numbers 11:1, *“The people were complaining about all their misfortunes, and the Lord heard them. His anger flared out against them because of their complaints.”*
(Living Bible)

1 Corinthians 10:10-11 – (still reading from the Living Bible) – ties us with those children of Israel. It says, *“And don't murmur against God and his dealings with you as some of them did, for that is why God sent his Angel to destroy them. All these things happened to them as examples--as object lessons to us--to warn us against doing the same things; they were written down so that we could read about them and learn from them in these last days as the world nears its end.”*

We don't plead with God to change the circumstances that hurt us, but rather, we “praise” Him for “everything” that takes place!

Let's read the Thanksgiving Scripture, found in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: (From King James) *“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

We are to just “glibly” praise – or thank – the Lord, but rather, to sincerely begin to see what God is attempting to accomplish within our life and praise Him for it.

Many do not know what it means to “praise the Lord.” “Praise” means, “to extol – to laud – to honor – to acclaim – or – to express approval” To praise the Lord is to give positive affirmation to Him – it is an expression of our approval of something – it means that we accept it and approve of it as being allowed by God for His divine purpose.

To “praise God” for a difficult situation, means that we accept and approve of its happening, as part of God's plan for our life!

“Always be joyful! Always keep on praying. No matter what happened, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”

If we are really thankful for something, there are some prerequisites we need to consider:

1. We need to dedicate our self to God. We are His property!
2. We need to realize the God is bigger than any difficulties we have!
3. We need to realize that God's work is affected by our response.
4. We need to realize that God wants what is best for us
5. We need to realize that God has allowed this happening for our ultimate benefit

Let's look at a few Scriptures:

James 1:2-4, *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*

The Living Bible renders this passage as, “*Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.*”

Romans 5:2-5 (from the Living Bible) “*For because of our faith, he has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us--they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady. Then, when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know that all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*”

Romans 12:1-2, “*And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy--the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.*”

Psalms 47:7 “*For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises – **with understanding.***”

One might ask, “*Did I cause this situation? Was it my fault? Was it some lack in my character?*” And, the answer to all of these questions might be “Yes!” It was my stupid – maybe even rebellious – ways that brought this situation all about. But, even then, if we will turn it over to God, He will “*work things out together for good.*”

God still teaches, “*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.[And, what is God's purpose in my life?] ... to be conformed to the image of his Son*” (Romans 8:28-29).

If I am thankful, then I must respond, not to the difficulty, but to the hand of God in the difficulty. The result will be the Fruit of the Spirit flowing from God – through me!

Hebrews 12:2, “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who **for the joy that was set before Him** endured the cross.*”

Jesus endured the nails, the crown of thorns, the spear in His side – He endured it “*with joy*” – not because it was not painful for Him – but because He knew that God's work was being accomplished.

Look at 1 Peter 4:12-14, “*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: **But rejoice,***

inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified."

And, 1 Peter 2:19-21, "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.." Verse 23, "*Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not – but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously:*" Another translation renders it, "*He left His cause in the hands of a righteous judge*" (Weymouth's Translation). Instead of resisting the difficulties of life, Jesus, as a man – living a human being's life on earth – simply placed these trying circumstances in the hands of Almighty God, know He would work it all out.

Romans 8:28 says, "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.*"

We are surrounded by difficult circumstances, often struggling to understand why they came. Whether we understand these circumstances or not, we need to understand that **God loves us** and has allowed these circumstances because He know what "good" can come out of them.

We have a remarkable example of how God works while we "praise Him" in the 20th chapter of 2 Chronicles. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was surrounded by the powerful armies of the Moabites and the Ammorites. He didn't have a change of winning the battle.

Jehoshaphat says, in verse 12, "*We have no might to stand against this great company that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, our eyes are upon You, God.*" - An important step in the act of praising God is to take our eyes off of the circumstances and look to God!

Jehoshaphat was not closing his eyes to the threat – pretending that it was not there – but, after taking careful stock of the situation and recognizing how helpless he was – he turned to God for help!

God said to him, "*Be not afraid or dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours it is the Lord's.*"

God told him to appoint singers to sign to the Lord and praise Him, as they went before the army, saying, "*Give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy and loving kindness endures forever*" (verse 21).

What a strange sight that must have been – a choir of singer, leading the army, singing praises to God! Verse 22-23 continues, "*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. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.”

When it was all over, the singing and praising of the army and the choir of Judah was so confusing that the enemy began to slaughter each other.

Philippians 4:11-13 says, “*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*