



The Power of Praise

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By Rev. David Koch

Introduction:

Praise is something that can take place anywhere. Everyone needs recognition for his accomplishments, but few people make the need known quite as clearly as the little boy who said to his father: "Let's play darts. I'll throw and you say "Wonderful!"

[Bits & Pieces, December 9, 1993, p. 24.](#)

I wonder if God ever feels like the little boy. He throws the darts and we say WONDERFUL!

Praise can happen anywhere. It doesn't always have to happen in church. In the story we are going to consider this morning, it happened in the jail.

TEXT: Acts 16:25-31

I. Paul and Silas were on their way to pray

Prayer should bring us to the place of praise. Part of our praying should be praising.

There is something that happens within our hearts as human beings when we receive praise for something we did that was honorable, right and just. It seems to me when that happens we hold our head higher, there is a spring in our step, we whistle more while we work, we work even harder to accomplish the things we set our heart to do.

I believe that God responds in a similar way to the praises that we offer to Him. When we praise, God moves; when we praise Him He works through us. As He receives the praise and glory from our lives, other people have opportunity to come to Him.

On the way to prayer, Paul and Silas encountered a girl who was a fortune teller by demon powers.

This was quite a lucrative business, and it is still a lucrative business today.

This girl had followed Paul and Silas around for several days, speaking very loudly the fact that they were servants of the Most High God. The problem was that she was telling people's fortune by the power of demons. Even though there was truth in what she was saying about Paul and Silas, she brought attention to herself and gave validity and credibility to what she was doing by reading fortunes.

People can get trapped into all types of occult activity. Reading fortunes, and horoscopes, palm readers, tarot card readers, Ouija boards, these things are tools of deception that may look harmless on the surface, but trap people into the realm of the demonic.

A wonderful thing happened to this young lady. After following Paul and Silas around for several days, Paul finally addressed the evil spirit that was controlling this woman and commanded that spirit to leave her. Immediately the spirit lost control over her and left. It wasn't too long after that the owners of this woman realized that their profit from this slave was gone; they seized Paul and Silas and brought them to the town leaders.

After being beaten, Paul and Silas were taken to the jail and imprisoned there. They were put in the most secure part of the prison.

II. At times when God uses us to do something good, it would appear that bad things happen as a result. I know that doesn't seem fair, or logical, or right, but nevertheless it is sometimes the case.

Remember Daniel. He was only doing what was right and good. He was praying and he was thrown into the lions den as a result.

Remember Joseph. He was doing right when his brothers sold him into slavery and he ended up in the temple.

So Paul and Silas, even though they were doing something good and right, they were beaten and thrown into prison.

III. We never know the effect of prayer and praise.

It is now the end of a long day for them; a day of joy and also suffering. It was a day of deliverance and bondage. About midnight (v. 25) Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns when they decided that since they didn't get to prayer earlier in the day at the temple, they would have their own prayer meeting right there.

Their prayers were mixed with praises. They were probably praying for the situation they were in. They were probably praying for those who had beaten them, for their community, for the salvation of souls. They may have been praying for the prisoners around them, and the jailer.

Scriptures tell us that the other prisoners were listening to them. I don't think Paul and Silas were focused at all on their surroundings, or on themselves, or on the other prisoners. They were focused on God. Because of their relationship with God, they could pray and praise Him in that situation.

We were discussing the truth on Wednesday evening at Bible study, that there are times God puts us in situations that He knows we can handle, not to do anything in us, but for the sake of other people.

I'm sure God cared about that jailer, and I'm sure God cared about all the prisoners who were in jail at the time that Paul and Silas were imprisoned there.

As a result of the prayer and praise that went up from that inner prison cell, God visited the jail.

IV. You can bring the presence of God into any situation you find yourself in.

It doesn't matter if you are alone, or with someone else. It doesn't really matter if you think it's fair for you to be there or not. It doesn't matter how you got there or who you think is at fault for you to be there. It doesn't matter if you are in jail, or in a hospital, or in school, on the job, or at home. It doesn't matter if no one else there is a believer. What does matter is your attitude in that situation. What does matter is what you do there. As a believer, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit goes with you wherever you are.

God visited that place. There was no mistaking that God showed up. In the process of their simply praying and praising, the jailer and his whole family came to trust Christ for salvation. Scripture doesn't tell us about any of the other prisoners but they certainly heard the testimony that Paul and Silas shared with the jailer about salvation.

When the presence of God comes into a situation, things change. Those who are prisoners are released. Those who are bound are set free. Those who were blind can see, those who were deaf can hear, those who were dead come alive.

We, who are praising people, can bring God's presence into a situation. In that way, lives can be changed and influenced, not just for time, but for eternity.

The foundations of the prison were shaken. I believe that this event happened because Paul and Silas had the right focus and the right attitude. God showed up in response to their prayer and praise and made a statement.

The earthquake shook the foundations of the prison. All the prison doors flew open and the chains that held the prisoners in that jail were loosened.

Conclusion:

Praise should always be a part of our prayer. Remember that on your way to prayer you may encounter someone or a situation that needs God's help, healing, deliverance. Understand that sometimes it appears that bad things happen right after something good takes place. We never know the end result of prayer and praise. Through praise, we can bring the presence of God into any situation.

So where are you this morning? Are you in bondage in a prison where you need to lift your voice in prayer and praise and bring God's presence there? Are you in a place of sickness, of discouragement, of uncertainty for the future, and you need to lift your voice in prayer and praise and bring God's presence there? Are you in a valley of sorrow, of loneliness, of defeat? Do you know God's presence is there?

The citizens of Feldkirch, Austria, didn't know what to do. Napoleon's massive army was preparing to attack. Soldiers had been spotted on the heights above the little town, which was situated on the Austrian border. A council of citizens was hastily summoned to decide whether they should try to defend themselves or display the white flag of surrender. It happened to be Easter Sunday, and the people had gathered in the local church.

The pastor rose and said, "Friends, we have been counting on our own strength, and apparently that has failed. As this is the day of our Lord's resurrection, let us just ring the bells, have our services as usual, and leave the matter in His hands. We know only our weakness, and not the power of God to defend us."

The council accepted his plan and the church bells rang. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army had arrived during the night to defend the town. Before the service ended, the enemy broke camp and left.

[Source Unknown](#)

He can work through those who praise Him in a powerful way. As we conclude this morning, I want to invite you to come here to this altar and make a fresh commitment to praise God and bring His presence into the situations of life.