

Impactful Praise and Worship

Written by Ir. David Kurniadi
Saturday, 01 December 2018 01:46 -

Actually man was destined to be God worshiper. The Bible says that: “Out of the mouth of babes and suckling infants you have established strength (to praise you) because of your foes” (Psa. 8:2). The Lord cited this verse when He responded to the indignation of the chief priests and the Scribes to the children at the Temple when they shouted to Jesus: “Hosanna to the Son of David!” after seeing Jesus performed miracles in the Temple (Mat. 21:15-16).

Man was prepared by God to become God worshiper not only as he lives temporarily on earth but until eternity in Heaven. Man will sing together with the angels praising the Lord in Heaven eternally (Rev. 7:9-10).

Thus God had prepared praise and worship for man since they were babies and suckling. In other words all man have been appointed to become worshipers of God. That is why God trains man in godliness (spiritual training: 1 Tim. 4:8), because through spiritual training (godliness) man learns to praise and worship God. This spiritual training is a preparation for eternal worship in Heaven.

If we don't like to praise God, and have no delight in worshiping God, then Heaven is not a suitable place for us, because in Heaven all people will praise and worship God forever. So if we want to live there someday, then train ourselves as we live on earth to praise and worship God.

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People often take David as their reference to become worshiper of God. It is true that David was a God worshiper since he was very young. He wrote many Psalms for God. He was skillful in playing harp to worship God. He arranged group of singers and musicians to praise God in the Holy Temple. He was truly a God worshiper.

But there was another figure that is often overlooked and people rarely refer him as worshiper. He was Paul the Apostle. Paul was actually an extraordinary worshiper, though he was not like David. He teaches people to like to praise and worship God:

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19)

Paul was not only a teacher who taught the theory of praise and worship, but he himself was a worshiper. Paul has special experience in praising the Lord. This was happened when he and Silas were praising God while they were chained in prison in Philippi. While he was singing and other people in the prison was listening to him, suddenly there was a great earthquake that shook the prison wall causing all the prison doors to open and everyone’s shackles were unfastened (Act.16:25-26).

The praising that Paul presented to God gave a great impact. Paul was an impactful worshiper: the keeper of the prison with his entire house believing in God and accepted the Lord Jesus and were baptized (Act. 16:30-34).

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Impactful praise was also recorded in the Old Testament Book that was when David playing his harp praising the Lord in front of King Saul. His praise caused the evil spirit that troubled Saul departed from him (1 Sam. 16:23). Like wise in time of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, when his kingdom were attacked by a great multitude of enemies. But when the people of Judah were singing and praising the Lord, God made an ambush against all his enemies and utterly destroyed them (2 Chr. 20:22).

Our praise and worship should be impactful not just impressive, because we are not a worship artist that perform praise and worship as an attraction. Our praise and worship must be our expression of our admiration to the Lord, our gratitude for His kindness, the expression of our love to Him who has loved us first by giving His life for us (Jo. 15:13).

How Paul could become impactful worshiper?

First, it is because he fully realized that he has experienced God's great love:

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“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:9-10).

“(I) Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13).

Only if one fully realizes that he has received God’s mercy, then he could give a true and earnest praise to God as an expression of his gratitude for His mercy and loving kindness.

Praising God is another way to proclaim God’s great works in our life, which has called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. We, who were not His people, and now, become His chosen people. We, who were condemned, but now, have received His mercy and become His own (1 Pet. 2:9-10). In other word, praising is our testimony upon great things that God has done for us.

Second, Paul counted Christ as more valuable and precious than anything that he used to admire before (Phi. 3:7-8).

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Paul admired Christ very much, more than anything he used to admire before. That was why Paul became a great worshiper of God. His praising was the expression of his great admiration to Christ. Only those who admire Christ greatly would become a great worshiper. Admiration is the source of praise.

But if we still admiring the worldly thing: adore wealth and its glory, pursuing popularity and power, then it would be difficult for us to admire Christ and spiritual things and become true God worshiper. If we love the world then the love for God will be vanished from us (1 Jo. 2:15). And if we don't love God how then could we become His worshiper? If such people praise God, his praise would be just a lip service or just an art performance to impress people: his praise is to justify himself before men. He is acting as spiritual person but actually he doesn't love the Lord at all: only those who earnestly love Jesus who would become earnest worshipers.

Third: Paul could praise the Lord though he was in very difficult situation: he suffered severe persecution and intimidation because of his faith to Jesus (2 Cor. 11:24-28). Paul also had problem with his physical condition. He said that there was a thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan that buffeted him (2 Cor. 12:7-8). But in spite of these unfortunate conditions he did not let himself disappointed with God. Instead he took pleasure in his infirmities, in his troubles and distresses for Christ's sake (2 Cor. 12:10). As the result, though he was shackled in prison, Paul could rejoice in the Lord, praising and worshiping Him. How could he own such mental strength? Certainly it was because of the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that upheld him supernaturally. But beside that, Paul, since the first time following Christ, was determined to endure hardness as a soldier of Christ, as he also suggested his spiritual son: Timothy (2 Tim. 2:3-4). Since the beginning he set himself that to follow Christ he must be willing to deny himself and take up his cross (Mat. 16:24-25). He knew that in this world he would suffer many persecutions as the Lord Jesus said (Jo. 16:33), but he knew also that he would be able to endure it because the Lord has overcome the world for him beforehand. Paul knew that to enter the Kingdom of God he must go through many tribulations (Act. 14:22). With such expectation Paul then could appreciate every single small goodness and fortune: it made him always thankful and rejoice. That made him able to praise the Lord in every situation and condition.

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But it's a pity that the Christians nowadays do not prepare themselves with such expectation. The Gospel nowadays is offered with grandiose promises and ease of life. The Gospel message now is more to motivate people to achieve successful life and material abundance. With such expectation Christians' faith become fragile and easily disappointed with unexpected situation. The smallest hardship could make them depressed, disappointed and upset with God. Their faith and praise to God are so dependent upon the situation and condition they have. If the situation and condition are not according to their expectation, they are not able to praise the Lord, and they are disappointed and complain. That is why so many Christians in the end time would abandon their faith and turn their back from the Lord. Indeed disappointment could lead to rejection (Lu. 7:23).

The expectation of Christians nowadays is not the expectation of the soldier of Christ that is prepared to endure hardship with Christ (2 Tim. 2:3). The expectation of today's Christians is the expectation of the tourist who expects beautiful scenery, pleasant journey, and comfortable accommodation. So, when they do not receive what they are expected they will be disappointed and upset. The small hardship or difficulty could make them leaving the church: minor offense, discomfort and disappointment are enough to make them grumbling.

This type of Christians cannot become earnest worshiper of God. Their praises are not sincere, but just a lip service, to show their participation during the church's service. Their praise and worship are not the expression of their love and admiration to the Lord but because they get what they want. Their praise is very situational and conditional so from their same mouth could come out praise but also grumbles to the Lord. They cannot rejoice at all time as the Scripture teaches them (1Te. 5:14,16).

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From the above mentioned we could develop a good mental attitude that would make us a true worshiper of God and an impactful worshiper.

Paul wrote a wonderful teaching about how God worshiper should behave in a daily life: it was written in his epistle to the Philippians church. At that time, when he wrote the letter, he was in the situation, which was very difficult - if not impossible - for someone to behave nicely. He was in a prison – a dark and stuffy Roman prison – a condition and situation that were difficult for someone to show a positive attitude that could encourage and console people. But the Holy Spirit who dwelt within him enabled him to flow the streams of divine encouragement and consolation (Jo. 7:38) to the people who read his letter. These streams of living water produce earnest praise and worship to God. What did Paul teach us?

Paul taught us that we should rejoice in the Lord always (Phi. 4:4) no matter what is our situation; the joy that sourced from the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22) that does not depend upon the surrounding situation or condition; the joy that comes from faith, hope and love to God (1 Cor. 13:13); the joy that comes because we realize that the Lord always loves us. Only a joyful person could praise the Lord with enthusiasm.

He taught us that we should show unselfishness (Phi. 4:5; Amp. Bible): even in the midst of our affliction. Most of people become selfish when they are in affliction; they don't concern about others. On the contrary they are envious or jealous if they see other people more fortunate. As the result they could not give thanks to God or praise Him joyfully.

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Actually being kind to others will always make us happy. And happiness will give us energy to praise and worship the Lord.

Paul encouraged us that we should not worry about anything (Phi. 4:6). Worry comes from unbelief. Worry is a sort of fear that is created by our unbelief and playing in our minds and our hearts. Since worry is not of faith and even contrary to faith, so worry is a sin, because everything is not of faith is sin (Ro. 14:23). We must deal seriously with our worry, because it makes our faith leak and sink. That's why the Bible forbids us to worry, and we should avoid what is forbid by the word of God.

Worry makes us difficult to praise God. We must deal with it if we want to become impactful worshiper. The Bible shows us how to deal with our worries. That is to bring our cares to the Lord in prayer (1 Pet. 5:7). Prayer is a way out for our worries, because when we cast our cares on Him, He will give a perfect peace within. We know that our God hears our prayers and concerns with our needs, because we are His children and He is our dear Father. He cares about us.

Prayer is an exit door from our worries and thanksgiving is an act of faith that will neutralize our worries. Thanksgiving will overcome our worries. If we can overcome our worries then we could praise and worship God whole hearted.

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Let the peace of God, which beyond human understanding, guards our heart and mind (Phi. 4:7). A peaceful heart is the fountain of praise that will flow the streams of abundant praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. The Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is the unfailing source of our peace. He gives His peace unto us; the peace that the world cannot give (Jo. 14:27).

The worldly peace is situational and conditional. It needs certain situation and condition to come up. If the situation and condition are not possible to produce peace than man cannot have peace they need or man will lose their peace.

But the peace of Christ is different. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It will come up regardless the outside situation. This is beyond human understanding. We will be marveled when we enjoy peace in the midst of unfortunate situation and condition. This divine peace is glorious because it is the heavenly peace that comes upon those whom God is pleased with. This is the peace that God promised to give, when the angels proclaimed it at the first Christmas Eve (Lu. 2:14). And with a heart full of heavenly peace we will be able to praise the Lord with all our heart. This kind of praise will give a great impact to the people who hear it.

We should fill our heart and mind with true, lovely, pure and positive things (Phi. 4:8). Our mind is like a vessel. If we fill it with good things, it will bring forth good things; if we fill it with bad things, it will bring forth bad things too (Mat. 12:35). The world nowadays gives many bad things. Bad news are flooded our ears everyday. Bad things are displayed before our eyes. These make our hearts and minds polluted. That's why we must clean up our heart and mind everyday with good things (Phi. 4:8) and with the words of God (Jo. 15:3). Only with clean heart and mind we can praise and worship God in the way that pleases Him. We must keep our heart and mind pure. We must guard it.

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We also must learn to suffice ourselves and be content in any condition and situation (Phi. 4:11). Be content with what we have because the Lord will never, ever, leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Those who do not learn to be content will always live in dissatisfaction and restless. Such person cannot praise God with full of thanksgiving and his praise will not give any impact. Contentment will make our worship profitable: it will give us great gain (1 Tim. 6:6). Contentment boosts us to always praise God and give thanks to Him.

We are able to bear anything in Jesus, who supplies us with His power (Phi. 4:13). Living in God's power (Ep. 6:10) will give us confidence that we can face any situation and condition that God allows to happen. We know that God has already measured it precisely according to our ability. And if it comes beyond our ability, then His strength will uphold us. And He will help us by giving a way to escape it, that we may bear it (1 Cor. 10:13). If we realize this then we will feel relieved and optimistic. Relief and optimism will make us able to praise God with enthusiast.

The essence of our confidence in God is we believe God will provide everything we need according to His riches and glory (Phi. 4:19). In Christ we are lack of nothing and have our abundant life (Jo. 10:10), because He is our good Shepherd and we are His flocks (Psa. 23:1-6). Everything we need: physical, mental or spiritual, is provided in Him, including protection, guidance, peace and joy. With such abundance there is no reason for us not to praise Him and always give thanks to Him. We always have a reason to thank Him and praise Him. We can be a worshiper that pleasing His heart and give impact to our surrounding.

How could our praise give an impact? It's because when we please God with our praise He will

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respond our praise by coming to us and reach out His merciful hand to us and give us His grace. And there will be many wonderful things happened as a result.

God manifests His presence in the midst of us when we please His heart with our praise and worship (2 Ch. 5:13). His presence will always bring great impact. Miracles and wonders can happen spontaneously, giving: healing, deliverance and restoration; God will directly take an action to solve our problems, which are beyond our ability to solve it. This was happened with the people of Judah when they were sieged and attacked by their enemies. God made an ambush and defeated their enemies while they were praising the Lord (2 Ch. 20:22).

Our praise is also our testimony of God's kindness and His wonderful deeds upon us. When we give our testimony through our praise and thanksgiving, our testimony could become a prophecy for other people who hear it (Rev. 19:10), and if they would agree and say "amen" the wonderful things that we have experienced could happen in the similar way to them. Thus, our praise at the same time can be a prophecy (1 Ch. 25:3). This is also how our praise can give an impact, or in other word, we make an impactful praise.

When we see that our praise and thanksgiving give a great and wonderful impact for other people, we will rejoice greatly. Isn't life so wonderful if we can be a worshiper that pleases God's heart and become a blessing for others?

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