**Pastor Tony N. Dorsey Jr.**

9/10/2023

Sermon Series: *“High and Lifted Up”*

**Preparation**

**PP 1-Psalm 95 ESV**

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;
    let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
**2**Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
    let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
**3**For the Lord is a great God,
    and a great King above all gods.
**4**In his hand are the depths of the earth;
    the heights of the mountains are his also.
**5**The sea is his, for he made it,
    and his hands formed the dry land.

**6**Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
    let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
**7**For he is our God,
    and we are the people of his pasture,
    and the sheep of his hand.
Today, if you hear his voice,
**8**    do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
    as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
**9**when your fathers put me to the test
    and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.
**10**For forty years I loathed that generation
    and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart,
    and they have not known my ways.”
**11**Therefore I swore in my wrath,
    “They shall not enter my rest.”

**Introduction**

A long time ago, I was at a place with God that was indescribable. I was working in Florida at the time, and my office was next to this beach which had a walk way bridge-and this bridge went out over across the water, and many people didn’t use it; but I can remember reading my word every day at lunch time, and eagerly waiting to get off so I could go out onto that walk way, and walk out towards the water just to spend time with God. No matter how I was feeling or what I was going through at the time, good day or bad day, I just had to end my days by going out and spending time with Him. Maybe it was the warmth of the Sun, the beauty of the waves crashing against the shore, or simply my desire to be near Him-I just had a longing and a thirst to be in His presence. It was the very essence of His presence that made me feel like I had purpose, and it gave me hope, courage and strength, but most importantly…it made me feel ALIVE! I wasn’t just Existing, I was Living….and I was living abundantly!! Not because of money, fame, or status, but because I had access to the beautiful presence of God. I enjoyed this feeling for a long period of time, as I was discovering God for myself and building my own personal relationship with Him. Nothing that my Father or Mother taught me, nothing that I learned in Churches that I attended my entire life, no! this was my own personal walk, talk, fellowship, and relationship with God. I enjoyed that time so much, that if I close my eyes and just picture that bridge, I can still feel the warmth of the sun, I can smell the salt of the sea, and just the thought of His presence as I picture all of these things brings me an overwhelming sense of joy and peace.

Life occurred….and there was a downward spiral that didn’t make any sense to me; God why am I going through this? It was hard for me to connect and stay connected as I equated what I was going through as a result with spending time with God, so I figured that Satan had a target on my back based on my relationship with Him so as a result I started to back off. I backed off from my prayer life, back off from church attendance, people have told me for years that I should be a pastor or preacher, and I would rebuke them because I didn’t want to hurt anymore!! And the enemy made me believe that if I did less, and I just merely attended occasionally the less effort on my part, the less praise and the less worship would mean the less trials for me, and that was a complete fallacy.

I have been blessed with a full life; at 43 years of age I have experienced a variety of things….like sun rises in Mexico, the sound of church bells ringing in Paris, France…experiencing the wonders of northern lights in Alaska, fishing on our back porch in North Carolina, having Ice tea with friends in Louisiana, marching with my brothers in Texas while serving in the United States Air Force, Traveling across this great country 3 times (North, Central, and South) seeing and experiencing so many different views of life and culture, so many different varieties of creation and breathtaking experiences that are sometimes unexplainable. All of these things that I have done, all of these things that I have seen, and none of them come close to being in the presence of God.

Indescribable!! And it makes sense because if I have a relationship with an Indescribable God then there are just some things I cannot explain when it comes to how good He is, the power of His presence the enormity of His grace, His giving, His persistence in making sure that I live out all that He designed for me to be its indescribable.

**PP 2-1 Peter 1:8**

**8**Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

Today, we are going to learn what it means to prepare our hearts for praise and worship.

**Background**

There are 4 parts to this Psalm: Praise, Kingship, Worship, and Warning

The Israelite’s were falling into the same rebellious acts as their ancestors before them; the Psalmist is referring to moments in history in making the reader not only understand how important praise and worship is, but how quarreling and grumbling can interfere with a health lifestyle of worship. Its causes a disconnect while trying to connect with God and David is trying to point out the dangers of generational curses, but in this case…generational rebellion. The author for this Psalm is not clear; however, in Hebrews 4:7 this Psalm is referenced as David being the author and sharing the message of do not harden your heart. Hardening your heart in this case refers to being unresponsive to God, unresponsive to praise, unresponsive to worship which ultimately strengthens one’s disbelief. And as I am preparing to worship God in spirit and in truth as it says in His word that is the type of worshipper, he is seeking then I must understand what didn’t please Him in order to effectively learn how to please Him.

WE SERVE A GOD OF ORDER!!

The tabernacle (outer court, inner court, holy of holies)

Praise and then Worship

Verses 1-5 (Praise)

**Praise**

Praise is boldly declaring and applauding what God has done.

**PP-Psalm 95:1-2**

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;
    let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
**2**Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
    let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

O come let us sing to the Lord….Nowhere does it say O come let us think about the Lord, O come let us fold our arms before the Lord, O come let us be quite before the Lord it says O come Let us sing!! Sing, thanksgiving, joyful noise is mentioned twice in the span of 2 verses.

God wants to hear your Praise…we serve a speaking God, and whatever He speaks it becomes. So God doesn’t want us to think a praise..He wants us to say a praise; not just say a praise; the bible says sing, then it says come with praise of thanksgiving…not quietly but with a joyful noise!! Why because the enemy is noisey, hes loud in the white house, hes loud on our jobs, hes loud in our every day life and the way to combat the demonic choir that the enemy tries to put on your doorstep is by making a joyful noise!! Your praise is a weapon against the enemy. It’s a weapon against grumbling and complaining, pride, and disbelief, because when you start thinking about the goodness of Jesus your soul cries out hallelujah!!

Names are very important especially to God; (names)

We serve a speaking God; whatever he says it becomes…..he didn’t think light He said “let there be light” and it was…

Meribah; Hebrew origin meaning "quarreling or strife"

Massah; Hebrew name for “testing”

So, God wants to “hear” the seven Hebrew words for praise.

SEVEN HEBREW WORDS OF PRAISE

1. Yadah To revere or worship with extended hands, to hold out the hands as in throwing or casting a stone or shooting an arrow; to give thanks. Psalm 145:10 “All your works praise (yadah) You Lord…”

2. Halal To boast, to rave, to shine, to celebrate, to be clamorously foolish, to make a fool of or act madly, like a madman. Psalm 150:6 “Let everything that has breath praise (halal) the Lord! Praise the Lord”

3. Zamar To make music, to celebrate in song or music. To touch strings or parts of a musical instrument; to make music accompanied by the voice; to celebrate in song and music. Psalm 7:17 “I will (yadah) [extend my hands] to the Lord according to His righteousness. And I will sing (zamar) to the name of the Lord Most High.”

4. Tehillah A laudation, a new song, a spontaneous song or hymn of adoration, public praise, renown, praise demanded by qualities, deeds or attributes of God. Psalm 22:3 “You are holy, enthroned in the praises (tehillah) of your people.”

5. Towdah Also translated as thank offerings, thanksgiving, thanks- means an extension of the hand, a confession, a sacrifice of praise; thanksgiving for things not yet received. Psalm 56:11-12 “In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? … I will render praises (towdah) to You.”

6. Barak To kneel or to bless God as an act of adoration- to praise, to salute, to thank. Psalm 72:11 “Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve Him.”

7. Shabach To address in a loud tone, to laud, to glory. To shout, commend, glory and triumph. Psalm 117:1 “Praise(halal) the Lord, all nations; praise, laud (shabach) Him, all peoples!

**Kingship**

**PP- Psalm 95:3-5**

3For the Lord is a great God,
    and a great King above all gods.
4In his hand are the depths of the earth;
    the heights of the mountains are his also.
5The sea is his, for he made it,
    and his hands formed the dry land.

This Psalm along with many others are categorized as “enthronement Psalms” because it mainly focuses on Gods eternal Kingship; we need to recognize God as the creator and sustainer of all things, and He alone is worthy of our praise and worship.

The Universe is His, the Solar system is His, Jupiter is His, Neptune is His, Saturn is His, The Sun, The Moon and the stars are His..There is no other God before Him and there is no other God after Him. He was, He is, and He will always be…Forever and ever!!

The Psalmist is pointing out the fact that your joyful noise and your songs of praise are not to a futile, finite, puny, whippy, awful, tyrannical God!! Our praise is to the one, the only, almighty God. Who sits on the circle of earth as stars dance among His fingertips in awe of Him, as birds fly in praises to Him, mountains tremble at his glance.

Now that I praise Him for not only who He is, what I see Him to be, and what I know Him to be, I now enter into the holy of holies in worship.

Verses 6-7 (Worship)

**Worship**

worship is humbly bowing in the presence of a Holy God. worship is honoring God for who He is.

**PP-Psalm 95:6-7**

6Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
    let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
7For he is our God,
    and we are the people of his pasture,
    and the sheep of his hand.

worship is humbly bowing in the presence of a Holy God. worship is honoring God for who He is.

* Be careful what you worship.

Jackson is one of the [best-selling music artists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_best-selling_music_artists) in history,[[500]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#cite_note-504) with sales estimated by various sources up to 400 million – 1 billion.[[501]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#cite_note-505)[[Note 2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#endnote_Note_2) He had 13 [number-one singles in the US](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_artists_who_reached_number_one_in_the_United_States#J) in his solo career—more than any other male artist in the Hot 100 era.[[502]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#cite_note-506) He was invited and honored by a president of the United States at the [White House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House) three times. In 2016, *Forbes* estimated annual gross earnings by the Jackson Estate at $825 million, the largest ever recorded for a celebrity, mostly due to the sale of the Sony/ATV catalog.[[534]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#cite_note-Forbes2016-538) In 2018, the figure was $400 million.[[535]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#cite_note-Forbes2018-539) It was the eighth year since his death that Jackson's annual earnings were reported to be over $100 million, thus bringing Jackson's postmortem total to $2.4 billion.[[536]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#cite_note-540) *Forbes* has consistently recognized Jackson as one of the [top-earning dead celebrities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forbes%27_list_of_the_world%27s_highest-paid_dead_celebrity) since his death, and placed him at the top spot from 2013 to 2020.

* Make sure that whatever you hold in high regard and worship can heal you, deliver you, set you free!!
* We are His people and NOT the worlds people….so why does the world get the most of my praise???
* Black Friday history
* Sports history
* The first worship leader (Satan)

**It is a privilege to worship God!!!**

Because of the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross; we now have direct access to a Holy God; the gateway to God has been open by Jesus. We don’t come to come to church because of guilt, We are the church because of grace.

I would advise you to look up certain types of worship and praise. i.e. African praise, Asian praise, Hindu praise, South American praise etc.

**PP-John 4:23-24**

**23**But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. **24**God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

God is SPIRIT, and we must worship Him in spirit and in TRUTH…God is not physical matter, He is spirit, and He is everywhere which means He is omnipresent and there is no location in which He does not inhabit, and yet our God who is Spirit had the power to create a physical universe and everything in it.

Michael Jackson is physical

Beyonce is physical

Garth Brooks physical

Dixie Chicks…Physical

God IS SPIRITUAL

Another thing about God is that He is Infinite, and these people are Finite

My praise needs to match the God that I serve:

My God is NOT dead, so my praise is NOT dead

My God is Big so my Praise is Big

My God is infinite so His praise shall continually be in my mouth!

**Thirst after righteousness**

**PP-Matthew 5:6**

**6**“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

**PP-John 4:14**

**14**but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4%3A14&version=ESV#fen-ESV-26160a)] The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

And the Isrealites missed the promised Land; quarelling and complaining, grumbling thirsty both physically and spiritually…..missing out on all the benefits that God had for them

Marriage is dry……thirst after righteousness

My ministry is dry….thirst after righteousness

Being thirsty causes moods and irritations, and when we’re irritated we miss out on God’s rest!!

**Gods Rest**

Hebrews 4

Describing the exodus generation as people who received deliverance like us and called to respond in faith like us; however, this generation missed the promises God because they did not respond in faith. The “rest” in Psalm 95 is in connection with God’s resting on the seventh day after His work of creation. They missed the promise benefit because of their unbelief and harden hearts.

**The Gospel**

The text talks about sheep, and now it’s time to separate the sheep from the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) In this case, the goats had harden their hearts, and they begin to have a Lack of Trust in the One who redeemed them from Israel, displaying His power with the plagues of Egypt, Pillar of smoke by day, and Pillar of Fire by night in guiding them, parting of the Red Sea, manner or bread falling from heaven….all of these things and they were still thirsty. I’m not just talking about a physical thirst, their faith was dry….and because of the hardening of their hearts..they missed the promised land!! And if we repeat this cycle we can miss the Promises of God.

Gods elect will persevere, turn away from their sins, and thirst after righteousness, thirst after the things of God, thirst to praise and worship God in spirit and in truth, as the deer pants for water so my soul longs after thee.

**PP-Matthew 26:13**

**13**Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

**How do I prepare for praise and worship?**

* Get to know God more intimately (you cannot worship a God that you do not know) i.e. fans know their celebrities and the things they like which makes it easy for them to worship them. When you understand His grace, understand His mercy, understand how we were destined for a place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, but also understand the meaning of our salvation
* Be free in your worship as you are free from sin and eternal damnation; Im free!!! And you now have access to the kingdom of God, heir to the throne and so I am free to worship my God
* Block out all distractions
* Prepare your hearts beforehand (pray, meditate, reading the word) should be a lifestyle..NOT just on Sunday morning
* Focusing on the theological substance of the music rather than the style or how a song makes me feel.

Heart is connected to the mind..mind is connected to the heart

Your heart is the central core when it comes to your thoughts, feeling , emotions and choices and when we harden our hearts we become unresponsive to God, and how can you believe in something if your hearts not in it?