

“Praise, How Great is our God” (Jeremiah 33:10-11; Revelation 19:5-7)

Praise will connect us to our great God in the midst of our real circumstances. When we praise the Lord, our hearts will be turned to the Words of the Lord, to the heart of the Lord, and we are led to the presence of the Lord. When we continue to praise the Lord, our hearts will receive the work of the Lord, and be healed and strengthened. We will find true hope in the midst of hopelessness. We will find true peace in the midst of anxiety.

Here is what happened in 587 BC, in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.¹ The army of the king of Babylon surrounded Jerusalem. That was exactly what the Lord said through Jeremiah the prophet. The Lord said, “I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will capture it. If you fight against the Babylonians, you will not succeed” (Jer 32:1-5).

Just as the Lord had said, Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of the king of Babylon. It looked like the city was going to be handed over to Babylonians, and destroyed and become a desert, emptied of people and animals.

In the midst of that situation, the Lord said:

Jeremiah 33:10-11, 14

"This is what the Lord says: 'You say about this place, "It is a desolate waste, without men or animals." Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither men nor animals, there will be heard once more ¹¹ the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord, saying, "Give thanks to the Lord Almighty, for the Lord is good; his love endures forever." For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,' says the Lord.

¹⁴ 'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

“What?” “Are you serious?” “It can’t be true!” “No, it’s impossible.” “Oh, thank you for the encouragement, but I know it will never happen.” “Actually this makes me more depressed.”

¹ *Children's Ministry Resource Bible*, Nelson, 1993, p.925

If you see the real situation just in front of you, those must be your honest thoughts.

But the history tells us that it happened!

In the days of Nehemiah, about 515 BC, the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt.² Of course, people rejoiced for it. They praised the Lord, and gave thanks to Him. They rejoiced and sang praises to the Lord. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem was so loud, it could be heard far away (Neh 12:43).

Praise expresses our joy and gratitude that the promises of God have come true. It expresses the greatness of God, and praises Him who has done all these great, wonderful things.

When we praise God, we will be drawn into the reality that God's promises have come true. We can take part in experiencing the greatness of God which people in the past have experienced. We praise the same God! We praise this great God! We can join the praises of the people in the time of Nehemiah.

By praising God, we can bring the greatness of God into our current circumstances. No matter what our current situation is like, the greatness of God will never change. This great God is with us. We are in the promise of this great God. As we continue to praise Him, these things will gradually become reality within us.

For example, I sing, "God will make a way where there seems to be no way. He works in ways we cannot see. He will make a way for me." When I started to sing, my mind was still preoccupied with my current situation; this problem and that problem, this duty and that duty. I know I have to do it. But, I am in the situation where I can't do it well. I don't know how to handle it. It's not "seems to be", but absolutely no way! My intellectual mind says it doesn't make sense this song. Just stop it.

But, I keep singing repeatedly. I continue to praise Him. Then gradually the work of the Holy Spirit spreads inside of me. The Holy Spirit starts to minister through the song. Through the melody and the rhythm, my hart heart is softened.

² *Children's Ministry Resource Bible*, Nelson, 1993, p.559

I continue to sing repeatedly, and start to hear God's voice through the lyrics. He is speaking to me, "I will make a way where there seems to be no way. I'm working in ways you cannot see." I continue to praise Him still more. Then before long, the song will become the words of my faith. And finally it will become my conviction.

In our praises, the Holy Spirit reminds us that no matter what our current situation is like, God's greatness will never change. This great God is with us. We are in the promise of this great God. As we continue to praise Him, these things will gradually become reality within us. "How Great is our God."

Not only that, Praise makes us hope in even greater works of God which will happen in the future. In praise, we go forward into God's perfect glory in the future.

Revelation 19:5-7

a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!" ⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

We praise the same God! We praise this great God! Praise opens our spiritual eyes to see the coming of the Lord in his glory. In praise, we can taste what dwelling in God's awesome glory is like, which is coming.

In his speech of "I've Been to the Mountaintop," Martin Luther King Jr. said this in Memphis, the day before he was assassinated. "I'm so happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."³

Praise has power. When we praise the Lord, we launch His great power.

When we praise the Lord, we declare God's greatness to the world, to other people. "How Great is our God."

³ <http://www.avis.ne.jp/~iyao/mountaintop.htm>

When we praise the Lord, we proclaim against our bad circumstances, “Our God is more powerful than you.” We proclaim against our problems, “Our God is mightier than you.” “How Great is our God.”

When we praise the Lord, we empower our faith. My God is greater than my understanding. He is greater than my knowledge, my theology. He is more wonderful, awesome and powerful than my expectation. “How Great is our God.”

For Lifenet groups and personal reflections

1. Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of the king of Babylon (587BC). It looked like the city was going to be handed over to Babylonians, and destroyed.

- 1) If you were in that situation, what thoughts might you have?
- 2) Read Jeremiah 33:10-12. What might be your response to the words?
- 3) In the days of Nehemiah, the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt (515BC). And people rejoiced and sang praises to the Lord. What does this fact teach you?

2. Praise will connect us to our great God in the midst of our real circumstances.

- 1) Against what situation or problem or issue, would you like to proclaim “my God is mightier than you”?
- 2) What kind of empowerment do you need to your faith?
- 3) Sing the song “How Great is our God” and observe what is going on in your mind and spirit. In praising, be open to the Holy Spirit and let him minister to you.