

Spiritual Warfare part 7- "Praise Warriors"
November 22, 2015

1 Peter 2:4-5,9

"As you come to Him (Jesus), a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

- This is one of the clearest NT statements of who we are & what our ministry is:
 - We are His dwelling place ("living stones...spiritual house")—no longer limited to one place
 - We are ALL His "priests"—those who "draw near to His presence"—no longer limited to one tribe ("Levites")
- Our greatest ministry is to "proclaim His excellencies" (virtues)
 - NOTE: The command to "praise, bless, honor, give thanks to" the LORD is the most frequent command in the whole Bible

1. PRAISE is OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

- The word "PRAISE" (OT) has a variety of terms/expressions
- The word "THANKSGIVING" (NT) capsulizes every "praise" word in OT
- Western understanding: Praise/Thanksgiving are polite responses to something done for us or a gift given to us
- Biblical understanding: HONORING GOD for WHO HE IS
 - He is a "covenant-keeper"—He'd rather die than break His word
 - He is faithful to every word He's ever spoken
- Also translated as "CONFESS"—"to say together with God"—who He has revealed Himself to be (i.e., we didn't "imagine" Him)

2. PRAISE is to be expressed with BOLDNESS & JOY

- The Psalms are filled with "volcanic eruptions of praise"—clapping, shouting, dancing—signs of anticipated victory!
- Every instrument used in this act of thanksgiving—singing, playing, lifting hands, kneeling, raving.

3. We were created to be PRAISE WARRIORS

- Adam was called to "tend" the Garden (i.e., "to guard it like a warrior")
- Later in OT, the word "tend" used to describe the duties of the priests in the temple—created to WORK & WORSHIP simultaneously

- *NOTE: “Paradise” was not aimless leisure; praise/thanksgiving “guarded” the Garden from the evil one—so that the glory of the Lord would spread from the Garden to the whole Earth!*
- One of the first results of the Fall: “Stopped worshipping Him as God” and “ceased giving Him thanks” (Romans 1:21 ESV)

4. PRAISE transforms the WAY WE TALK

“Do everything without grumbling or complaining—so that you may shine as brilliant lights in this oppressively dismal world.” (Philippians 2:14-15 Paraphrase)

- Complaining and grumbling quench His light.
- When we continually complain—we blame God for giving us a miserable life!
- This doesn’t mean we should say, “Praise the Lord” every other sentence.
- Rather, our words reflect trust & hope when we speak of past, present & future.

5. PRAISE is WARFARE

Psalm 8:2 NIV- *“Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.”*

- “Infants”- those newly born into the Kingdom (i.e., spiritual birth)
- “Strength/praise”- the unrelenting power of God; prevailing
- “Cease/silence”- to knock out an opponent (fully conquer)

Psalm 22:3- The LORD is “enthroned in the praises of His people” (a positive way of saying the enemy is dethroned).

Acts 16- Thrown into deepest recesses of a Philippian jail (after being severely beaten & tortured) because they cast demons from a priestess of the “Temple of the Python,” Paul & Silas PRAISED. Their praises echoed throughout the prison—causing a “supernatural shaking” (i.e., every prisoner freed—no one injured). Led the Roman jailer to Jesus (NOTE: He would have been beheaded if any prisoners escaped).

6. PRAISE presses through DIFFICULT DAYS

- David wrote Psalm 23 when Absalom (his son) was trying to kill him.
- “Even though I walk...”- not in the valley yet; he’s simply dealing with the “what if?”
- I settle it here and now; “EVEN IF” the worst happens, I am pre-

- determined to “fear no evil”!**
- **Habakkuk 3- “Even IF the fig trees don’t blossom...” Here’s what I will do if things don’t get better immediately:**
 - **“I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.”**

PRAISE DETHRONES THE ENEMY—AND ENTHRONES GOOD KING JESUS AND HIS KINGDOM ON OUR PLANET.