Power of Praise
Acts 16:22-34

ILLUSTRATION: I want to make a statement and I want you to listen very closely - You are an incredible group of worshipers. As a matter of fact I don’t know of any group of pentecostal holy rollers on the planet that are better worshippers than this group of people.

- We have a children’s ministry that can worship with passion
- A student ministry that can worship with great zeal
- You ought to see these adults worship, it’s incredible
- And these Seniors, I mean wow it is intense.

The only problem is, you don’t necessarily worship Jesus. The truth is, when it comes to vocally, emotionally, passionately expressing praise and worship to Jesus - that may be one of the biggest deficiencies in our Church.

But it’s not because you aren’t worshippers, it’s just directed at other things.

- High School football
- College football
- National Politics
- Deer Hunting

Check this out - this is some of the best worship I have ever witnessed.

[JUSTIN BIEBER VIDEO] That is what is called Bieber fever

You see that is worship.
- Worship is taken from an old english word that means Worth ship. It means to attribute worth to something. IN the eyes of these few thousand teenage and preteen girls Justin Bieber is very valuable.
- We use the word praise - it is the root of our word Appraisal. It means to set a value on something. In the eyes of that crown Justin Bieber is Very Valuable.

THAT WAS HUGE WORSHIP TO A TINY god
Often we see TINY WORSHIP TO A HUGE GOD

Well I want to talk to you today about why it is in your best interest to feel as passionately about your Savior as any American Idol.

- Adam sang - You see when God created man and placed him in the Garden did you know that the first words we have recorded from man were in the form of a Hebrew Song?
• In Heaven we will sing - Did you know when we get to Heaven the book of Rev. gives at least 10 new songs we will sing together?
• God sings - Zephaniah 3:17 that “In that day God will delight in us and rejoice over us with singing, that God is a musician and when redemption comes and all tears have been wiped from our eyes, that God, indeed, will lead us in song.”
• Jesus sang - before the cross.

It is in your best interest to have a song in your heart and on your lips. But frankly, it’s not there for many of you.

CONTEXT; Remember that thus far Paul, Silas, Timothy and Dr. Luke are together on the 2nd Missionary Journey. They had tried to go North, South and East but each time they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit so now are now traveling West together. The Holy Spirit is driving them to the unreached continent of Europe. Paul had just had his vision of the Macedonian man imploring with him to share the Gospel.

TEXT: Acts 16:16–18 (NASB95)

16 It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

The phrase “spirit of divination” is speaking of what was called in the Greek a Phythian Spirit or the Spirit of Python. The Greeks believed that Apollo had a mythical serpent that guarded his temple called python. It came to be known that a demon possessed person was a pythones.

Now there is nothing appealing about a person inhabited by demons. It is the most miserable, horrible thing a human can experience. Most of those who are heavily influenced by demons are driven to suicide to escape the misery of their condition.

Apparently a group of businessmen decided to pimp out this demon possessed girl so they could profit from her metaphysical powers. Much like the entire economy built around the Oracle at Delphi, they could sell her services, provide souvenirs it was an entrepreneur’s dream.

17 Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.”

NOW - what is wrong with that? Isn’t that true? What is she doing wrong? There is some debate about what exactly was happening here. Some say the article “The” is best translated “a”. Insinuating that Jesus was one way among many. Others say, “No” she was speaking the truth.
Either way she was possessed by a demon and Jesus never allowed demons to do the work of the Gospel.

Several times demons approached Jesus confessing him as the Son of God - do you know what Jesus did? He said, “hush” and he would cast out the demon.

Why? The Kingdom of Satan has nothing to do with the Kingdom of Christ. He cannot be trusted.

But it is true with this girl and it can be true today - if Satan can’t destroy a Church he will simply join it. Eventually he’ll decimate it from within.

18 She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out at that very moment.

When Paul cast the demons out of this slave girl, the bible uses a very interesting turn of phrase – *Basically Paul cast the demons out of the girl and the profit out of her masters. Paul had ruined a very lucrative business.*

20 and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, 21 and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.” 22 The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. 23 When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The bea**ting with rods** would leave their backs a mess of lacerated flesh and clotting blood.

The stocks were an instrument of torture as well as confinement, made of wood bound with iron, with holes for the feet, which were stretched more or less apart according to the severity intended.

OK - what does the intellectually superior, spiritually gifted, man who knows God like no one else do in this situation?

25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God. The Greek indicates they begin praying in a way that burst into song.

**WHAT DID THEY KNOW THAT WE DON’T KNOW?**
Perhaps it was the same thing that Jesus knew, who according to Matthew, just before entering into the Garden of Gethsemane sang a hymn with his disciples.

What does singing have to do with suffering? Friend the singing of Paul and Silas speaks VOLUMES about those men.

**ILLUSTRATION: A sociologist said,** You can tell about a people’s theology by their doxology.

Paul would later write in *Ephesians 5:19 (NASB95)*

19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord:

1 Corinthians 14:15 (NASB95)

15 What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit (little s - human spirit) and I will sing with the mind also.

**WHY SING? What does it practically accomplish?**

1. **Praise Attracts the Attention of the Lord**

27b - and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened.

Now I don’t think they expected this to happen. They knew that God didn’t deliver Stephen when the stones were hurled at him. God didn’t deliver James in the moment of his harshest trial.

- I believe their attitudes were like those of the three Hebrew young men when they were thrown into the fiery furnace - Our God will deliver us, but if he doesn’t we will not stop praising him.

- Their attitude was like that of Job - though he slay me yet will I serve him.

But there is something about singing praises to God that just gets His undivided attention in a unique way.

Ps 22:3 But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.” What does that mean? Listen: God is everywhere, but He manifests Himself in a unique way when his people praise him.

II Chronicles 5:11-14 “And it came to pass when the priests came out of the Most Holy Place 12and the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of
the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets—indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: “For He is good, For His mercy endures forever,” that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.”

Now when Paul and Silas broke the silence of that dark dungeon God filled that place. He shook that place and the Bible says he loosed the chains of every prisoner.

That is why we open our service in singing. There is something about singing that invites the manifest presence of God.

*That brings us to the second point...*

**2. Praise Arrests the Attention of the Lost**

27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

What is that all about? Well you see this jailer was responsible to guard these soldiers. His punishment was so horrible if he allowed them to escape that he deemed it better to take his own life.

But look what happened...

28 But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!”

How do you explain that. I mean I can understand why Paul and Silas were there, but why did all the prisoners stay? They could even make a good argument that Jesus broke them out of jail. But they stayed. Why?

LISTEN: There is power is praising God. It changes the atmosphere.

**ILLUSTRATION**: Girl in Eng. Lit.

**ILLUSTRATION**: Girl in Speech Class.

**Romans 15:9 (NASB95)**

9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, “Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Your name.”

Singing can be VERY evangelistic.
And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

Praise Attracts the Attention of God and Sinners...

3. Praise Emboldens the Faith of the Saints

Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, “Release those men.” And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace.” But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.”

The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

What was that all about? Paul had never claimed his Roman citizenship before. He knew above all men what happened when men of God were allowed to be persecuted and no one spoke up to stop it.

He saw it with Stephen when he himself was the instigator.

He knew that if he could do something, he should for the good of the Phillipian church. No doubt his actions protected the church and allowed it to thrive and become one of the greatest in the N.T.

There is something about praising God that emboldens your faith.

HOW DO WE PRAISE AND WORSHIP?

1. FROM THE HEART: - John 4:23
   We must worship in spirit. (from the heart, not just with externals)

2. ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE: - John 4:23
   We must worship in truth. (God’s Word tells us how to worship Him acceptably)

3. IN SONG: - Psalm 149:1
Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints.

4. CLAPPING OUR HANDS: - Psalm 47:1a
   Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! (if you’ll clap for a football team, why not God?)

5. SHOUTING: - Psalm 47:1b
   Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

6. BOWING: - Psalm 95:6
   Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

7. LIFTING OUR HANDS: - Psalm 134:2
   Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.

8. JOYFULLY: - Psalm 100:2 - Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness.

10. IN THE DANCE: - Psalm 149:3 & Psalm 150:4
    Let them praise His name with the dance… Praise Him with the dance! We know that King David, a man after God's own heart, danced before the Lord with all of His might. He was leaping and whirling before the Lord. (2 Samuel 6:14-16).

YOU WILL FIND THAT IT ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION OF YOUR GOD - IT TURNS THE SINNERS HEAD - AND IT EMBOLDENS YOUR FAITH.

Why would any Church not want to be a singing church?

INVITATION;
I once heard of a Maestro teaching a young apprentice how to play the Piano. The boy played every note, in time, with rhythm, and melody. However the Maestro shook his head and said, no boy, no boy… YOU are playing the notes, not the song. The Mastro sat down and played the song.

Some of you are hitting the right notes;
• You are faithful to Church
• You read your Bible
• You are givers to God’s work

But you do not have a song.

LEAD AMAZING GRACE
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Does worship end with the song service?

What are some of the expressions of worship listed in the following verses:

Psalm 100:2
2 Chronicles 6:19
Psalm 46:10
Lam. 3:41
Psalm 96:8
1 Tim. 4:13
1 Cor. 11:25-26

Lamar Boschman says it best "When I worship, I would rather my heart be without words than my words be without heart."

What does 1 Peter 2:5 say about how our worship should be?

Read Gen. 22:5-18. How does this act relate to worship?

Read Verse 5 again. What did Abraham tell his servants he was going to do?

Abraham was obedient to the Lord in his willingness to sacrifice his own son. Although there was thought of self here, the desire to please the Lord through giving, his only son, was the ultimate act of worship. He listened to the Lord and obeyed.

Read Psalm 27:6, 50:14, 107:22, Hebrews 13:15. What word is most common in each of these verses?

What are acceptable ways to worship?

1. Psalm 24:3-6

2. Hebrews 12:28-29
3. Deut. 26:10

One of the most meaningful acts of worship recorded in the New Testament is in John 12:1-3. What was the act of worship that was given to Jesus, and by whom was it given?

Who is God referring to in Acts 13:22, and what does He say about this individual?

Read the following scriptures and give a brief summary of this person's heart towards God and worship. Psalms 29:2, 95:6, 96:9, 99:5, 99:9, 132:7.

This is obviously a man who had a great heart of worship for the Lord. In verse after verse he gives praise and worship to God out of his love for Him.

Do you believe that with all that had happened to David, with the death of his child and the constant threat of his enemies, he was a man that felt like worshiping all the time?

Do you think that it was always easy for him to express praise to God midst the trials and difficult times?