



## A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Becky Combee

I was studying the Scriptures on the subject of peace when I had an unusual thought. I suddenly remembered the old song that says, “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen. Nobody knows my sorrow.” What an oppressive thought! Trouble and sorrow!

The words to this song draw our attention to someone who believes his difficulty leaves him no hope of survival. Happily, the song writer goes on to say that every day I pray! We rejoice in this confession because we know God answers prayer!

Difficulties cannot control our lives because our God is the God of hope. When we walk with Him, holding fast to His Word, we will abound in hope. God will fill us with joy and peace because we believe.<sup>1</sup>

It’s easy to judge our circumstances by our own ability and resources. When we depend upon ourselves, our mind says, “You will never win. You’re finished! It’s over!” Before we know it, we hang our heads in regret, refusing to move forward. After all, we can’t win.

But I have good, good news. The apostle Paul reminds us to cast down every imagination that contradicts God and His Word. This means we must demolish, destroy, and pull down all thoughts that conflict with God’s Word. When we embrace the promises that He has given us, we can live victoriously

There are many magnificent promises – many words of encouragement in God’s Word. I cherish the words of the apostle Paul, particularly when he

## PRAISE GOD

Suzanne D. Williams

When a well-known minister lost his wife to cancer, he said he and his family held up their hands and worshipped. There are some praises that we can only give God during our lives on this earth. In heaven, we will praise Him, but here, in the midst of pain and loss, our praises shine brighter.

Hebrews 13:15 says we give a “sacrifice of praise.” By this, the writer referred to the Old Testament peace offerings. There is a sacrificial mentality to our giving of praise. How precious in God’s sight was that family’s worship. But the Albert Barnes Commentary of this verse tells us the peace offering sacrifice was actually thanksgiving. When people brought what is also called a friendship offering, they were making a voluntary offering of thanksgiving and friendship to God. All the other offerings under the Law were for sin. This one wasn’t.

“But in their peace-offerings, the offerer was regarded as one who stood in the relation of a friend with God, and the oblation was a sign of thankful acknowledgment for favors received ...” (Albert Barnes Commentary)

Our sacrifice of praise is “the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”<sup>6</sup> Here I am reminded of what Paul said in Philippians. He told the church to “Be careful for nothing,” or not to be anxious, “but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Thanksgiving is part of our prayers.

*(Continued from "A Word of Encouragement")*

reminds us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.<sup>2</sup> Did you hear that? All things! We can do all things well because God will empower us.

The prophet Isaiah also states that God will strengthen us. He points us in the right direction declaring that God will renew our strength when we wait upon Him.<sup>3</sup> In the Psalms, we also read, "My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me."<sup>4</sup> Oh, what a glorious provision! Wait on God. Follow closely. You will be renewed. God will hold you in His hand. Could it be any better than that?

Here's another word of encouragement! God promises us peace beyond understanding.<sup>5</sup> In the midst of situations that give us a reason to worry,

we can pray and be carefree – without a worry of any kind. How is that possible? It is possible because we have a prayer-answering Father. When we pray, He guards our hearts and minds so that no invasive thought can trouble us. We can truly say the Lord is my helper!

I think this is the reason that Paul and Silas sang praises when they were in prison. Because they prayed and believed, they sang. Can you sing and praise God today? If you believe God's Word, you can. You can expect the strength He promised. His perfect peace will guard your heart and mind. It will! He promised!

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

---

1Ro 15:13 <sup>2</sup>Php 4:13 <sup>3</sup>Is 40:31; Is 41:10 <sup>4</sup>Ps 63:8 <sup>5</sup>Php 4:7 <sup>6</sup>Heb 13:15 <sup>7</sup>Php 4:7

---

*(Continued from "Praise God")*

Praise and prayer go together. But where Israel had to bring their offering, or sacrifice, to the altar in the physical temple, we are now the temple of God in our flesh. Even when I'm anxious or worried, or especially when I'm anxious or worried, praise is part of the process that brings me peace,<sup>7</sup> and I can do that right where I'm at.

We cannot limit our praises strictly to moments of joy and success. Praise is our surrender to God, even when life is difficult. It is the first step in resisting the devil. The devil's will for us is the anxiety we're trying to get free of. But Jesus died to bring grace. He is our favor with God now. God's favor is not because we have followed all the rules of the Law. We do not obtain our salvation through personal effort. But salvation is ours because God is good, because He is love, and who He is does not change if life looks like a garden pond or the troubled sea. For this reason, we praise Him.

A sacrifice under the Old Covenant required something of the giver, the gift itself, their time, and the right heart and mindset. God did not want sacrifice simply so they could say they'd given it, and He does not want praises because we sing well,

because everyone else is singing, or because we love this song. Our praises should always be because we love Him. We are not worshiping an inanimate object that cannot see or hear. God is not a statue made with man's hands. Instead, He knows our heart and our thoughts. He knows our sorrows and carried all our griefs on His cross.

Grief alters our view, and sorrow slows our footsteps. Praise and thanksgiving turn our eyes toward hope, and from hope comes new vision of better things. In hope, we find faith to keep going forward, not as by rote, mindless steps made in weariness, but in eager pursuit of the joy promised us when Jesus faced the cross. With His death before Him and the rejection of those He died for spitting in His face, He saw promise and leaned into what would be in replacement of what was. There is no better praise than this, that we would hold Him up in our view and disregard the turmoil in our heart and mind in favor of the heaven extended in His hands.

"Pour out all your worries, frustrations and burdens upon him, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)