

"PRAISE YE THE LORD"

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights." Psalms 148:1.

Have you ever stopped to think how little praise to God there is in the life of the average Christian? How much time do you give to praising God? Go where you will, enter any church you please; you will not find much time actually given to praising God. Before long you will hear someone asking God for something. It is so natural and so easy to ask God for things.

I don't know of anything which will dispel the blues and drive away the clouds of despair like praising God. Notice how often David praised the Lord. Of course, he got down in the dumps, but he didn't stay there. He began counting his blessings and before long, he was shouting the praises of God. If you get blue and discouraged, sit down and start counting your blessings.

I. The Object of Praise.

If thanksgiving is "the declarative mood of gratitude," to whom should the declaration be made? Unto God. Polite thanks for secondary causes may be spoken to our fellowmen, but true thanksgiving always directs itself to the "Father of lights," Who is the giver of "every good and perfect gift."

One must confess that there has been a strong tendency among us to substitute the praise of man for the praise of God. It is a part of the humanism of our day. We have forgotten that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Our modern version of it has been "The chief end of man is to glorify himself and enjoy himself forever." It simply will not work. The very structure of life is against it. We may not like it, we may wish it were different, but here is the fact: when man glorifies himself, he is least manly, and when he glorifies God, he is most godly.

Thank God -- whose heavens declare His glory and whose firmament sheweth His handiwork.

Thank God -- Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance.

Thank God -- Who pours the light of morning over the horizon of every day, Who sends the clean breezes from the cool tops of the mountains, Who paints the colors on the faces of the flowers, Who attends the birth of every bud in the springtime and is present at its funeral in the chill of autumn, Who openeth His hand and feedeth every living thing.

Thank God -- Who is the Creator behind all creation, the Wisdom behind all philosophy, the Fact behind all science, the Purpose behind all history, the Lover behind all love, and the Giver behind all gifts.

One of our noblest hymns puts it well:

"To Him I owe my life and breath,
And all the joys I have."

To Him therefore let my lips speak their praise.

II. The Obligation of Praise.

There is something about gratitude so becoming and so desirable as to give it the standing of a high duty. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Ephesians 5:18-19. Never begin by tallying your troubles and then coming around to your blessings, but begin with your mercies and blessings, and then look at your difficulties. They will not appear half so numerous or so great.

III. The Outline of Praise.

1. Praise Him for the Word of God.

For the matchless light and power of the Holy Scriptures let us offer our renewed praise. To try to pay rhetorical tribute to this Book is like the needless task of painting the lily or of decorating a sunset. It is the Book supreme and sublime. It is supernatural in origin, universal in appeal, unerring in guidance, regenerative in force, timeless in appropriateness, deathless in destiny, with man's hand behind its penmanship but with God's heart behind its authorship.

Then let us send up our notes of praise that this book--the Bible--taxes the capacity of more printing presses, travels more miles, enters more doors, and talks to more people in their mother tongue than does any other book.

2. Praise Him For Christ our Redeemer.

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." II Cor. 9:15. Take Christ out of history and you leave a gap which all the kings and all the generals and all the philosophers and all the artists can never fill. Let Christ drop out of it and you have lost the key to history. Be grateful, then, that He is there --- the Word made flesh, the Grace of God come down to meet and to master the sin of man, God's perfect Man and man's perfect God, the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether Lovely One.

3. Praise Him for temporal blessings.

Have you ever praised God for the physical blessings you enjoy? You have a strong, healthy body, but have you ever thanked God for it?

(1) Have you praised God for your good eyesight?

You can enjoy the beauties of an autumn sunset, when the sky matches the woods in its riot of color. Who can describe the beauty of those snow-capped peaks in the moonlight, or a sunrise over the ocean, or the glory of a storm upon the deep, or the fairy land in which you revel when you fly above the clouds? You certainly ought to praise God for the privilege of seeing these things.

(2) Have you praised God for your hearing?

Think of the pleasure of hearing the greatest music man has produced--heavenly symphonies of harmony that thrill your soul! You can sit by your radio and hear the best the world has to offer, all because God has given you two ears with which to hear.

(3) Have you praised God for your material comforts?

You have respectable clothing to wear, plenty of wholesome food to eat, and a good bed in which to sleep. You also have congenial companions for associates and enough money to get the necessities of life. Have you praised Him for these blessings? If not, do so.