

Enter into His Courts with Praise

Lesson for Sunday, September 1, 2024

NOTE: This week our lessons will pivot and become extremely practical! Over the next several weeks, we will take one aspect of our prayer time (praise, thanksgiving, etc.) and work to organize that specific area. Each lesson will contain a brief Bible study on the importance of the topic, but a good portion of your time should be reserved to work on organizing their personal prayer time. Make sure you (1) don't teach the entire time and (2) allot time for the practical work IN THE CLASS!

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ We have spent the last four weeks discussing the need for personal prayer. Our goal has been to present the strongest case possible for why every Christian should cry out to the Lord, "Teach me to pray!"
- ⇒ Last week, we introduced the concept of praying the Scripture. Today, we begin to put it into practice.
- ⇒ TEACHING TIP: *Contact your class before Sunday and encourage them to bring a resource they can use to begin ordering their prayer life. Most likely, it will be some kind of journal or note cards.*
- ⇒ There are three basic categories we want to consider in our prayer lives.
 - Upward prayer: praise and thanksgiving that focuses on God Himself.
 - Inward prayer: self-examination and confession that bring a deeper sense of sin and, in return, a higher experience of grace and assurance of love.
 - Outward prayer: supplication and intercession that focuses on our needs and the needs of others in the world.
- ⇒ Today we are tackling PRAISE.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. The Priority of Praise
 - a. The Bible clearly makes the case that when we pray, praise comes first.
 - b. Read Psalm 100:4
 - i. This is a psalm of praise!
 - ii. Verse 2: We are to come into God's presence with singing. This speaks to our attitude as we enter our time with the Lord.
 - iii. Verse 3: We begin by remembering Who the Lord is ("He is God"), what He has done ("He hath made us"), and who we are ("we are HIS people").
 - iv. Verse 4: Enter into His gates (presence) with thanksgiving and praise!
 - v. Verse 5: This verse even gives us some ideas of what we can praise God for: God is good; His mercy is everlasting; His truth endures.
 - c. In the New Testament we have the words of Jesus. Read Matthew 6:9.
 - i. We begin our prayers by remembering our relationship with God: he is our Father.
 - ii. We remember where He is: in Heaven.

- iii. We remember His character: He is to be hallowed – holy – completely separate from the rest of creation (including us).
 - d. What is our point? Praise comes first.
- 2. The Motivation of Praise
 - a. Why is this important? Why should we begin our prayer time with praise?
 - b. Praise motivates the other kinds of prayer.
 - c. The more we attend to God’s perfect holiness and justice, the more readily we will see our own flaws and confess them.
 - d. Seeing God’s greatness also leads to supplication. The more we sense His majesty and the more we realize our dependence on Him, the more we will go to Him for our every need.
 - e. We could say it like this: Awe-filled adoration of God corrects the other forms of prayer.
 - f. This doesn’t mean that we can never come to God and immediately confess our sins or pour out our great need to Him. But it does mean that, in our overall prayer life, praise and adoration must have a prime place.
- 3. The Practice of Praise
 - a. How do we come up with the proper words of praise for the God we can’t begin to fully comprehend?
 - b. The good news is: The Bible is full of prayers of praise! We just have to find them and the personalize them.
 - c. Here is one example: 1 Chronicles 29:11-13 – David is praying before the congregation of Israel.
 - i. Have the class turn there and read the verses together.
 - ii. Point out that anyone can pray that prayer if they are sincere. Can anyone say it better than King David?
 - d. Encourage your class to take the journal/cards and simply tell them to write the reference at the top, and then save space where they can later write those verses out.
 - e. Spend the rest of your class time looking at the next page and taking the time to begin writing some of those verses.
 - f. Help them see how they can personalize these verses into their own prayers.

CONCLUSION:

- ⇒ Point out that we don’t have to pray every entry every day. But they can take one and read through it slowly, making it a prayer that comes from their own heart.
- ⇒ Remind them that the Psalms are full of prayers of praise! This section of their prayer time can constantly be evolving. As they find a prayer of praise in the Bible, enter it into your “rotation” to help keep your prayers fresh.
- ⇒ Challenge the class to be looking for more examples this coming week, and encourage them to share them with the rest of the class (email, text, etc.)

Other Examples of Praise found in Scripture

TIP: Use this to make your own class handout. If you can send it to the SS Office by 5 PM on Thursday, we can run copies for you. Give the class the references and give them time to look them up and share with the class.

Generic texts of praise:

- ⇒ Psalm 63:1 – “O God You are my God, I shall seek you earnestly. My soul thirsts for you, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. My lips will praise You because your lovingkindness is better than life.”
- ⇒ Psalm 42:1 – “As the deer pants for the water, so my soul pants for You, O God.”
- ⇒ Psalm 84 – “My soul longs and even yearns for the courts of my Lord; my heart and my flesh sings for joy to the living God. The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. How blessed is the man that trusts in You!
- ⇒ Nehemiah 9 (all throughout the chapter) – Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are God – the Lord – You have made Heaven, the earth and everything in it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all.

Praise the names of the Lord:

- ⇒ Jehovah-Jireh – My Provider – Genesis 22:14
 - “Heavenly Father, I praise you because I know that every good thing I have is provided by You...”
- ⇒ Jehovah-Rapha – My Healer – Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:2-5
- ⇒ Jehovah-Nissi – My Protection – Exodus 17:15-16
- ⇒ Jehovah-Makadesh – The One Who Sanctifies – Leviticus 20:8
- ⇒ Jehovah-Shalom – My Peace – Judges 6:24
- ⇒ Jehovah-Rohi – My Shepherd – Psalm 23
- ⇒ Jehovah-Tsidkenu – My Righteousness – Jeremiah 23:5-6
- ⇒ Jehovah-Shammah – The One Who is Present – Ezekiel 48:35

Praise what we learn about Jesus in the Gospels.

- ⇒ The Bread of Life
- ⇒ The Light of the World
- ⇒ The Door of the Sheep
- ⇒ The Good Shepherd
- ⇒ The Resurrection & the Life
- ⇒ The Way, the Truth, and the Life
- ⇒ The True Vine