

The Pastor's Corner Vol. 38

February, 2012

“Praise the Lord”



*.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith
that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV*

Reviewed by: Dr. Lambert Duncan

“Praise the Lord”

Psalm 150:1-6 (NIV) “¹*Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. ²Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. ³Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, ⁴praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, ⁵praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. ⁶Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.*”

Psalm 148:7-13 (NIV) “⁷*Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, ⁸lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, ⁹you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, ¹⁰wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, ¹¹kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, ¹²young men and maidens, old men and children. ¹³Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.*”

Acts 16:25 (KJV) “*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*”

Once upon a time, there was a church that was without a pastor for six months. Their former pastor prayerfully decided to follow the Lord’s direction and move to another church 200 miles away. This church began looking for a new pastor immediately after the former pastor announced his plan to resign as pastor. However, six months had gone by and they were unable to find a suitable pastor to meet all their requirements. Six preachers had applied for the position, but all six were refused by the members for various reasons. Some were not married, some were too young, some did not preach well and some did not have the experience or education they were looking for.

Finally, the seventh preacher that applied seemed to be the perfect fit for the position. He was married and had three children that were well behaved; he was not too young nor too old; he was a very good preacher, one that reached both the young and the old; he had plenty of experience and was very well educated. However, because this church was a “conservative” church that did not believe in various types of “praise,” they did not like one of the answers the seventh preacher gave to their question, “If we accept you as our new pastor, what would you do differently?” The answer this preacher gave was simple, he said, “I would increase the amount of time the church currently allows for “praise” and I would add other types of “praises” to supplement your current “praises.”

Immediately after hearing this preacher's answer, some of the members began to grumble, saying, "All that praise stuff is for young folks." Others said, "We are not interested in entertaining people in our church; we do not need all that praise stuff." Eventually the members that objected to the potential pastor's plan to add to their current praise portion of their service told the deacon board how they felt about this "praise stuff." However, because this church had already been through six other preachers applying for the pastor position that were not suitable to them, the deacons did not want to dismiss this seventh preacher too quickly; besides he was a perfect fit in all of the other areas.

In their wisdom, the deacons decided to have a meeting with this potential pastor and the entire church to have this potential pastor explain his reasons for wanting to change their current "praise" part of the church service. At the meeting, the church members told this potential pastor how much they liked him across the board; however, they needed to hear from him where he got the notion that his proposed changes to their current praise portion of their service was either biblical or necessary.

In answer to this, the potential pastor said, "On the subject of praise, the Bible teaches us four things: 1) Where to praise the Lord, 2) Why we praise the Lord, 3) How to praise the Lord and 4) Who should praise the Lord. This is where I get the notion to change your current praise service."

To this, one of the members said, "I have been going to church all my life and I have never heard any such thing before, show us exactly where you got this from in the Bible."

Having dealt with this type of scrutiny before, the potential pastor politely stood up behind the podium with his Bible in hand and said, "Everyone please turn with me to the 150th Psalm." He read verse 1, "***Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.***"

Then he said, "This is '**where**' we praise the Lord, in his sanctuary, which is the church building or equal." "Notice," he said, "It does not say 'only' in his sanctuary so we can give him praise anywhere."

Then he read verse 2, "***Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.***" Then he said, "This is '**why**' we praise him. Consider God's provisions for the birds of the air, how he sends the rain; provides sunlight in the day for us to work and darkness in the night for us to rest. There is nothing or no one greater than our God."

Then he read verses 3 – 5, "***³Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, ⁴praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings***"

and flute, ⁵praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.”

Then he said, “This is ‘**how**’ you praise the Lord. Notice you do not have any of these types of praise in your current praise service. I would like to add some of them.”

Then he read verse 6, “*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.*”

Then he said, “This is ‘**who**’ is to praise the Lord.” “Correct me if I am wrong,” he said, “but we are not at a very large home going service here, so that means everyone here has ‘breath’ in them; therefore, the ‘**who**’ is all of us. Since we are on the subject of praise,” he said, “the 148th Psalm calls to all things in creation to praise the Lord. In this Psalm, the sea creatures, wild animals, cattle, birds, and the kings and princes even the trees, mountains and hills are called to praise the Lord in their own unique way. Haven’t you folks noticed that the trees, grass, weeds and plants all grow upward? All of them are stretching towards Heaven. I believe this is their act of praise. The chirping birds at dawn each morning that have not eaten yet, I believe are giving God praise for who he is in their own way.”

To this, there was complete silence. Finally, the deacons called the meeting to an end. The very next week, the church voted in favor of this preacher becoming their new pastor and allowing him to implement the changes to their praise portion of their Sunday services. Needless to say, this was no easy task, even though they agreed to the changes.

After the new pastor was installed, he began to slowly implement different types of praises. In his wisdom, he realized that everybody is unique and could offer praises in their own way since the Bible offers different ways to give the Lord praise. The most important thing to him was that everyone did find their own unique way to give the Lord praise, and not try to create a church full of puppets, copying each other. After six months, the members that initially grumbled looked forward to coming to church each Sunday. Not only that, the atmosphere in the church became warmer and more loving.

In truth, no church is complete without the three (3) P’s, they are:

1. “Prayer”
2. “Praise”
3. The “Proclamation” of the Word

In conclusion, always remember that as Christians, praise is part of what we are to offer to the Lord. Not because of some “praise bully” to be found in some local churches, but because of who he is, what he’s done and what he is currently doing. Despite our current pain, hardships, etc., God is still worthy of our praises so do not neglect your duty to give

God the praises he deserves. You do not need to praise him the way everyone else does, you can praise him in your own unique way. Whichever way you decide to give him praise, do it regularly and most of all, from the heart, not because you are told to praise him.

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

Note:

This article is the sole property of Pastor D. M. Duncan. The contents of this article may not be altered in any way. However, my name and the church name may be removed for circulation in any church or ministry. This article may be reproduced only in its entirety (with the exception of removing my name and the church name) for circulation as “freeware;” without charge. This article is not to be sold or used as an enhancement for any other product that is sold.