



PRAISING GOD AT ALL TIMES

I was sitting at my desk some time ago when I came across a verse in Hebrews that arrested my attention: "*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*" (Hebrews 13:15).

As I sat there, I asked myself, in bewilderment, "How could anyone praise God continually?" I then said to myself, "I can see that it's good to praise God, but surely not all the time."

Knowing the best way to interpret any given verse of scripture is to study its context, so I began to think about the basic message of the book of Hebrews. I recalled the many contrasts that the author points out between the Old and New Testament priesthoods, blood offerings and sacrifices. In all these matters, the promises of God through Jesus Christ are better than then the Old Covenant.

The improvement was especially apparent in the area of sacrifices. Whereas the smoke of the Old Testament sacrificial offerings ascended from the altar continually, now in New Testament times the one sacrifice of Jesus made all other sacrifices unnecessary.

"But wait a minute," I said. "It's only a partial truth to say that God doesn't require sacrifices anymore. True, He doesn't require sacrifices for sin, but He does require sacrifices of praise. That's what it says here: "*...Let us offer the sacrifices of praise to God...*" I hesitated a moment before I added the word: "...*continually.*"

Thinking that maybe there might be a faulty translation here, I decided to see if I could find any other passages that might shed a little light on the subject. I found Psalms 34:1: "*I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*"

Well, that's even clearer than Hebrews 13:15. And if David was blessing and praising God at all times in Old Testament times, than what's wrong with me? Why don't I praise God more than I do?

I tilted my chair back on two legs and just sat there and thought for a while. And, believe me, I had something to think about. God was telling me that He wanted me to live a life of praise. He wanted me to praise Him while I was taking out the trash, and He wanted me to praise Him in good times and bad. Anytime, all the time.

"*All right, Lord,*" I said finally. "*If that's what You want, who am I to say no?*" And I have made a covenant with God that I would begin praising Him in all things.

I believe that was a major breakthrough, although I can't say I fully understand the mystery of praise and why it unleashed such great power in my life. Not until some time later did it become a little clearer.

One day I was drawn back to Hebrews 13:15. As I read the verse over and over again, the Holy Spirit revealed to me that the writer defined praise as "*the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*" The word "*fruit*" caught my attention. The Holy Spirit brought back to my remembrance how Jesus had said, "*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*" (John 15:8). While there are many ways in which we may bear fruit as Christians, yet here is one sure way: by "*the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*" This great revelation that the Holy Spirit gave to me has shown me that every time we give thanks and praise to the Lord, we are bearing fruit. The more we praise Him, the more fruit we bear. The more fruit we bear, the more our Heavenly Father is glorified. And, the more He is glorified, the more His power is unleashed.

There is another word that the Holy Spirit caught my interest in this passage of Hebrews 13:15, the word "*sacrifice.*" The Holy Spirit revealed to me that we are to offer *the sacrifice of praise to God.* That revelation suggested that we are not to praise God only when all is going well, but *continually.* Even when we don't feel like it, we are to *sacrifice praise,* and this is what God wants from us. When circumstances seem dull and gloomy, *sacrifice praise.* When sickness strikes our bodies unexpectedly, and our will power is reduced to zero, *sacrifice praise.*

I knew that the Holy Spirit revealed a key Bible truth to me. Feelings or no feelings, God commands us to offer Him *the sacrifice of praise continually.* In sickness and in health; in foul and fair weather; good days or bad days; *sacrifice praise.*

This revelation came to me with fresh impact that praise is not optional for Christians. God expects it from you and I. I wasn't doing God some big favor by praising Him; I was simply obeying Him.

There were times that I encountered objections from others that praise is fanatical, emotional, or unmannerly. But we are not offering praise to please them. There's another Scripture that says, "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me...*" (Psalms 50:23). By this scripture, we know that our praises glorify the Lord.

There are, of course, those who offer up praises insincerely or mechanically, but real heart praise unto God always glorifies Him. There is another revelation the Holy Spirit showed me. He revealed to me that it is not sufficient to say, "Well, I praise the Lord in my heart," which is good, but God wants us to use our voices to praise Him, and He requires it. Turn to Psalms 66:8: "*O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard.*"

I emphasize the tremendous benefits that will come to those of you who praise the Lord daily. And while the benefits are abundant, we miss the mark if we are praising Him only for the benefits.

I praise the Lord because I believe in praise. God's word abounds with hundreds of challenging scriptures that call us to praise the Lord. I believe it is a good thing to praise the Lord often, and I believe God is immensely pleased with our praises. I further believe I am in the center of God's perfect will when I am giving thanks to Him in everything. I believe that this is the sacrifice God wants of me: "*to praise Him continually.*"

Yes, I actually believe in my heart that praising the Lord is right, scriptural, God-pleasing, and an evidence of the true Spirit-filled life. I believe in heaven we shall join the redeemed of all ages in praising the Lamb who was slain for us. Praise is the heavenly language. I believe I draw my heart heavenward every time I employ my heart and lips to praise the Lord.

If you believe in praise, then join me. "*O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together*" (Psalms 34:3).

Your Brother In Christ,

Walter Beatty

1112 Raspberry Street
Erie, Pa. 16502
814-451-0479
814-504-8903
wbeatty63@hotmail.com