

May Jesus Christ be Praised - Part 5

THE PRACTICE OF PRAISE Romans 12:1-2

STIMULATE

** From our last study, do you recall the "mystery" which had been hidden from the Old Testament saints and then revealed to us?

That God was causing a partial hardening upon the hearts of the nation of Israel, until the times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled.

** What was the wonderful promise put forth by Paul, upon which we can base our praise to Jesus Christ?

"...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." God is faithful! (Romans 11:29)

** Based upon that wonderful promise, have you been faithful to show others the joy of your salvation, no matter what the circumstances of your life have been?

That is the critical response we must have so that Jesus Christ will be praised and our God will be glorified!

MOTIVATE

** This wonderful series has been dedicated to the praise of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We have learned that each believer has their own "**Profession of Praise**", a duty to the "**Proclamation of Praise**", a debt of gratitude to the "**Privilege of Praise**" and a shared hope in the "**Promise of Praise**". How do we effectively apply all that we have been learning? Today the rubber meets the road, as we learn what God's word says about "**The Practice of Praise**".

If I want my lifestyle to be to the praise of Jesus Christ, what must it look like? What are the two main characteristics of someone who lives to the praise of the Lord? Please join me in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 12 and we will learn the answer together.

Read Passage (V. 1-2)

Opening Prayer

The Practice of Praise

INVESTIGATE

V. 1 ** As our passage begins, how do we know that it is tied to what Paul has been saying to us over the past four lessons?

Because he again uses the word "therefore", reflecting back upon his masterful portrayal of the gospel or "good news" for both Jews and Gentiles.

** Is Paul about to give a cold hearted command, without any concern or empathy for those to whom he is writing?

No! He does not command them, but instead says I "urge" you. The word Paul uses here is "parakaleo" and meant "to call alongside". It later came to connote exhorting, admonishing, or encouraging. Here Paul is calling his "brothers" in Christ to do the very thing he himself was doing.

** What great, profound, truth was going to make Paul's exhortation possible in the lives of his readers?

"...by the mercies of God..." Paul continues to reflect on what we learned last time, that our salvation was granted to us not on the basis of merit but totally on the basis of God's mercy.

cf. Romans 11:32, Ephesians 2:8, 2Peter 1:1, Philippians 1:29

The means of our obedience is "the mercies of God", for without His mercy it would be impossible for us to please Him.

All see - Hebrews 11:1-3 This hall of fame gives us by name fifteen heroes or witnesses to a life of faith which has been granted by the mercies of God, namely His grace and His love!

V. 6 - The writer then goes on to say that "without faith it is impossible to please Him..."

So here is the progression -

- 1) We please God because of our faith in Him.
- 2) We received faith as a gift of His grace.
- 3) His grace was given to us by His mercy.
- 4) Therefore, we are able to obey Him only "by the mercies of God".

** Now, back in Romans 12:1, what is it that Paul urges us to do "by the mercies of God"?

"...present your bodies..."

** Why does Paul call for the offering of our bodies, why not our souls?

As "brethren" we are children of God and our souls already belong to the Lord!

cf. 1Peter 1:17-19 and 1Corinthians 6:19-20

** How are we to present our bodies to God?

As "...a living and holy sacrifice...", this speaks of the duration and devotion of our sacrifice.

** What is to be the duration of the sacrifice of our bodies?

As long as we are "living"! Or, everyday that the Lord grants to us the breathe of life!

** How does this offering of our bodies speak to our devotion?

That we present our body as a "holy" sacrifice. Paul uses the word "hagios", which has the literal sense of being set apart for a special purpose. In the Greek culture of the day, the word carried no idea of moral or spiritual purity but Christianity sanctified the term, using it to describe God, godly people, and godly things.

** Is it going to be easy to present our bodies as a holy sacrifice throughout our lifetime?

No! Paul had to fight his body! All see -1Corinthians 9:26-27

We must fight to make our bodies become the slave of our souls or hearts, which belong to God.

** Back in Romans 12:1, when we are victorious in the fight, how does God feel about it?

It is "acceptable to God". lit. "well-pleasing" There is such a thing as unacceptable worship.

The Bible shows us four types of unacceptable worship, and we have learned about them in our study entitled "Worship - The Ultimate Priority". Paul would have us be devoted to that which is acceptable in the eyes of the Lord.

** Once we have formed this pattern of sacrifice, even one that is pleasing to God, have we done something extra-ordinary for a Christian?

Absolutely not! This is the norm! Our heavenly Father sought us out, just to worship Him in this manner. All see - John 4:21-24

** As we return to our passage for today, how is Christianity described here in Romans 12:1?

It shows us that Biblical Christianity is not to be based upon what we get or demand from God, but rather it is based upon what we "present" to Him. Our salvation is to be God centered, not us centered!

V. 2 ** Clearly this should be our desire, if we want Jesus Christ to be praised in our life. But how do we do it, what should be the two main characteristics of our life?

1) "...do not be conformed to the world..."

2) "...be transformed..."

** Let's look at these one at a time. Why should we not want to be conformed to the world?

Paul uses a word [suschematizo] which refers to an outward expression that does not reflect what is within. It is used of masquerading, or putting on an act, specifically by following a prescribed pattern or scheme [schema].
WE MUST NOT FOLLOW THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD!

All see - 1John 5:19, John 17:15-17, John 15:17-20

** Do we have any of this world's corrupted stuff still in us?

Sadly, yes! cf. Romans 7:21, 8:23, James 1:14

We still are not to be conformed in our lifestyle!

** So secondly, in order to not be conformed, what must happen to us?

We must be transformed!

** How is that process accomplished?

"...by the renewing of the mind..."

** How does God renew our sinful, polluted minds?

- 1) At salvation, He washes us! John 3:5, Titus 3:5
- 2) Throughout our lives, the cleansing continues with the Word of God. Ephesians 5:26
- 3) Our minds are made clean by the power of the Word of Christ! John 15:3, Colossians 3:16

That is why our motto is: Staying in the Word, Staying in the Word, Staying in the Word!

** If we are continually "washing" out the pollution of our former thought process and renewing our minds with the wisdom of God's precious Word, what will we be able to prove?

"...what the will of God is..." We will gain a discernment of what the Lord would have us to do and think in every situation, based upon His expressed will in His Word. By saying, "that you may prove", Paul is declaring our ability to "test" or "approve" of God's will by aligning our will with His. cf. Colossians 1:9, Ephesians 5:10, 17

** What is the very nature of God's will?

"...that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Our actions (represented by not being conformed to this world) and our thoughts (represented by our transformed minds) will only display the "good and acceptable and perfect" will of God!

** "**MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED**" has been the theme of our study for the past five weeks. How does God's will align with that Bible study theme?

Philippians 2:9-11 "...that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

EXTRICATE

** If we want others to learn how to praise Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, what pattern of persuasion should we borrow from the apostle Paul?

We should "parakaleo" or come along side and encourage them, instead of commanding or being argumentative when at first they do not understand.

DELINEATE

** What are the two main characteristics of someone who lives to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ?

1) They are not conformed to this world. (actions)

2) They are renewed in their mind with the Word of God. (thought life)

EVALUATE

** How much does my life reflect the world's corrupt system? Do my actions or thought life look like the unsaved around me or am I continually displaying the will of God, "that which is good and acceptable and perfect"?

ACTIVATE

** Lord, help me to be more discerning about the choices that I make. May I live to make sacrifices for You and Your glory, rather than for my own selfish desires. In my life, "**MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED**"!

Closing Prayer