

**Sermon Notes of
Assistant Pastor Redida Edwards' Sermon on March 20, 2022:**

**"Worshippers Arise and Praise
(Psalm 150:1)"**

[In today's sermon, Assistant Pastor Redida Edwards, at church in the Y, shows us what scripture tells us in depth what praise and worship really means and that we should be courageous enough in our public worship to “make a show” for God’s Glory!]

Introduction:

- What is our attitude towards worship?
- Do we willingly and joyfully come into the presence of God? Or are we sometimes just going through the motions.
- I have heard on many occasions I don't like this song, or I don't like that about a song or something in our worship service.
- Face it, we all have our preferences, but it is so not about us, it is in every way about Him!

- We've got to get over ourselves and our comfort zones and become more God conscious instead of me conscious.
- It does not matter what you look like, but it does matter if your heart is right because worship is a heart matter.
- How can we lift our hands, pray, sing or dance if our heart is not in alignment with our Creator, Savior and Spirit?

- Redida has heard that grateful hearts are worshiping hearts, and she can see how that statement can be true.
- The Lord is our true treasure, and our worship should reflect God’s heart and all that He has done for us.
- It should come from a place of a deep understanding of who God is and who we are in Him.

- Today, Redida wants to take us back and revisit what praise and worship is and share different Hebrew expressions of the word praise using Biblical examples.

Praise and worship:

- The words praise and worship are often used together; although they complement one another, they are two different things.
- In English we tend to use the word “Praise” to encompass upbeat and lively worship to the Lord.
- But did you know each time you read the word “praise” in the Bible it could mean any one of seven different things.
- Even better each word corresponds with a physical action!
- There is a book called “The Hallelujah Factor” by author Jack Taylor in which he goes into detail about the Greek and Hebrew root words that define our praise and worship to God.

- But before we get into some of those beautiful words let's get a deeper meaning of both what praise and worship are.

Worship:

- In the Strong's Hebrew Concordance, worship is *Shachah* (shaw-khaw) to bow down, to prostrate oneself.
- And the verb *Segid* (Se-geed to do homage (by prostration) and in Aramaic Worship is *Sagad* meaning to bend down, give honor, revere.
- The Greek translation for worship is the verb "*proskuneo*" which also means to bow, to kiss and to serve.
- All these translations have a common denominator and that is they use an expression of humility and reverence.
- So, in other words worship is an expression of adoration and reverence.
- This kind of worship that should only be reserved for God.
- How many people do we know including ourselves at one point have placed our worship in today's idols like cars, or career, status, sports and even people?

Exodus; 34:14, (for you shall worship no other god, because the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God).

- Scripture clearly states we should have no other gods before Him and that He is a jealous God.
- God should never have to vie for 1st place in our hearts.
- When we worship, we should come with a posture of complete submission, humility and surrender before our Triune God.
- In this position, we shift our perspective to be open to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us.
- And we have to listen to Him.
- The Bible tells us to worship in spirit and truth.
- Jesus told the woman at the well, "**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. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth**" (John 4:23–24).
- Yes, God wants us to come to Him and worship Him.

Praise:

- Although there are many meanings of the word praise in the Strong's Concordance and Lexicons.
- Praise is essentially more like an expression of approval or admiration to God.
- In other words, praise is an acknowledgement and appreciation of what God has done for us.
- It is our way of expressing our gratitude by giving thanks to Him.
- The Bible is filled with instructions to praise God and examples of doing so.

- Biblical examples of praise include both angels and humans singing, dancing, shouting, and playing musical instruments.
- We see in Isaiah 6:3 that the Angels called out to each other “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.”
- When the Ark of the Covenant was returned, David danced with no restraint and when the Walls of Jericho came tumbling down with loud sounds of the trumpets.
- Praise is powerful!
- Praise is referred to 254 times in the NASB and 214 times in the KJ version of the Bible.
- Can anyone guess what book has praise in it the most? It’s the Psalms – 175 times.

Worship or praise:

- Now that we have embraced the word “praise, let’s see how our expression of worship or praise changes from the original language of Old Testament Scripture.
- There are seven Hebrew words in Taylor’s book that Redida would like to share with us, but for the sake of time she’ll concentrate on 3 which are the ones we most today.
- If time permits, she will quickly go through the others.
- The first Hebrew word for praise is *halal*, which is the most prolific word translated as praise, appearing 96 times in the Old Testament.
 - *Halal*: To boast foolishly, to make a show of it. (Strong’s 1984)
 - In another lexicon, *Halal* means to be clear, to be brilliant, the brightness of light, to make a show, to be foolish.
 - Can you imagine a gathering that makes it clear who we are worshipping and Redida hopes that it’s here?
 - The essence of *halal* praise is loud enthusiastic, joy, jumping, and spinning and dancing in celebration of the Lord.
 - Each time *Halal* appears in the Bible, it is in celebration of the overwhelming realization of God’s immeasurable greatness!
 - You might also recognize that *Halal* is the root word of “hallelujah”.
 - So, *Halal* is not quiet praise.
 - *Halal* praise is seen and heard and is contagious. This is Redida’s kind of praise!
 - There is nothing hidden about what she is feeling about God when she is in a “*halal*” moment.
 - That’s now but it wasn’t always the case.
 - When Redida had her first visit to her grandmother’s church, she became afraid because the music was loud and people were shouting.
 - Let’s not make the mistake of judging others worship experience because that is between them and God.

Questions:

- Redida’s questions are:
 - Do we admire our God for who He is in our worship?
 - Do we shine the light on him or on our own personal experience?

- Are we willing to be courageous enough in our public worship to “make a show” for His Glory!
- It all comes down to a choice.
- You can allow the Holy Spirit to work in you so that you can have a deeper worship experience, or you can continue to fight it.
- Now, the your fight won’t win. The Spirit of God will move you in ways you never thought, and you will start crying, lifting your hands, clapping or even dancing when you least expect it.

Halal:

Psalm 22:22 (NRSV), “I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise (halal) you.

- This verse gives us the context of praising in public, in front of everyone.
- With halal, praise is not shy, but it is a praise seen by God!
- Psalm 148 is a song comprised entirely of halal praise.

Psalm 150:1, Praise (halal) the Lord, praise (halal) God in his sanctuary, praise (halal) him in his mighty expanse.

Psalm 48:1, Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised (halal) in the city of our God.

[This Psalm is a song of broken bondage (like when Moses and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea)]

Tehillah:

- The next Hebrew word which shows up 56 times in the Old Testament is *Tehillah* – to praise vocally in song or shouts.
- It is perceived to involve music especially singing hymns of the spirit or praise.
- With *Tehillah*, we express worship by singing or in other words vocalizing our praise.
- With *Halal*, praise is seen; with *Tehillah*, praise is heard!
- Praise is not only heard, but the idea is that we are louder for our God than we would be for ourselves.
- Our song declares the Name and traits of the One we love and worship.
- In our culture, celebrities are worshiped the same way the word *Tehillah* connotes.
- Have you been to a concert or a sports event and heard the screams of thousands?
- We can make noise, and it feels great.
- But, if praise is not directed to God, even our songs can potentially be idolatrous.
- Our purpose in life is to give Him our whole heart withholding anything from Him!
- When we go into our worship spaces, like the car or at home or even when we come here, we should be singing songs and hymns that honor our God.
- He loves our praise!
- Try putting the word “song” in place of “praise” in each of these passages.

Psalm 66:2 – Sing the glory of His name; Make His (song) praise glorious.

Psalm 51:51 – O Lord open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your (song) praise.

Psalm 34:1 – I will bless the Lord at all times; his (song) praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Zamar.

- The third most prolific word for praise is Zamar and it is used 44 times in the Old Testament.
- *Zamar* means to praise with instruments alone or with voices.
- More specifically, stringed instruments are described as being played when offering praise, which means a guitar qualifies along with harps and lyre.
- *Zamar* is defined as a “pluck” of a string but we see all throughout the Bible that cymbals and trumpets are used as well.
- It is also very important to note that instrumental music all on its own is praise!
- *Zamar* inspires our praise to be more than vocalization at times.
- The praise of God is special enough when we gather that the creation and skill of instrumental music is valued in the scriptures, and it is valued here.
- The fact is we can sing and harmonize and keep tempo better with the accompaniment of an instrument or group of instruments than singing alone.
- We’ve heard the saying “music soothes the soul.”
- Where we can find in scripture an example of this theory?
- Redida doesn’t think we can find a better example than David and Saul.

1 Samuel 16:14, Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. 15) And Saul’s servants said to him, “See now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. 16) Let our lord now command the servants who attend you to look for someone who is skillful in playing the lyre; and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will feel better.” 23) and it came to pass, and when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a (lyre) and played with his hand; So, Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

- What a great example of David following the lead of the Holy Spirit using one of the many gifts God gave him.
- It took great skill, effort and practice to perfect the lyre and it was used for this specific God given moment.
- So, music does sooth the soul literally.
- Redida is grateful for our musicians. Thank you for using your gifts.
- While the last two words (*Halal* and *Tehillah*) were about what is seen and heard, *Zamar* is about what is precise!
- Often, praise demands precision.
- Imagine what instruments you hear with them. What tempo? Is there harmony to the melody?

Psalm 21:13 – Be exalted, O Lord, in Your strength; We will sing and praise Your power.

Psalm 108:1 – My heart is steadfast, O God; I will sing, I will sing praises, even with my soul.

Psalm 33:2 Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings.

Psalm 146:2 – I will praise the Lord while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

- Let's pause for a moment and listen to the soothing sound of Lyre. (Lye music played.)
- It's different from the sound of the harp.

Here are four more Hebrew words that are translated "praise" in the Old Testament:

- Barak – to kneel down, to bow, to bless God as an act of adoration.
- Yodah – to lift or throw arms upward in praise and surrender.
- Todah – to sing praises together as one community, in harmony.
- Shabach – to shout with the voice of Victory!

Final thoughts:

- In closing, it is important to realize that praise and worship is not just what we do here on Sunday, but it should be a daily part of our lives.
- It is an integral part of our faith.

1 Peter 1:7, so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

- How many of us know that after a season of trials ends, it should lead to a great big Hallelujah, thank you Jesus! That's praise!

Closing prayer