

## Praise (I): Why Praise?

### Introduction:

In the inner life series, following "The True Essence of Inner Life", the **first theme is "Hope of our Calling"**. "The hope of our calling", which is the eternal will of God, can be seen from the perspective of "God leading His people into the promised-land". The "promised-land" symbolizes Jesus Christ within us and Him becoming the abundance of all things for us. Therefore, a redeemed Christian is like the Israelites coming out of Egypt. However, "coming out of Egypt" is not the ultimate goal. The purpose is to enter the "land flowing with milk and honey", or to enter into the fullness of everything in Christ.

Before entering the land of Canaan, one must cross the Jordan River. "Crossing the Jordan River" symbolizes being "filled with the Holy Spirit". Therefore, the **second theme** in the series of inner life is **"Being Filled with the Holy Spirit"**. The Holy Spirit comes to lead us into the fullness of Christ. To obtain the abundance of God, one needs to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

After entering the land of Canaan (being filled with the Holy Spirit), although one enters into the fullness of the Lord, there are still many unconquered territories, numerous enemies, and many battles. Therefore, the **upcoming themes** in the series of inner life will discuss a series of methods, **teaching us how to drive away enemies and gain victory in this land of abundance**.

"Praise" is one of those methods that enables us to drive away the enemies, continue to possess the inheritance more abundantly, and enjoy the fullness of everything in Christ.

### I. Why Praise? A Biblical example:

#### 1. When we praise, God sets an ambush against the enemies (2Chr 20:11-23)

##### (a) Praise is God's most wonderful way to defeat our enemies

###### ◆ 2Chr 20:11

Jesus has won abundance for us, but the enemy is unwilling to accept it. The enemy uses various methods to drive us away from the abundance God has given us, steering us away from the promise-land that God has won for us.

###### ◆ 2Chr 20:21-23

God wants to accomplish far beyond what we can ask or think of. Like King Jehoshaphat, it is unimaginable how God uses the "praise" in such a miraculous way to defeat the enemy. God personally defeats the enemy and causes them to destroy each other.

##### (b) Praise is recognizing that we are powerless against the enemy on our own (2Chr 20:12-13)

◆ To obtain all the abundance and victory of God, it is crucial to understand that "we have no strength by ourselves" to resist the vast army attacking us. We need to come before God to seek and rely on Him.

◆ Each of us faces different enemies in our lives today. If we only rely on ourselves, we will be defeated.

(c) Praise is knowing that the victory of the spiritual warfare does not depend on us but on God (2Chr 20:15)

- ◆ We need to understand that in this spiritual warfare for the promised-land (Canaan), it is not because we are better or more obedient that God grants us victory. Victory does not depend on us but on God.
- ◆ King Jehoshaphat did not analyze his environment, wondering how the Jewish people, being so few in number, could face such a large enemy force. He only needed to praise based on God's promise. When they sang praises, the Lord sent ambushes to attack their enemies. We must understand that this spiritual battle is not fought with human strength but the battle belongs to God.
- ◆ We need to put praise in the forefront even when facing a formidable enemy with no solution in sight. It is not about rational analysis of how to deal with difficult situations. Instead, it is about continuous praise and waiting for God to act.

(d) Praise is the true expression of faith (2Chr 20:20)

- ◆ "...the Lord your God, and you will be established..." (2Chr 20:20)
- ◆ King Jehoshaphat expressed true belief in what the Lord had spoken to him. He placed the choir at the forefront of the army. Not only did he trust in God, but the people and the entire army also believed and accepted what God had said. When they were willing to sing praises, God defeated the enemy.
- ◆ We often pray and seek but do not truly trust Him, leading to worries and burdens. If we truly trust in Him, our prayers, expressions, and voices will be different. Some people believe initially but later lose faith. The best way to maintain belief is through praise. Thanking and praising the Lord in all things are expressions of faith.

2. When we praise, God's throne comes upon us and what we care about (Psa 22:3)

(a) God is enthroned on the Praise of Israel (Psa 22:3)

- ◆ We are the spiritual Israel.
- ◆ When we praise, something marvelous happens: God establishes His throne among us. It's not about doing something or figuring things out rationally. Instead, it's about continuous praise, thanksgiving, and trusting God. Remarkably, When we thank and praise God, His throne comes upon us, and in the spiritual realm, His grace, salvation, and wonderful power impacts what we care about!
- ◆ For example, a mother whose daughter worked as a nightclub dancer was advised by a pastor to thank and praise God. Initially, she only wanted to thank and praise for the good things, blaming the enemy for the bad. The pastor helped her understand that everything that attacks those loved by God serves a purpose. The mother knelt down, thanked and praised God with the pastor, and after their praises, she said, "For the first time in a long while, I am no longer worried about my daughter." The next day, she called the pastor to share that on the night they praised, a young person walked into the nightclub and told her daughter, "Jesus loves you very much", and her daughter accepted Jesus as her Savior, bringing about a transformation.

- ◆ Similar to Jehoshaphat, a good king, God allowed numerous enemies to surround him to make him realize the greatness of the God he believed in. All he needed to do was praise God.
- ◆ Praise is wholeheartedly and joyfully accepting the present circumstances arranged by God and believing it is the best intention God has for us.

## II. Attitude of Praise

### 1. Praise is to delight yourself in the Lord (Psa 37:4)

(a) Even when there is nothing favorable in our circumstances, we are still willing to delight ourselves in the Lord.

- ◆ For example, there was a couple whose daughter suffered from a mental illness and the doctor declared no signs of recovery. They met a pastor who encouraged them to praise and give thanks to God for their circumstance. Although it didn't make sense logically, they began thanking and praising the Lord for His goodness and His purpose in their lives. Eventually, the doctor called to report that the daughter had significantly improved and was discharged from the hospital in two weeks. She even got married a year later. When we delight in the Lord, He gives us the desires of our hearts.
- ◆ When your circumstance is like those of King Jehoshaphat, facing a great crisis, whether it's your spouse, child, job, boss, or past trauma, those are all like a great enemy. You are powerless to resist, but our God has a way. When you delight yourself in the Lord, He gives you the desires of your heart.

(b) How to delight ourselves in the Lord?

- ◆ When you feel the terror of your enemy, your mouth can still praise and bless Him, acknowledging that He is the God who loves us. Acknowledge His greatness, recognize that He governs every aspect of your life, and affirm that everything in your life, including your parents, family, and life's journey, is arranged by His good will. When you acknowledge his goodness, give thanks and praise him, you are delighting yourself in the Lord.

### 2. Praise is truly honoring Him as King

Praise is respecting that He is God and King, and you believe God will take care of all your affairs. Unless you let God triumph in *you* first through praise, He cannot triumph in your life and in what you care about.

## III. Practice Praise

※Praise needs to be practiced.

- ◆ Unless we eagerly practice praise in all things we encounter daily, we would be at loss when a terrible event happens suddenly.
- ◆ We can start by thanking and praising the Lord for the long-standing weaknesses that have burdened us, without self-pity or resentment. It could be for the hurts

inflicted by others, the hidden sorrows within our families, or the person or situation that has brought the most pains in our lives. When we begin to thank and praise for all of our difficulties, lifting up our hearts, allowing God to work, we will find that He will accomplish more than we can imagine.

### **Assignments:**

1. Praising out loud for at least 5 minutes every morning.
2. Praise and give thanks everyday for the “weaknesses” that burden us, without self-pity, blame, or criticism.
  - ◆ Things that hurt you
  - ◆ Unspoken sorrows within your family
  - ◆ The person who brings the most pain in your life
  - ◆ Unpleasant circumstances you are facing
3. Memorize scripture: Psa 22:3, Psa 37:4, Psa 100:4, Psa 34:1-2.

### **Praise:**

“You should continually strive to praise – surpassing all your mistakes, misunderstandings from others, all your failures, and the reckless words and actions of others. When the feeling of disappointment comes upon you, be attentive – immediately rise up to resist it, move away from it, stop it, surrender it to the Lord, don’t dwell on it, and don’t think about it anymore. Regardless of what happens, speak joyfully, maintain a cheerful countenance, be at peace, let it rest in the hands of the Lord. Whether it’s a major difficulty, a minor setback, a poignant disappointment, or a slight discouragement, maintain your praise and faith, don’t focus on those things, don’t look at yourself, just gaze upon Jesus.

If you praise the Lord every day, every moment, unimaginably great things will happen. It will make everything else you’ve experienced seem pale in comparison. You will see the Lord often, and an astonishing transformation will come upon you – you will delight in Him, replacing His desires with your natural desires. You will rejoice in His presence, praising Him for everything He has arranged for you, including your parents, family, and your entire life.

Such people are in the ranks of the overcomers.”

—Mrs. Robinson.