



**A
LETTER
FROM YOUR
PASTOR:
JUNE 2020**
by Lee Shipp

THE CHOIR OF GOD

"[...]let us come before His presence with thanksgiving ..." Psalm 95 gives the intent of forming a choir of worshippers who are extending their hands in the act of adoring, praising, and thanking God. This choir of worshippers is a company of believers organized and engaged in the church service. This is in addition to, and possibly different from, the worship team – which implies a company of people playing, singing, and leading in the worship of God. This is also different from the "choir" so traditionally found in mainline denominational churches where the choir is employed in singing, but there is very little, if any, public and spontaneous cries and shouts of adoration to the glory of God.

According to Hebrews 13:15, all redeemed persons who are loving and loyal to Jesus are called to come out publicly and praise the Lord, *"By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."* The world is trying to ignore the One they so shamefully rejected; therefore, it is the believer who supplies the constant reminder to the world of the beauty and love of Jesus. God was not ashamed to bear our reproach; we should not be ashamed to bear His.

PRAISE OPENS THE HAND OF GOD

God does not get to do all the things that are in His heart. Jesus could not work many miracles in His hometown because they refused to believe on Him. Jesus longed to care for Jerusalem, but instead, He had to weep over the city because she refused to cry to Him. There are so many great things that God wants to do for His children. He is excited to be God! Let us, therefore, be the people who say "YES" to Jesus!

Beautiful provisions are awaiting the choir of worshippers. God's manifest presence will distribute real and tangible treasures into the lives of those who offer Him praise. In the midst of their praise, God will break out upon their enemies and bring to confusion the hordes that have gathered around them. I have personally witnessed this in my life. In a season of great danger, many enemies were lurking for the destruction of my life and ministry. Traps were set for my demise. False accusations were broadcast to any listening ear. Like David, I had no refuge but the presence of God. I did not know who was a friend or who was an enemy. I was in peril at every turn. It was here that God taught me the very real way He responds to our praise. Praise opened the door to the presence of God. I entered into the secret place where I heard God sing songs of deliverance over me. I knew in that moment my foes were defeated, for God had come to fight for me! I saw it. I heard it. Then I watched God bring my deliverance. What a glorious deliverance it was!

When believers offer praise to God, He comes to them with the delight of being God and fulfilling the believer's expectations. He becomes the strength in their weakness. He becomes their refuge in the day of trouble. He is the Good Shepherd rescuing them from the pits of the sin they have fallen into. He is the One who justifies

them, pardons them, sanctifies them, and glorifies them; therefore, who can lay any charge to these, or bring them into condemnation?

Though there are many believers in the world, it is obvious from scripture that all do not enjoy the intimacy and provisions of God to the same degree. Many believers will not praise God. It is not that they cannot, they just will not do it. Tradition has paralyzed them. The fear of man has paralyzed them. The reproach of Christ is not worth the rejection of men.

From this bondage of tradition and the fear of man, they are only convinced of one way to worship God, even if it is wrong. They will say things like, *"Well, that is not the way we did when I was growing up. In our church, we did not lift hands or shout out to God, that would be undignified."* And like Michal, David's barren wife who was embarrassed by David's praise to God, they will shut the door to God's abundant provisions and revelations.

PRAISE RISES FROM A PROPER VIEW OF GOD

Praise does not arise from those who have no troubles. Praise is the persuasion of God's help. It is the persuasion that the Lord, He is my God. I am His and He is mine. I am advantaged because the Lord is on my side and it's He who fights for me. I praise Him because He is worthy! I do not praise Him because He keeps me from trouble, but because He will not forsake me in troubled times. God cares for me and I praise Him. It's not a job that is going to care for you! No man is going to give you the break you need! It is your heavenly Father who watches over you as He does the birds of the air.

**"IT IS ONLY BY A LACK OF PRAISE THAT
MULTITUDES AVAIL THEMSELVES OF
THE INTIMACY & PROVISIONS OF GOD."**

The Bible has declared God's blessings to the believer. The one who can praise God believes these blessings are true; their praise opens God's hand. In Christ, I am blessed of God! I am not cursed. This new life, the life of Christ, is my life. I'm free as a Son of God. Regardless of my past, or what anybody has spoken to me, or generational curses, I have a new life in Christ, which is blessed forevermore!

God has redeemed me. God assures me, even promises, that all things will work together for my good. God has an expected end and He is very excited about it. Praise your way through whatever is trying to defeat you. Sickness, calamity, oppression, confusion, and betrayal are no match to the presence of God. Do not let the enemy prevail by refusing to give God praise. Praise is the direct line to God, call Him and He will come. Praise God into the situation!

PRAISE GOD NOT THE DEVIL

God is going to do something powerful for His name's sake. God is not only establishing your testimony ... He is establishing His. God has spoken good things over your life. Believe Him! Do not tell me, *"I just cannot believe to see the goodness of God."* It is not that you cannot, it is that you will not. If you are not believing God, then you are choosing to believe the devil. You would rather believe the devil and receive evil. Seriously, look how much faith everyone has in the devil. They expect evil and trouble every day, and that is what they typically get. And they also praise the devil. They ascribe to the devil's ability; his ability to bring havoc and pain into their life. They ascribe to the devil his presence and strategies against their life and family. I see this all the time with people.

Why not believe God? If you had a fraction of faith in God to be as good as you do in the devil to be evil, you would hold the promises of God in your hand. Do not tell me that you have faith in God if you do not praise Him the way the Bible commands. Praise

with lifted hands, shouts of exultation, magnifying His Name, crying out to Him, singing to Him, declaring His goodness publicly, paying your vows in the congregation of the Lord, and so forth.

Do not fail to keep your hope. Your confusion is not your end. Your disaster is not finality. Your death is not your conclusion. *“God shall bless us: and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him”* (Psalms 67:7).

Come on, what is the glory of the story? If God assures me of good things and an expected end, then I must not faint until I experience that ending in my life. There is to be a glory to the story God is writing about my life. Was the glory of the story watching Daniel pray in his window or sleeping with the lions? Was the glory of the story when the three Hebrew boys refused to bow or the fourth man walking with them in the fiery furnace? Was the glory of the story when Joseph was in prison still being faithful or going from prison to Prime Minister overnight? Was the glory of the story when Moses was praising God at the Red Sea or when the waters parted? Was the glory of the story when Jesus laid His life down on the cross or the resurrection?

Praise till the greater glory has come. Yes, it was glorious for Jesus to offer Himself on the cross, but are you not glad there was a resurrection? Yes, it was glorious for Daniel to continue his prayer life while it could mean execution, but are you not glad there was a Daniel in the lion’s den? Yes, it is glorious you still love Jesus, that you continue to be in your place, but can you smell the greater glory that is coming? Praise until it does!

The One you are calling by your praise is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or the world to come. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him.

So, what am I saying? If your life is not filled with mystery and miracles, then you need to praise until it is. Who do you believe God is? If you distort Him and His image, even in your mind, then you have created a false god. An idol of the mind is as evil as the idol in your hand. The Living God is big! Oh! Magnify Him with me! Do not form another god in your mind. Believe in the One who has fully disclosed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. If you distort Him, if you allow what you see to diminish Him, even in your mind, then you are left with an idol, a demi-god, and no wonder there is no praise in your life.

Just consider Isaiah’s confession of God’s greatness. In his writing, between chapters 41-44, Isaiah gives the most spectacular demonstration of what a God is supposed to be. God is God because He does great wonders. By wisdom, He creates. He made the heavens and earth. He made light. He smote Egypt and delivered His feeble people.

False gods have been invented by men, but God invented men. God has no beginning or end. False gods are made from the earth, but God made the earth. False gods bring no fear nor cause things to tremble, but God causes the mountains to shake and the seas to roar. False gods are made by a goldsmith, hammer, and anvil, but God made the goldsmith. False gods cannot foretell the future, but God controls the future. False gods cannot do good or evil, but God can do anything He wants.

If your enemy has overcome you, your god is too small! If you suffer lack, your god is too small. If you can’t take it anymore, your god is too small. If you can’t laugh, shout, sing, and dance, your god is too small. If you can’t rejoice, waist-deep in the billows, your god is too small! If you cannot praise, it is because your god is too small.

ISAIAH DESCRIBES WHAT A GOD SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

God should be able to remove fear from His people by being with them. He should give His people strength. He should be a present help. He should uphold them and keep their feet from falling. He should fight their battles. He should hear their prayers. He should feed them when they are hungry and give water to quench their thirst. He should make them righteous by redeeming them and saving them. He should answer their prayers. He should deliver them from their oppressors and heal their diseases. He should go before them and prevail over their enemies.

All of this and more is the value of the believer’s God! Our God is mighty. He rebukes the false gods of the people and denounces them by calling them deaf and blind. God declares to His people: *I will be with you in the waters. In the rivers, you will not drown, and in the fire, you shall not burn. I love you with an everlasting love. I will give my life for your redemption. I am the Lord. I am the creator. I am holy. I make a way in the seas and paths in the waters. I give water in the wilderness and springs in the desert.*

Isaiah reinforces God’s claims by speaking on behalf of God: *your false gods are vain; they cannot see, but I see all things. Your false gods know nothing, but I know all things. What god has ever profited a man? The vain gods have never fed you or given you water. They are weak and cannot give you power. But I, the Living God, form the light and create the darkness. Baal bows to me. The false gods are carried by beasts, but I carry you, I made you, I will bear you up in my arms. The false gods are carried on men’s shoulders. Once they are set down, they cannot move from their place, but I ride on the wind and dance through the galaxies! The false gods cannot hear or answer your cries for help. When you are in trouble, they cannot save you. But I cannot fail you.*

Oh beloved, shall a God like this not be praised continually? It is only by a lack of praise that multitudes do not avail themselves of the intimacy and provisions of the Great God Jehovah.

What have the false gods ever made or annihilated? What miracles have they wrought? When did they divide a sea or march through a wilderness scattering bread from the skies and giving water from a rock?

HIS DESIRE TO BE GOD IS GREATER THAN YOUR DESIRE TO BE HELPED

Right now, you can open the hand of God. Right now, you can beckon God into your very life. He will come. He loves being God. His delight is not what you can do for Him, but what He can do for you. His glory is manifest in His ability to make the weak strong.

Wherever you are, you can move to a new place by praising God right now. Men cannot get you there. Your counselors cannot get you there. Your pastors and church cannot get you there. It is God who answers prayer. It is God who delivers. So how do you get His attention, how do you pray a prayer so He will answer? You praise Him the way the Bible says to praise Him. You praise Him in the power of His Holy Spirit. You praise Him in humility and faith.

Men may have discarded you. Your failures may have disqualified you. Your enemies have wrecked your life. But if you would begin to praise God, He will come to you and restore you. He will make something beautiful of your disasters and sins. He will lift you. He will save you. He will fight for you. He will redeem you. He will make you whole and clean. That is what a God should do!

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