



The following notes are from a sermon given by Pastor Wayne Flowers
on Sunday April 5th, 2020 at Smythe Street Church.

The Sacrifice of Praise – Sunday April 5th, 2020 – Smythe Street Church

Welcome! Thank you for joining un online.

It is my hope and prayer that I can leave you with something that will be a source of encouragement and strength.

Current series called the “The Power of Confession.”

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue”

When our words CONFESS what is in line with our heart it brings healing, salvation and LIFE!

One of the key verses has been...

If you CONFESS with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved**. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:9-10 (NIV)

What is your mouth CONFESSING to God? Are you CONFESSING Him as your Lord?

Confession is liberating! Confession brings freedom!

Confession sets us free from the POWER and grip of SIN!

Confession is POWERFUL!

Topic today...”The Sacrifice of Praise.”

We have a **key verse**: (we will come back to this shortly)

Through Him, therefore, let us at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that confess His name. Hebrews 13:15

My goal...that we would reaffirm the power and blessing in confessing and declaring the praises of God!!

Today is Palm Sunday. Praise is often the theme for Palm Sunday.

A few weeks ago, when we were planning the speaking schedule...talking about praise was the perfect fit for Palm Sunday. (triumphal entry, praising the Messiah)

But as things unfolded I felt like this was a challenge...

Can we talk about praise in circumstances like this?

Let’s be honest about why we might find this challenging right now...

- Many are stressed, worried and fearful. Many are not in the frame of mind to praise God.
- How can we praise God when we not feeling any joy and our hearts are troubled?

Three words that describe how you might be feeling...

Things that can push praise to the background...

1. Discouraged. What if my fear is suppressing my praise?
2. Disingenuous. What if I feel like my words of praise are hollow?
3. Disconnected. What if I do not feel as close to God as I should?

These are all valid questions!!

But there is something we need to hear!!

Confessing and declaring our praise to God is powerful not just when things are good. It is even more powerful during the difficult times.

Just because you praise God does not mean you are in denial of your reality. It means you are moving through your present reality with hope!!

Examples of people in scripture who praised God during difficult times...

- **Job.** When he had lost everything...bowed before God and worshipped.
- **Daniel.** In exile in a godless culture...offered praise to God.
- **Paul and Silas.** Sang praises to God at midnight from a jail cell.
- **Jesus** lifted his voice in praise of the Father when he was facing his darkest hour.

The strongest most inspiring men and women I have ever known are those who chose to declare the greatness of God in dark hours.

This was not the repeating of some magical incantations.

This was not a hyper-faith that denied the difficulties of life.

It was the declaration of the greatness and faithfulness of God in world that is broken by sin!

It was the declaration of the truth that when all else is shaken God will remain our rock!

Key Verse:

Through Him, therefore, let us at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that confess His name. Hebrews 13:15

This verse mentions...“a sacrifice of praise.”

There are times when praise, thanksgiving and worship flow easily from our heart and lips!

There are times when praise feels like a sacrifice.

In our minds praise and sacrifice do not seem to go together.

One is joyful, the other arduous and hard.

To praise God in tough times requires personal sacrifice.

It takes an act of the will to lay our all on the altar before a God we don't understand.

When we bring a "sacrifice of praise," we choose to believe that, even though life is not going as we think it should, God is still good and can be trusted.

When we choose to praise God in spite of the storms, He is honoured, and our faith grows.

When we lay down that sacrifice of praise before God...

Even when it seems hard....

Even when it seems counter-intuitive....

Even when we do not understand....

Something amazing and powerful happens in our life!!

The following three things bless our lives...

Confessing our praise to God...

1. Gets the focus off ourselves.

It is *not that we do not matter.*

Our feelings matter, our circumstances matter, our lives matter.

It is simply that we can become so self-absorbed that we leave ourselves more at risk and on shaky ground.

By praising God we are confessing, embracing, declaring that there is something true, something solid, something hopeful, something good, something lasting...beyond our temporary and difficult circumstances.

- We remind ourselves who is in charge and that we are not on our own out here.
- We reorder our little corner of the universe, putting things back in order.
- We put the emphasis back where it should be.

2. Brings us to a place of humility.

It is not that God does not want us to accomplish great things in life.

He has blessed mankind with amazing abilities and opportunities for the good.

But sincere praise puts God on the throne.

That matters!

It reaffirms that we are finite. We are frail. We need one another! We need God!!

We bow and we honour God.

We embrace the greatness of God and lasting truth of all that He is.

3. Helps us break through our fear.

To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the **garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness**; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified." Isaiah 61:3 (NKJV)

I love this phrase...

The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness!!

This is the exchange the Lord will enact in us!!

How does this happen?

Because you are aligning yourself with all that is true, secure, lasting and hopeful!

You are speaking truth over your life!!

God dwells where there is this kind alignment and truth.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God. Psalm 42:5 (NIVUK)

One more time...say this verse with me...

Through Him, therefore, let us at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that confess His name. Hebrews 13:15

The **worship team is going to close our service today** with an older encouraging song...

Blessed Be Your Name

Blessed be Your name - In the land that is plentiful

Where Your streams of abundance flow - Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name - When I'm found in the desert place

Though I walk through the wilderness - Blessed be Your name

Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise

When the darkness closes in Lord - Still I will say

Blessed be the name of the Lord - Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name - When the sun's shining down on me

When the world's all as it should be - Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name - On the road marked with suffering

Though there's pain in the offering - Blessed be Your name

You give and take away - You give and take away

My heart will choose to say - Lord blessed be Your name