

The Worship Life of Jesus

By Don Potter

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In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. (Luke 10:21 KJV)

The first time I read Luke 10:21 I passed right over the word “rejoiced” just as if I understood what it really meant. Then one day, while trying to understand the Greek words for rejoice, I found the real meaning of what Jesus was doing in the Spirit.

The Greek word, "agalliao" was used when referring to the way that Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit. Agalliao means “to leap; to exult, leap for joy, to show one's joy by leaping and skipping denoting excessive or ecstatic joy and delight.” Though I’ve been unable to get a real picture in my mind of what that might have looked like to His disciples, I delight in the very idea of my Lord leaping about for joy.

My hope is not to offend any who would feel this is going too far with scripture. Painting a picture of the Lamb of God acting like a child, as He’s whirling about, might have a adverse affect on some. I assure you my goal is to shed some light on the idea of rejoicing before the Lord with all our might, as David did, as Jesus did, and as God Himself does over His people.

JESUS IMITATES HIS FATHER

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. John 5:19-20 (KJV)

When Jesus was leaping about rejoicing, He was only doing what He saw His Father doing. We are to marvel, or be stunned as the Greek defines marvel, by what Jesus was seen doing. Jesus did incredible miracles while He walked the earth, but nothing would be more wonderful to watch, than the Savior leaping about, enjoying the Father enjoying Him.

God uses the prophet Zephaniah to express Himself concerning His people. His expression is much like Jesus in Luke 10:21.

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)

The Hebrew word for rejoice used here is “suws.” It means, “to be bright; cheerful; be glad greatly; make mirth; to enjoy someone;” The Creator of the universe is cheerful and able to enjoy Himself concerning His people. If God’s wrath is big, why wouldn’t His joy be big too?

I believe the prophetic word in Zephaniah 3:17 is acted out in Luke 10:21. Jesus in the midst of His people, will save, and rejoice over them, while resting in His love, and singing over us. As Jesus imitates His Father, we are to imitate Him. Exuberant joy is a part of our heritage.

Zephaniah 3:17 also mentions God singing. The Hebrew word “Rinnah” is used for singing. It means, “creaking, shout of joy, to emit a stridulous sound, gladness, proclamation, rejoicing, shouting, singing triumph. In Psalm 67:4 the psalmist says “Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.” Nations means the rest of the world outside of Israel. Sing is the Hebrew word “Ranan” or “Rinnah”. This means we are to shine forth and make a stridulous sound of joy. (This means a joyful noise.)

I know it would be hard to imagine just what God would sound like singing, but this gives us some insight on what that might be like. His singing is full of joy and shouts of triumph. If He can speak daylight into being, imagine what His shout of joy is like.

REASONS TO REJOICE

In Luke 10:18 it says that Jesus was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Jesus didn’t rejoice over that sight, nor did He rejoice when He gave the disciples power over serpents and all the power of the enemy. He rejoiced over the fact His Father withheld this wisdom from the prudent and gave it to babes.

Though Jesus is God, made flesh, He was still a man. As a man He was overjoyed when He realized the wisdom of God’s ways. We should be as full of joy when we realize the wisdom of God’s dealings in our own lives. God’s victory shout is not for Himself, but for us. God is truly for His people.

JESUS WAS PRAISED BEFORE HE WAS BORN

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. (Luke 1:41)

John the Baptist was leaping for joy while still in the womb of Elisabeth. As a result, she got filled with the Holy Spirit. If we're not afraid to show the joy that comes from our meeting Jesus, others will get saved and filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of that joy. (see Psalm 40:3) There is a greater power than we know, in the pure joy of knowing the Lord.

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. (Luke 1:46-47)

Mary is thought to have sung these words to the Lord. The word "rejoiced" is the same word used when referring to Jesus praising God, in Luke 10:21. Agalliao meaning to leap about. Mary's spirit was leaping about for joy as she was walking out the will of God.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:10-11)

Like king David, these kings rejoiced with exceeding great joy when they beheld the Deliverer. In their culture, falling down, or bowing down, was an act of profound reverence. They were prophetically acting out what the rest of the kings of the world will do one day. (see Psalm 86:9 and 110:1) Great rejoicing and worship will always precede Jesus.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:13-14)

The praise of Jesus started before He was born with Elisabeth and Mary. Then kings bowed before Him and worshiped a new born. And suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host came boasting of the glory of God on high. There has always been lots of excitement around Jesus. I believe His presence demands it.

SEEKING THE PRAISES OF MAN

One thing that we can be sure of concerning the life of Jesus on earth, He never sought the praises of man. He never thought it was important to gain the approval of the people to fulfill His destiny. That's not always so with us. We struggle to gain the acceptance of others and consider their reaction as a gauge of our success.

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (John 12:43)

John uses the Greek word “doxa” for the word “praise.” In the classical Greek doxa means; “opinion, judgment, conjecture, expectation.” When referring to the chief rulers that secretly believed in Jesus, John wrote, they have loved man's approval, opinion or expectation of them more than God's, so they continued to hide their faith.

These chief rulers, who had power and authority, were afraid of being put out of the synagogue. Somehow the praise and good opinion of the Pharisees was more important to them than the approval of God.

This might serve as a warning to all of us. The Pharisees didn't start out their service to God being “a brood of vipers,” as Jesus called them. (Matt.3:7) They had good intentions just like we do.

NOTE: It was interesting to me to find the Pharisees were basically self-appointed. There is no history of where they came from or what tribe of Israel fathered them. Reference is made to them as far back as 160- 140 BC. They came into power about 76 BC and changed the idea of Judaism being a religion into a law. The interpretation of the Law was their study. They were the developers of a two fold law: written and oral. They believed the way to God was through the law. They opposed Jesus because He refused the teachings of the oral law.

Sometimes the greatest carriers of the religious spirit are self-appointed people. Those trying to meet a need they believe exists. The Pharisees knew that Israel needed God and they determined by themselves the way for that to happen. The idea of what the church needs and how to bring it to pass is alive a well today. No matter how you cut this, it is the religious spirit. Praise leaders and musicians can often carry this burden never knowing it is meant for intercession. God alone meets the needs of His people.

GOD IS PERFECTING PRAISE

And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (Matthew 21:16)

I think it's interesting that the Lord used the word "babes" when referring to the praises He was perfecting. The Greek word "Nepios" means: “infant, or a child not yet able to speak plainly.” "Katartizo" is used for the word "perfected" which means: “to put a thing in it's appropriate position, mature, complete.”

Paraphrasing Matthew 21:16, it could read, “True praise can only be put in it's proper place and completed by God, through the mouth of those with child-like trust.” If I try to perfect my own praise, I take God out of that task.

PRAISE IS STRENGTH

While on these scriptures, it's interesting to compare the difference between Psalm 8:2 and Matthew 21:16. Jesus translated the meaning of Psalm 8 in Matthew 21.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. (Psalm 8:2)

And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (Matthew 21:16)

Jesus is interpreting Psalm 8 for us. PRAISE is STRENGTH. Ordained strength, is full grown praise. This is the praise that stills the enemies of God. Praise is the weapon to still the voice of torment coming against us. The accuser can not stand while a voice is shouting the praises of God.

Though there are not many scriptures describing Jesus praising the Father, Luke 10 sure gives us insight on what His feelings were like concerning praise. All those times He went off alone to pray, most certainly had to have had some worship time in it. What happens in private with the Lord is still the most important worshiping life we will ever have. What happened with Jesus in His private time was manifested in His outburst of joy for His Father.

SPONTANEOUS EXPRESSION

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. (Matthew 21:8-9)

This was the most famous praise and worship session in history. Jesus was making His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the people were starting to gather together. When they shouted Hosanna, they were actually saying, "save, we pray." The root of this word is in the Hebrew, meaning "a cry for help." Hosanna was somehow changed and used later as a word for praise, but that day the people were crying out for their Deliverer.

This cry was taken from Psalm 118 which was read at the Feast of Tabernacles. Hosanna was shouted on the last day of the Feast. This made it even more offensive to the Pharisees, as this kind of worship was reserved for God at the Holy Feasts. Though this was a traditional type of worship, it was not a traditional reason to have a shouting session in the streets. The people spontaneously began to worship at the coming of Jesus, whether they truly understood what was happening or not. They did traditional things in a spontaneous way.

While the Pharisees were wondering what all the noise was about, Jesus was receiving

the praise due Him. I don't know if the people of Jerusalem really knew the significance of what they were doing or not. Do we really know the significance of what is happening during worship in church? There are things taking place in the Spirit, that our logical mind will not understand. We are faced with a choice every time we assemble to worship God. Will we be the people in the streets shouting, "save we pray," or Pharisees rejecting what they don't want to understand?

EMOTIONALISM

And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased. (Matthew 21:15)

In Matthew 21:8 the multitude spread their garments on the road and shouted praise. They were outside the city. In verse 15 it says the children were inside the temple crying, and saying Hosanna.

Whenever I see a child crying I always want to see what the problem is. I assume that crying means, there is a problem. When the Pharisees saw the children crying and the people giving the praise to Jesus that was only done at the Feast of Jehovah, they were not only jealous of the response, but they were put off by what they considered to be the over-emotional reaction of everyone that had now manifested itself in these little children crying. They never saw that this was a real response; an act of Holy praise to the Savior.

How many times have you thought that some people were getting too emotional for your taste while in a public worship session? I know I have. Yet if God is perfecting praise in the mouths of babes, then we will have to expect emotionalism at times, crying at times, laughing, dancing and maybe other forms that are spoken of by David in the psalms such as trembling which means violent shaking. (see Psalm 2:11)

I was recently warned by the Lord to stop watching people worship. There have been times when seeing someone really praising God was inspiring to me. There are now more distractions around praise than ever before. The enemy is working overtime to get our eyes on anything but Jesus. Staying focused on the Lord is getting more and more important, as well as more difficult.

QUOTES

The following are two quotes from men that have a similar view of what a song of praise and the prophetic have in common.

"It is not likely, therefore that Paul would speak of 'psalms inspired by the Spirit...' if he intended the reference to be to the borrowing of traditional odes from the hymn-book of the Jewish Psalter. Compositions which were spontaneously 'inspired' and created for the occasion were much more probably in view" (Ralph Martin)

"Hymn-singing was developed in the first century church by the sect of the Therapeutae. Describing their meetings as one of the group stands up and sings a hymn to God, either a new one which he has composed himself, or an old one by an earlier composer. The others followed one by one in fitting order. In the evening meetings the men and women were separated at first; and would sing hymns, sometimes antiphonally, often accompanying the anthems with rhythmical movements. "Then divinely inspired, the men and women together, having become one choir' sing 'hymns of thanks to the Savior God.' " (Philo)