

Call to Obedience #472
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

Where Were You...When the Morning Stars Sang Together, and All the Sons of God Shouted for Joy? (Job 38:7)

Reimar A. C. Schultze

Today we shall consider the great subject matter of praise. In the midst of Job's trials, physical suffering, depression and feelings of abandonment, God introduced Himself to Job as a God worthy to be praised all the time—yes, all the time.

“All the time” takes us back to creation when time began. Genesis 2:1 and Job 38: 4-7 indicate that God created the heavenly host before He began to create the earth. That is because He wanted His creation filled with praise. So, all the celestial beings sang and shouted during the whole process of creation. And then, when they saw man as God's crowning act of creation, they did not cease praising because from then on they anticipated the great wedding between Christ and the Church. So, from then on praise continues to fill the infinite space in that great “out there.” And by the grace of God, you will someday hear these morning stars singing together and these sons of God shouting for joy as you cross over the great divide that separates earth from heaven.

Praise is the substance and essence of God's world. What water is to fish, praise is to God. Praise is God's habitation. Praise is the saint's habitation. The saint cannot live without it. He cannot breathe without it. He is powerless without it. He is blind and crippled without it. Although he can petition God without it, he cannot have fellowship with Him without it. Praise is the indicator of each person's spiritual temperature. If he is without praise, he has lost his first love and is in danger of losing his soul. If he is without praise, he will be without faith because faith cannot grow in a heart that is without praise. And a heart without praise will become vulnerable to sin (Rom. 1:21).

Since sin separates us from God, we can only come into fellowship with Him by Jesus taking away our sin and presenting us faultless before His divine presence. But my friend, if we desire to remain in His divine presence, we have to create an atmosphere and environment of praise within us to sustain that intimate fellowship with God. Yes, I said that we need to create that

atmosphere. It is not handed to us on a silver platter. It does not come to us except by self-denial because the self-life is diametrically opposed to a life of praise.

Job lost his intimacy with God in his time of severe suffering. He became inordinately self-absorbed. Oh yes, he still believed, but his faith was jarred. Yet God, in His love, reached out and brought him back to praise by inspiring him to join the morning stars and the sons of God. Again, in this divine/human encounter, we learn something of the necessity of praise under all circumstances of life: not only on the mountain tops but also in the valleys of life, not only while in health but also during sickness, not only when free but also when imprisoned, not only when all goes well but also when everything seems to fall apart, not only when there is a tailwind but also when there is a headwind. God basically said, "Come on, Job. It is still proper to sing and to shout." Now my dear friend, whenever you are in a hard place, please remember that you are still on the way to the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Few have the vision of this. The Apostle Paul was one of those who had this revelation, this conviction; and for him, it was his lifestyle. So when he admonishes us to rejoice always, it is not only a theological concept but the very essence of his own daily life that he shares with us. He said: *in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* (1 Thess. 5:18).

One of the best examples of Paul giving thanks in all circumstances is his trip to Rome documented in Acts chapters 27 and 28. God gave him the revelation that he needed to go to Rome, even though persecution and death awaited him there. Although he did not know it at the time, Paul's achievements in Rome came to far exceed his other works for Jesus. Because Paul went to Rome, the Church grew greatly until paganism was replaced and Rome became the hub of Christianity for centuries. It is in Rome also that Paul wrote some of his richest letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Titus and his two letters to Timothy. Paul's greatest pulpit was his writing desk in Rome which still affects millions of lives every day. Now consider that most of us would expect a journey by the revelation of the Holy Spirit to be smooth, but in Paul's case, the very opposite turned out to be true. It was a horrible, horrible adventure which was full of obstacles.

I believe by these means, as God gave Paul a rough ride on his way to Rome, He was trying to make a better man out of a good man. God wanted Paul to learn to embrace his personal cross in a deeper way than ever before, to glory in it. The same is true for us. God does not want us to bypass our cross.

We cannot glory in it unless we are nailed to it. The deeper our roots go into suffering with rejoicing, the higher our spiritual branches spring upwards. Hence, there is a desk or pulpit somewhere out there for every one of us, but we can only get to it by going through storms.

Let us now look specifically at what drove Paul into a deeper Christian life on his way to Rome. Here are some direct quotes from the report: *...the winds were contrary...the wind not permitting... passing it with difficulty... sailing was now dangerous...* (Acts 27:4-9). Paul told them: “Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives” (Acts 27:10). And then things got worse! For two weeks, they were without navigational guidance, having neither the sun nor stars; and they were aimlessly tossed around in a storm that was so severe that the sailors had tied ropes around the hull of the ship and then later had to throw the cargo overboard as they approached a point of despair. Eventually they ran aground at Malta and had to swim ashore.

What was Paul doing all that time? He was rejoicing always and serving others. He lived in this manner and he was frequently tested on it, and therefore he had the right to preach it and it made him a vessel for an ever greater anointing. All suffering has a divine purpose. Now you know what your road of suffering, your Via Dolorosa, is for. Then finally, God sent an angel to reassure Paul that no one on the ship would be lost and to reaffirm to him that he would safely arrive in Rome. Indeed, God may be quiet for a long time in your suffering, but if you keep praising Him, He will show up eventually. Acts chapter 28 continues with what happened on the island of Malta. Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake on the shore and should have died, but he was unharmed. As a result, many of the islanders and their governor were saved and there was a great healing meeting. Hallelujah! If you do the right thing inwardly, God, in time, will reward you openly. God rewards His people for their faithfulness!

Have I convinced you yet of the benefit of singing with the morning stars and shouting for joy with the sons of God no matter what? That is the recipe God handed to Job in his trial. Paul got it, Job did not. Job needed a friend like Paul to teach him to give thanks in everything. Oh, the healing power, the balm of Gilead residing in every tested saint of God. This is what Jesus means when He says: ...the righteous will shine like the sun (Matt. 13:43). What is your wattage right now on your way to heaven? Of course, unlike Job, Paul stood on the shoulders of hundreds of saints, and of Christ who had gone before him.

You have 2,000 more years' worth of saints' shoulders to stand on. Where are you in this? How are you doing on your journey from your Caesarea to Rome?

There are so many good things that come out of praise. One of them is that it makes God happier. For the last 30 years I have spent the first half hour of my day in praise to make God happier. In the process God reciprocates and makes me happier as well. This kindles the fire within me and it helps me to get to the pulpits, the people and the connections that I would otherwise miss.

Another benefit of praise is that praise puts a buffer zone between you and the enemy. It erects a barrier he cannot cross—it drives the enemy away. A praising Christian cannot be defeated (2 Chron. 20:21-22). A huge enemy army came against Judah. It looked hopeless, like the children of Israel had no chance for survival. Do you also have hopeless situations? Well, when you do, do not wear sackcloth and ashes like Job. Do what God told His people to do: meet the enemy with praises. They were to sing songs of the beauty of holiness and of the mercies of the Lord. The enemy was completely defeated. The Israelites did not have a single casualty.

Praise turned a hopeless situation around. Now you know why God loved David so much that He called him “a man after His own heart.” It was not necessarily that he was the best saint of all others, but because he was a man of praise. God inhabits the praises of His people. David's psalms are full of praises and he appointed 4,000 Levites to be always praising the Lord, day and night, in the house of the Lord. I challenge you today to start shouting and praising with the heavenly host through every circumstance of life—and you will not miss the wedding you are called to attend

Call to Obedience #472

PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA

www.schultze.org