

LOVE, SERVE, PRAISE!

Part 6: "PRAISE!"

Mark 16.15-18 "Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone! The ones who believe and are baptized will be saved; *the ones that don't believe will be separated forever*. And these signs will follow those that believe: in My name they will cast out devils, they will speak with new tongues, they will take away 'serpents' and if they drink anything harmful it will not hurt them... *they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover!*"

We are sent into the world with the "good news" of salvation and healing... delivered as credible witnesses with "overcoming testimonies!"

Revelation 12.7-11 There was war in heaven and the archangel Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels and they were *defeated* and their *place* was taken from them in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world was cast out into the earth along with his angels, and I heard a loud voice saying, "Now is the *time* of salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ, for the accuser is cast down, who accused them day and night. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony*; and they loved not their lives unto death!"

The text... "And they..." The ones who were accused by him night and day! "*overcame him,*" the Serpent, the Devil, Satan, his accusations, his wrath..." "*because of the blood of the Lamb...*" His blood is the reason of our victory! "*and the word of their testimony!*"

THE WORDS OF OUR TESTIMONIES COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT THE BLOOD... AND THE BLOOD IS SHED IN VAIN, WITHOUT OUR TESTIMONIES!

His blood was shed for the sins of the whole world... how will they hear and believe without a proclaimer?

"And they loved not their lives, unto death!" Whatever the cost, life itself, nothing could keep them from overcoming his assaults and insults... There's motivation to turn over every stone in our field! *And only death could shut them up!*

"Let us threaten them so that they won't speak of Him anymore." Peter and John answered, '*we can't keep from speaking the things we have seen and heard.*' **Acts 4.16-20** "And being freed they went to their own and when they heard the full story *they lifted up their voice to God with one accord...* 'Why do the heathen rage and imagine vain things?' "They stand against the Lord and His Christ... and now Lord, behold their threats and *grant to Your servants boldness to speak Your words!*" **v23-29** "They were arrested again, and beaten this time, and told to stop speaking in Jesus name... *and they departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name!* **Acts 5.27-42**

The topic is simply our "praise," the "testimonies" of the great things God has done for us!

Basics... "The possessed man wanted to go with Jesus but He said, '*Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He had compassion on you.*' And he went and told his story throughout ten cities *what great things Jesus did for him and the people who heard him, marveled.*" **Mk 5.18-20**

“Pray that God will open doors *for telling the story of Christ*, for which I am in bonds. *I want it to be plain as day what He does for us*. As you live and work among “outsiders” be alert and don’t miss an opening... make the most of every opportunity. *Be gracious in your speech, the goal being to make men thirsty for God by the words you speak to them!*” **Col 4.3-6**

Nuts and Bolts... *Praise is more than fast songs...* BUT... it includes singing His praise! (We *worship* God for who He is and we *praise* Him for what He does... Which intimates that He is active in our lives!). Praise privately and publicly at all times, all day long, conversation, declaration, in song, with instruments, to glorify God! **Ps** “Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melodies in our hearts to the Lord!” **E5.19**

Asides... Some men have a hard time getting into worship and praise! They’ll sing into an air mike! After a few beers they’ll do a concert! They’ll go to a concert and mimic the star! But it’s different in church... Where family, coworkers, peers can see you humbled before God... Why? **Because our enemy doesn’t want men in their rightful place! Men’s voices, interacting with God, are an omen of a spiritual beat down!**

Nuts and Bolts... *Aspect! People want you to tell them something powerful, hopeful, and life changing!* They want to hear how their lives can be turned into “real life...” Gives a person a way to see something of *your story* that is pertinent to theirs... *Your story* gives them a view of how their lives can be different... *Your story* exposes them to a particular perspective, a “slice,” of your life so that it brings theirs into sharper focus... ***But it has to be a RELEVANT perspective!***

“To the Jews I became as a Jew, to those under the law as one of them, to those outside the law as one of them, to the weak, I became as weak...” **1Cor9.19ff *Intentional, thought out perspective! Sharing testimony shouldn’t actually be about us but about God and our audience!*** Our testimony should make them *marvel!*

They want to be treated with respect for their feelings and time... They want you to remember that they can think for themselves and don’t have to be told what to think! ***They want you to be clear and focused, on them and their needs!*** Our testimony should not bore them with “I, me and my!” ***Praising God publicly is part of “the mission!” Never embellish!*** Make sure what you are praising Him for (works) is real! “Had a headache all day yesterday... I took three aspirins before bed and it was gone when I woke up...” “God gave me the guy I have been wanting at the office...” “I just had a miracle provision, I sold my car...” People, including your kids, know how to think through your story and justify or delete it! ***What God does has God written all over it!***

Advanced... “*I will exalt You, my God and King! I will bless Your name forever. Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever!* Great is the Lord and *greatly to be praised!* And His greatness is unsearchable! *One generation will praise Your works to another and will declare Your mighty acts. And I will speak of the glorious honor of Your Majesty and of Your wondrous works!*” **Ps 145.1-5**

Inspiration... David’s giant proclamation of praise... “Every day and forever I will praise You!” “I will speak of Your majesty and works!” **“And I will transmit my testimony to my generations!” *This connection must remain open/vital!*** “Faith comes (or is revived) by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (and hearing of His mighty acts)!” **Rom 10.17** Soldiers equipped/Battles won by faith... ***Cut off the testimonies*** and our generations lose the future battles! ***Substantial material needs to be shared!*** *Current events* in our homes, in our hearts, minds transformed, relationships restored, physical healings, miracles... All provided by the God of the Bible stories that build our faith! ***That means we must keep connected to God by faith for mighty works to declare! And irresponsibility now means a generation without active faith/cut off!***

We must exercise our faith in a world of growing faithlessness... We must engage God and stand to see His delivering hand... We must cry out the goodness of our God – to the world around us... Beginning at home with our children! We do it because, if we believe David's *song of praise*, the future depends on it!

Exhortation... Everything we do, have been offered in Christ, must find its way to "mission!" We are saved to be sent and we send the ones we are sent to! We are sent with healing virtue as God's calling card for salvation! We publicly pray to establish credibility and verify our association with God! We publicly praise, building faith and establishing future salvation's, sent ones, healing ones, praying and praising ones!