## Lesson 11: Praise; Releasing Faith

If you want to be made completely whole so that you learn to live daily in harmony with God, then practice offering the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God. We have been redeemed "that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Eph. 1:12). When we offer sincere praise and thanksgiving in times of suffering we let Christ come into our trials and glorify His name. We are not talking about superficial praise. We're talking about praise when we have to die to self to offer it.

Charles A. Tindley, a poverty-stricken black pastor, stood at desperation corner. He was serving a tiny, struggling church in Cape May, New Jersey. A blizzard paralyzed the town. His baby had died in the cold, dark night.

Dawn brought no sign of relief. There was nothing but stale bread for breakfast. In his book, Their Finest Hour, Charles Ludwig explains how Tindley met the crisis.

"Set the table like we always do," he urged his wife. Courageously he thanked God for his salvation, his health and his children. The family listened and wondered. Someone knocked at the door. A brother in the Lord entered with his arms loaded with groceries. The storm had delayed his coming. Meanwhile, Charles Tindley had passed a sore test of faith with flying colors.

Pastor Tindley was an ex-slave who went on to build a church ministering to thousands in Philadelphia. God blessed mightily. A grandson of his former master was even converted under his ministry!

His spirit of grateful praise was the foundation for his wealth of spirit. Thankful praise releases your faith. On the wings of humble gratitude your faith soars into the highest heavens. There you enjoy the "free air" of complete trust in God.

Thanksgiving turns trials into blessings. Your inner life is transformed. Your personality becomes attractive. (After all, who enjoys a grouch?) Most importantly, it gives God the honor and glory due His name.

## The 3 Basic Elements of "Thankful Praise"

Exactly what is this thankful praise? And why is it the key to the rise and fall of individuals—and even whole nations?

Thankful praise to God is NOT the same as thanking our fellowman. Unfortunately, "Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for this food," usually sounds about the same as "Dear John, thank you for the birthday present you sent me." That kind of thanksgiving will **never** release our faith from bondage. Psalm 100 gives three basic elements of the thanksgiving that liberates our faith:

1. **Thanksgiving is submission.** It recognizes that the Lord is God (v. 3). He made us. He has absolute power as a tender, loving shepherd for our good. Therefore, we should submit to His will with thanksgiving. Thomas Ken said,

Devote yourself to God, and you will find

God fights the battles of a will resigned."

This is what Charles Tindley found. He showed supreme trust in the Lord his Shepherd. Then God was free to go before him in almighty power. Tindley thanked God no matter how bare the table. This was real "grace" before the meal. Grace before meals should mean, "I gratefully submit to the hand that feeds me." Our moral obligation to Him should be obvious.

A salty preacher once accused his congregation of missing this basic lesson. "Why, any dumb ox or donkey would recognize the one who feeds them as their master! But you don't." Not many preachers could get by with such hard-hitting language. But this one was named Isaiah (1:1-3). God had sent him to tell Judah why their nation would fall.

## Why Man Fell

As a matter of fact, that's why the whole human[1](https://www.praywithchrist.org/leaders-praise-releasing-faith#endnote) race fell. Did Adam and Eve thank God before they ate the forbidden fruit? Obviously not! When they knew God they did not honor Him as God. Neither were they thankful (Rom. 1:21).

John Noble's life was saved by eating in a spirit of grateful praise. He was in a Communist prison. The prisoners nearly starved to death. The Communists finally passed out old crusts of bread. Some desperate prisoners gobbled it down. Their empty stomachs couldn't stand it. They died. Noble sat in his cell overwhelmed with praise. Gratefully, he nibbled crumbs of bread. The spirit in which he ate saved his life.

Grateful submission to God in hunger or plenty is the foundation for true thanksgiving. But we can't stop there.

2. **Thanksgiving requires Joy.** Our is not a glum submission. As we enter God's gates with thanksgiving (Ps. 100:4), we are to "make a joyful noise unto the LORD (v. 1). We must "come before his presence with singing" (v. 2). Paul and Silas had this spirit when they sang in jail with their backs bleeding. If there's joy in our thanksgiving when we are suffering, how much more should there be when we have plenty and are well?!

My faith was released once by a joyful expression of thanks to God. My patience had been tried. For weeks we had sought to make necessary repairs to our office but we could not get the work done. Our ministry was hindered. I was discouraged; I had fallen "under the circumstances." Then the change came.

"I'm going to thank the Lord and enjoy the day whether we repair the office or not," I told my wife as I left home. I went on my way rejoicing. At our office prayer meeting I told the staff the same thing. Joyful thanksgiving marked our prayers.

Before we finished, a volunteer showed up to help with the repairs. Now, I don't always get relief that quickly, but I can always get "on top of my circumstances" by rejoicing and thanking God. And it is right to do so because He controls all my circumstances for my good. This is why thankful praise transforms our life. It opens our heart to God. We are then free to profit from our problems. Let me explain how this works.

One time, God told a family His plan for their future. A younger brother would be the leader. The others would serve him. The older brothers hated the younger; they sold him into slavery. He suffered unjustly for years. Yet he profited from all his afflictions. His trials prepared him to be a kind, forgiving, gracious ruler. But his cruel brothers were tortured all their lives with envy, jealousy and a guilty conscience.

Why did he profit from his problems? He believed God meant his afflictions for his good (Gen. 50:20; Ps 100:5). Our own grateful submission rests on this same confidence.

3. **Thanksgiving requires praise.** It is praise (Ps. 100:4). This is an attitude of worship and adoring wonder. I think this was demonstrated for me by Mrs. Ethel Tylee. She frequently prayed, "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things!" (Ps. 72:18). Coming from her, those words really meant something to me as a teenager. She had been a missionary. Her husband and one child were killed by the Indians. She was pregnant at the time. They left her for dead but she escaped and later gave birth to her baby.

Mrs. Tylee demonstrated to me something beyond grateful submission and deep joy. She worshipped the King with adoring wonder. I heard her repeat Psalm 72:18 so many times I have never forgotten it. This does NOT mean that she never grieved, but it does mean that she did reach the level of faith found in Psalm 72:18.

Most of us pull up short here. We are hindered by our struggle to understand hard things that have happened to us and our friends. We are trying to figure out what good could possibly come from them. And we can't fathom the mystery.

Praise takes us beyond our understanding. On the wings of praise we adore God beyond our comprehension. By faith we know God is not struggling to make the best of a bad situation, He only does wondrous things. Mrs. Tylee's adoring wonder was an example of "the sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15).

Paul Billheimer, in Destined for The Throne, aptly explains this sacrifice. Praise becomes a sacrifice when we have to die to our own opinions to offer it. We have to give up our ideas of what is best in order to praise the Lord for trials. We trust Him even when we cannot understand His ways. Thus we die to self.

William Carey offered this sacrifice when his printing plant burned. He watched years of translation work go up in smoke. What was his reaction? He calmly said, "How unsearchable are God's ways! The Lord let this happen that I might trust Him more. I will be still and know that He is God."

When Christians in England heard of the fire, they rallied to Carey's aid more than ever before. The profit from the fire in the end was far greater than the loss.

God Himself offered the greatest sacrifice of praise. Christ died as the sacrifice of thanksgiving prescribed in the law (Lev. 7:12). You remember He offered thanks for the bread and the cup at the last supper. They represented His body and blood which He would soon give as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Psalm 23:3 tells why He offered Himself as a sacrifice of praise. **God inhabits the praises of Israel. God is at home in the midst of the praises of His people!**

The only way God and man can live together happily for all eternity is in the midst of praise and thanksgiving. God is quite capable of imposing His unlimited wisdom and power upon people whether they like it or not. But He does not enjoy doing so. The imposing of divine wisdom and power on a grumbling man is grievous and sad.

Imagine yourself as a person of superior wisdom and power over a little child. You have to take the little one to the doctor to save his life. Out of your superior wisdom and power your force this treatment upon him. You can do it, but you don't enjoy it. If the child would only trust you, what a change would take place. He would submit to you in a spirit of thankful praise. He might not understand what you are doing, but he could look up to your superior wisdom with adoring wonder. You could enjoy each other. But, more than that, you would feel no reluctance in bringing into his life all that your superior wisdom and power are capable of providing.

**The goal of the Bible is the enthronement of God in the heart of man.** God must be free to act out of His superior wisdom and power without having to impose Himself on a doubting and reluctant man. This is why praise is more important than prayer.

## Adventure into the "New World" of Thankful Praise

Are you ready for flight into the world of continual, thankful praise? Here's the countdown before take-off:

Make every problem and every disagreeable person an occasion for prayer and thankful praise. (A man who worked daily with someone who got on his nerves began to thank God for this person every time he was irritated and their relationship soon became cordial.)

Count on God to use them for your good.

Lift off in faith. Thank and praise Him without waiting to see the good or understand what He's doing.

Now your flight is underway. Soar to the heights of complete trust with singing.

### POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

* What are the three basic elements of true thanksgiving according to Psalm 100? Why is each important?
* What does it mean to die to self? How does death to self relate to the sacrifice of praise?
* Why did man fall?
* Can you recall a "disaster" in your life that turned out for the best? Did you praise the Lord before you saw "the best"?
* How does praise help at the time you lose your job, fire destroys your home or you face some other calamity?
* Do people sometimes need time to grieve over a tragic loss or to work through anger without being made to feel guilty?
* What happens when a believer or a body of believers truly praise God?
* Can you think of personal illustrations when sacrificial praise was followed by unexpected blessings?
* Why is praise more important than making requests of God?
* Should we offer sacrificial praise to the Lord without expecting to receive any special favor in return?

### RESEARCH FOR INSTRUCTOR

* Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 which tells how a courageous act of praise conquered a powerful enemy.
* Look up "praise" in a concordance or in Naves Topical Bible and make notes on some of the insights you gain on this important exercise.

## Endnotes

1 Murdoch Campbell, From Grace To Glory, (London, Banner of Truth Trust, 1970), 149.