

Intro

We’re continuing in our series “indescribable” – looking here in June at praise / worship – understanding all that it is and wrestling with how to apply this and live this out...*spending the summer using Psalms as a touch point for what we’re diving into...*

turn with me too: (we’ll start here and see where we end up)

Rev 4:11; 5:12

Repeat the phrases from Rev. (you are worthy our Lord and God to receive/Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive...)...(pause)

- Kids know how to receive – don’t they?...no reservations to them receiving or second guessing whether they should or not...(I never have to insist that my kids take the soda /candy bar from my hand...they just do – they’re pre-wired to receive)
- We enter this world understanding what it is to receive...craving, wanting, needing...
- We enter this world with needs – we know that we need and therefore we’re on the lookout for receiving what we need... water, food, air ...our bodies remind us if these needs are going unmet

Ex:

Q ever try to go without air? (*let’s get some volunteers, hold breath during sermon - kidding*)

-Time you hold your breath under the pool water – swimming from one end to the other...you begin craving air

-time you go through the tunnel (you know the one in PHX) when you approach the tunnel – everyone takes a breath, get into it and you’re trying to concentrate on the music to distract you, begin tapping your foot, try the fake breath to trick your body, you feel the strength of your pulse / heartbeat like never before → then you see it...the ‘light at then end of the tunnel’ (I’m sure that is where the phrase comes from) you emerge from the tunnel and air rushes back in and you’re reminded again of the reality that you have needs→ that we need to receive air...

T we understand this notion of receiving – we receive stuff all the time, not just the things we need, but all sorts of things – we’re constantly receiving...

- We all receive – *some things not labeled as good* (Q-how many of you receive junk mail?, ever received a headache (...maybe one from junk mail?), been on the receiving end of shots/vaccinations? (never met anyone excited to receive a shot)
- Some things we receive are good: (stimulus check, compliment at work, gift from your spouse or friend, appreciation from your kids – special art project they made with you in mind... etc)
 - When you receive those – it warms your heart, delights you – it moves you...

Q ask those around you – the best compliment/gift that you received and how it made you feel... → go ahead and take 45 seconds and share with a couple people around ya...(in groups of 2-3 at seats)

T as we examine the scriptures – we recognize more and more that God understands how He created us – created to have needs/ we’re finite beings – the psalmists records how God meets those needs

Ps. 30 – David is praising God for his rescue – that God heard him and delivered – “you’ve removed my wailing for dancing”... “I’ll give you thanks for ever” → over/over this reprise rings out in the Psalms... God hearing and responding... *of God giving and getting involved!*

James reminds us:

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God is a giver at heart – in his very nature – we see this all throughout the Scriptures – we see this over and over in the life of Jesus...

- As he brings healing to those in need
- As he brings hope to those without
- He brings meaning/purpose to those who are searching

* we are invited into a life of worship...

-we can receive from the God who knows us – who cares for us
-as we grow to know Him...we in turn can then give back to God

Remember, Glenn unpacked a bit last week: **Worship is a relational response to God ...from those who know Him.**

Repeat the phrases from Rev. (you are worthy our Lord and God to receive/Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive...)

Remember Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well (jn 4 *Spirit and Truth*) So, when Christ speaks of worshiping in spirit and truth... He’s talking about the deepest of relationships.

John 4:3

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

God seeks this:

God seeks this!!! God was seeking it in Gen 4, Rom 1, He seeks John 4... and He’s still seeking it. Why?

b/c God desires a relationship of spirit and truth... To have people with a freewill who know Him, and love Him... ...that as He freely gives...they freely give back to Him

It’s the one thing God can’t give Himself... God created us with a desire to worship, but He also created us with a free will... He will never force anyone to worship Him. Praise becomes a choice!

1 jn 4:19

So, the bible portrays love as: God first loved us! he initiated love ...

He knows you – He meets your needs b/c he loves you...

and he longs for your relational response.

Psalm 86:12

I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.

Hebrews 13:15

1 Peter 2:9

A life of worship - requires participation from people who were created to respond – but often who have become conditioned to be simple consumers - merely spectators...

Thus so over and over from Scriptures, comes this invitation, this urging to enter His courts with praise

- Over 220 (x's) in Psalm is the word 'praise' used → hallelujah = praise YHWH

→ we are to bring praise – b/c we serve a God who can receive. A God who wants to be in relationship

→ and everyone knows that a healthy relationship is one of “give and take” – not just receiving all the time, or giving all the time – give & take - that's not how a true love relationship works best.

EX: if I only received from Amy all the time and never sought to give back to her any adoration, respect, appreciation, gratitude, love → then our relationship would be very weak, totally lopsided & unhealthy...

Thus as we come to bible – there are many descriptions of all that praise entails (roger, will unpack a bit of this in the next couple wks)

Praise is: **the expression of our**: gratitude, adoration, affection, appreciation, respect, love – back to God

...in its purist form – it's what C.S. Lewis captures in this phrase...

Quote: (C.S. Lewis) “praise is the culmination of our enjoyment of anything”

We use the phrase in our culture – when you really enjoy something, when you really enjoy someone → **“you sing their praises”...** brag on them, allow your heart to be moved with appreciation for that experience or person... your joy spills over

Illust:

- A new restaurant – you can't help but share that with others, or take others with ya (*which by the way I'm also open for helping share your joy*)
- A new hobby/interest – you can't help but share that with others
 - *From recipes to vacations – we spill over praise of what we enjoy*
- *Story: Calista with the jumping castle phenomenon recently – so much joy for jumping and falling (staid in for an hour the other night) constantly talking about it - enjoying...*

**Praising God – comes down to expressing our enjoyment of Him...
...for all He is and all He's done!**

T We're urged to make Praise a habit... **b/c there are great benefits to a praise habit**
(Roger, will unpack this a bit more of this next wk)

→ benefit of being refreshed by God's intimate care and involvement with you
→ benefit of being reminded that God is big enough to handle any situation that comes your way

* Often in our humanity – we easily forget. **SO - praise reminds us – refreshes us...**

Developing habits is sometimes difficult:

Ex: *they say it takes 21 days to form a habit...*

(pause) – Glenn tried to teach me surfing a couple yrs ago and I could've told you after 21 min. that surfing was not for me – thank you very much – I'll stick to boogie boarding...

Habits are a part of our life – we're constantly working on them: (starting new ones/ending old ones)
-as parents we continually training our kids toward good habits: please and thank you, wash your hands, brush your teeth at least once a week...(just kidding).

Q *anyone ever started an exercise habit – more than once...?*

- (start off – join a gym – go for awhile – then have you ever found yourself later down the road...involved in a humanitarian project as you're sending in your monthly gym dues to support others who need to work out more than you)? *Anyone else experienced this phenomenon?*

-chopsticks (getting ready for China trip 3 yrs ago) - over there and working hard on it, found this restaurant that had honey chicken and that big piece got dropped...so disappointed...

T → Habits are a part of life and the Scriptures tell us that...

God desires a habit of praise – b/c as He cares for us, and he desires that we'd take time to praise him in return... (worship is a relational response to God, by those who know Him)

And the beauty/mystery of God – (whom the psalmist says in ps. 24) “the earth is the Lord's and everything in it” – he is so beyond us – so BIG...

The miracle is: he counts what I bring to him as meaningful! (no matter how small...)
 → that our acts of service (Jesus said) – our prayers – our praise is a work of art to God...
-that if God had a refrigerator – your praise would be hung on it for all to see

T I want to give us 2 simple praise practices...2 things that we can make a part of our lives – our worship through praising God for His actions & attributes –

- praising Him for what he has done and will do
- and praising him for who He is

Praising Him for what He's done:

We see Moses set this pattern as God has rescued the Israelites – brought them thru the Sea and conquered the Egyptian's – liberated them from bonds of slavery...

Exodus 15 records the songs of praise from Moses and Miriam...might just be the 1st corporate worship setting...of a mass of people – rallied, and praising God for what He's done!

God knows we need reminding of what He has done... b/c we need reminded of what He can still do:

- How often our mindset sinks inward and short-sighted when we're in need...
- We can easily get swallowed up in despair

Praise keeps me from being stuck in selfishness or hopelessness- focused only on what I can see – it pulls me toward recognizing again the grandeur and greatness of God

Psalm 77:10-12

*explain what David is going thru in this psalm – he's set on praising – b/c it reminds him of how BIG God is – How active He is – how He longs to be involved

T Another simple way to build a praise habit – praising God for who He is ...
 – not only his actions – but also His attributes – what He is truly like as He has revealed to us.

Praising Him for who He is:

One of the greatest gifts I can give my kids– is that they know me. That they can grow up remembering who I am – what I'm like...*that I let them get close enough to know me...*

Ex: We do this all the time – reminding them of who we are, what we're like: (phrases that parents say to kids to reassure them) things I remind my kids that I will love them often, that I'll be here, I'll always love ya, you can count on me – call me if you need me...

→ex: *of all the 7 yr olds lined up and I could only pick 1: do you know that I'd pick you!*

Q How does God reassure us of who he is – what he's really like?

→ Well, all throughout scripture He continual paints the reminders of what he's truly like – his nature – his heart and attributes...

Ps. 23 The Lord is my Shepherd
 Ps. 46 God is our refuge & strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble
 Ps 103:8 the Lord is compassionate and gracious

He wants us to know Him – **so He reveals himself to us** – so we can know him and be in relationship with Him.

→ the Scriptures contain hundreds of snapshots of God's nature, so we get a fuller picture of what who He is and He's truly like...

Illust:

Spiritual view finder:

Journal exercise: a few yrs ago – I started a journal, where I began circling the phrases and descriptions of God (mostly in the Psalms) and reflecting on what that word/phrase meant – all that it would do and be like, what feelings it stirred in me – then I'd jot a prayer, thanking God for being that for me.

Conclusion:

→ we're invited to make praise a habit b/c there are great benefits to making praise a habit...

But, the greatest benefit of praise – has nothing to do with what it does for me – the greatest benefit of praise has everything to do with what it does for the heart of God

Illust this wk I sat down (by myself) and went back thru an envelop/notebook that I've kept for yrs. I'm not nec. a saver – I generally throw things...but I've saved this file: It's filled with notes, letters, cards from those I love – that I have found encouragement from. Some of whom aren't even alive anymore...but their words speak to me, they move me – they remind me...

Some of the most treasured notes/cards/projects – are from my kids...I've saved them as they remind me of the great love I have for them, their love for me...

(show a couple)

Q do you think I'd take \$10,000 dollars for these notes? *(well of course I would, they could draw them again... that's a dumb question...)*

The heart, the words behind it – the love that got scrawled into it – there is no price, no words

Best reason to praise: is b/c of what it does for God → God is a person, He has feelings

→ God is not robot; God is not a cosmic force; not a giant artificial intelligence machine...

In the scriptures we read about God having feelings: God being grieved, taking delight, experiencing anger, knowing deep heart wrenching sorrow

→ God knows, not less, but more than we do what it is to feel compassion, rejection, tenderness, mercy and love

--. The best reason to praise –is what it does for God

It's for Jesus – that he burst into our world, to live, and give up his life – that he was resurrected from the dead b/c he was on a rescue mission to reconcile us to God

I praise b/c:

God loves me so much that when I come to him with my praise – my worship → it brings Him joy! For some mysterious reason that God only knows it brings Him joy!

→ the Best reason to praise – to make it a habit is:

What God wants most from us isn't just our service, or activities, or the things we give, the things we have, the things we do → **it's our hearts...**

(pause)

Well, you've heard the expression: “practice what you preach”

today – we're going to end applying this...

- Some of you here might need a reminder that God is still in control
- Some of you might be needing a refresher on what really matters – of the beauty of who God is, what He's like, what He's done and what He can still do...

Praise can do that!

– so let's praise together – and while you sing, -- reflect on all that God has done throughout history – throughout your story...
-how He's intervened on your behalf and guided you

Reflect on all that He is – all of His attributes that draw us closer to Him – or be reminded that He is a loving God, full of mercy, grace, wisdom and forgiveness, knowledge and power

Think through these songs – highlight a phrase (connection emotionally with it, do we buy it)
Familiarity breeds complacency (we can forget the beauty, depth behind it)

Worship relationally through these songs...

b/c:

reread:

Rev 4:11a

Rev 5:12