

Resolved to Pray (part 3)

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Well, we're finishing up our series and especially this resolve, I will praise you.! We were just in review of last week, we saw we were made to be praising people.

That's how God meant for us to function. And that whenever we depart from God's design, there is loss. And we considered for people who lose when we don't praise him.

We ourselves lose the joy, the peace that comes from praise, the fellowship with the Lord. Our God himself loses on earth the praise that should be rising to him.

The lost world loses a testimony to just how good and great our God is that would attract them to him rather than giving to them an impression that God is a killjoy.

And then our brothers and sisters who are down and afflicted. They too lose the encouragement that could be theirs if they met with a praising Christian in us.

[1 : 04] So there's losing all around and we said we need to reverse that. We want to be gainers by praise.

We want God's name to be hallowed by our praise. We want the world to see just how good and great he is. And we want our brothers and sisters to be lifted up.

And so as we become more and more a praising people, everybody wins. Satan alone loses. And that's the way it is meant to be.

Well, we ended our series then with just some practical suggestions on how can we develop an attitude of praise just as we've sung that begins in the morning and runs right through the end of the day.

Praise in the common things of life. It's going out and in. The things that we may be overlooking that there's some praise here that ought to be coming to God. How do we gain this attitude and habit of praise?

[2 : 03] And I don't set these out as legalistic rules to be followed, but just as suggestions and some of the things that I found helpful. And the first was just to resolve to praise more and more, to be unsatisfied with my status quo that recognizes I've not been praising God as I ought when I just survey who he is and what he's done for me.

The balance is way out of scale, and of course it ever will be, but I want to be a praising Christian. So I must resolve as the godly man in Psalms did.

Secondly, then each time we come to the word of God, let's find something to praise him for. And so if you're daily in God's word, you'll daily be finding new materials for praise.

And thirdly, especially we are to live in the Psalms if we would become praising Christians, because indeed there's no book in the Bible that is more full of hallelujahs and praise to the Lord than the book of Psalms.

And then we spoke about incorporating praise into our times of prayer, not only as we read the word, but as we then respond to our God in prayer.

[3 : 18] There are different ways that we can ensure that praise is a part of that, and it's not just all petition. And so we spoke about the acrostic acts, A-C-T-S, and that the A for adoration, just adoring God for who he is.

That's one way that we praise him. And thanksgiving, the T, is another form of praise. So if we get into a rut in our prayers, that acrostic might break us out into four channels that we can let our prayers be going in, and it will bring us to praise.

And then if we're just praying through the Psalms, if you pray through the Psalms, you will be praying with praise. And personalize the Psalms. As you pray through, make the psalmist's words your own.

And as he praises God for his deliverance, as you praise God for yours, and work your way through the Psalms in that way. So prayer, even to ask God, as we did in that song that we began with, God, give me a heart.

Give me a life of praise. So using prayer, incorporating praise into our times of prayer. And then the last thing I mentioned was to make use of God's gift of music in the giving of praise.

[4 : 36] And you find that throughout the Psalms as well, that no small part of our praise is to be put to music. And we're to make music to the Lord with our praise.

And it's a wonderful enhancement of our praise and stirs up our praise. So find places to fill your day with praises of song and music.

And so I have two others to share with you. And if you have some then that you would like to testify to or just to suggest, we'll hear those as well today.

But number six, develop an eye for praise. Always be on the lookout for reasons to praise, opportunities to praise. A life of praise is a whole way of seeing life in relation to God and his praiseworthiness.

So I should be wanting to connect everything that I'm seeing to God. And let me just give you an assignment.

[5 : 42] As I just sought to do a couple weeks ago as I came to this point, and that's there I was sitting in my room. And I want to challenge you to do this wherever you're at, just to take some time to connect everything to God and to turn it to praise.

So there I am sitting in my study, and I'm just looking around the room and turning everything I see to praise. I'm connecting it to who's seeing it in relation to God.

So there I am, and there were lights on. And so I immediately have an opportunity to praise God for the light of the world that he sent into my darkness and how he has shed light into my dark heart and mind and to give him thanks for the light.

He created the greater and lesser light, the sun to rule by day, the moon by night, and to praise him for the light. I had books on my shelves. Here are the records of your works, O God, in history, things that you have taught others in days gone by.

You are a God of history. You have been saving a people and keeping a people for yourself. Your gift of truth and wisdom has been passed on to others who, like Abel, though they are dead, yet they speak, even through their written word.

[7 : 03] And I praise you for that. There was a Bible on my desk. Lord, where would I be without the Bible? Where would I be without having your revelation of yourself and your thoughts and your thoughts about me and about the way of salvation?

Thank you, Lord. You are a good God to have given me the Bible in my own language when many do not have it. There were pictures all around my study of people that I love, some of them still with me, some having gone to glory.

Lord, you put those people in my life. I didn't choose them. You gave them. How good you are to have given me these people in my life. There's a coffee cup on my desk.

Lord, it's your gift of taste that you gave me a tongue. And then you filled the earth with all kinds of flavors for me just to satisfy that gift of taste.

There's a jam box on the floor with CDs. Lord, your gift of music. And ears to hear it and to appreciate it. Paintings on the wall. Oh, Lord, thank you for your gift of art and beauty and a mind and eyes to see it and appreciate it.

[8 : 18] A clock on the wall. Yes, Lord, for your gift of time to me. My times are in your hands and all the time that you've given me. You determined even before my first day came to be.

Little, well, phone, computer, fax, copying machine. Thank you, Lord, for the wisdom you've given men to make my life a bit simpler, sometimes more complicated.

But I need that too, Lord. Thank you for the trials of a computer. Little pieces of paper all over my desk. I don't know if your desk is like that.

But notes to self. Aids to memory. Things worth writing down. Things worth remembering. Thank you, Lord, that you've spoken things and you've touched me with things that I don't want to forget. I can make notes about it. Thank you for these truths that you're pressing home to my life. And then there was myself. There I sat.

[9 : 25] And as David said, Lord, I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. And here's my hands and my feet and my heart and my lungs and all that you've made me.

And if you let me look out the window, well, then, you know, it's a whole other world of praise, isn't it? With the trees and the sky, the clouds, the sun, the grass.

And that's the exercise I want you to do. I don't know where you will be when you do it. I think you can do it anywhere under God's earth because he's filled his world with his unfailing love.

And you'll find reasons for praise. But that exercise will help you. To relate everything to God rather than just, okay, I'm drinking coffee and I'm using the phone and I'm seeing these pictures on the wall.

But it will give you something more of a God-centeredness. And so do the exercise. If you find it helpful, do it more than once. Do it every so often.

[10:27] Remind yourself. We're wanting to grow in a habit of praise. And praise as a habit grows one praising at a time, doesn't it? As any habit grows.

So be on the lookout. Amazed at all the matters for praise. And then lastly, schedule times. And some of these things overlap, I realize.

Schedule times just to count your blessings and to name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

And it will lift your hearts to praise. And that's what we're after. Maybe your drive to work.

Maybe your drive on the way home from work. Okay? I don't know how long it is, but just schedule. Five, ten minutes of praise. Counting your blessings.

[11:26] And naming them before the Lord. So the aim is to be praising God at all times. And if I am to be praising the Lord at all times, that means that at all times, my mind needs to be filled with reasons for praise.

And so this whole matter of counting our blessings is critical to developing a habit of praise in our lives. Just as an orchestra, before it performs, if you get there early, you will hear the most strange sounds coming from the stage.

And you wonder, what have I signed up for here? They're tuning their instruments. However long it's been since they last played. And with those people, it usually isn't very long. But even then, they sense that we need to get our instruments tuned.

And so anyone who wants to be a praising Christian is going to have to learn that discipline of tuning your instrument. Namely, your heart and mind. To be in a spirit of praise.

And we will need this tuning more on some days than other days. Have you found that? And some days, yes, praise rises rather quickly. Other times, boy, I need to tune this string really badly.

[12:47] And sometimes some personalities will need more tuning than others. You know what I mean? Some personalities tend to see the glass half empty.

It doesn't matter how much is in the glass. They see what's not there. And they see the dark side of things. Those personalities will especially need to be often tuning their instrument, their heart, to praise.

So, turn to Psalm 103. Psalm 103. It's interesting that the Lord lets us see into the heart of a man who's tuning his instrument.

And it's the same man. This is what makes it so precious to me. It's the same man who resolved to praise the Lord at all times.

And to always be praising the Lord. It's the same man who resolved to praise the Lord not just with his lips but with his whole heart. And it's that man who has set his aims high that is now recognizing I'm not there.

[13:58] Now, how do I get there? How do I tune my heart to sing his praise? Well, we get to see him at it here in Psalm 103.

Notice how he gets his heart engaged. Praise the Lord, O my soul, all my inmost being. Praise his holy name. In other words, all that I am.

Praising all that he is. Not just my mouth but my soul, my inmost being, my heart. Praising all that he is. His holy name, which is his whole character.

Verse 2. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. You know, our need to resolve is due to our tendency to forget, isn't it?

That's why the psalmist must resolve, I will praise the Lord. Why? Because I forget about all his benefits. And that's why we need to count our blessings and name them one by one.

[15:05] We don't remember in a way that excites wholehearted praise. So we need to recall them one at a time. And that's what the rest of the psalm is.

One benefit after another. Tightening up the strings of his heart. Who forgives all your sins. That's where he begins. And heals all your diseases.

Who redeems your life from the pit. Who's not treated you as your sins deserve. Who's not repaid you according to your iniquities. Who's separated you from your sins as far as the east is from the west.

Who loves you with compassion as the Father loves his children. Who gives you life after death from everlasting to everlasting. The Lord's love is with those who fear him.

And he has set his throne in the heavens. Reigning above all. And what happens to this man with his heart somewhat out of tune? Well by the end he's so full of praise to God.

[16:01] And because he's had reasons to praise him held before his mind. He's calling on the angels. Angels help us to adore him. You praise him.

You servants of his in heaven that do his will and obey his word. And then he's saying let everything in all his dominion praise the Lord.

He's calling on all things to praise him. And then he goes back to where he began. Praise the Lord oh my soul. So who's David talking to in this psalm?

Himself isn't he? He's charging himself to praise the Lord. And giving himself all these reasons. And sure enough by the end we find him with a heart that's now ready to praise.

Full and overflowing with praise. I want you to turn in your hymnals to number 70. We're going to see how Henry learns to tune his heart to praise.

[17:03] Henry Light in hymn number 70. And I want you to notice again who he's talking to.

Praise my soul. The king of heaven. To his feet. Thy tribute bring. Ransomed. Healed. Restored. Forgiven.

Who like me. His praise should sing. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise the everlasting king. So he's talking to himself.

What's he talking about? What's he saying? He's heaping up reasons. That his inner being should sing praises to the Lord. He gives four of them just in one breath.

Ransomed. Healed. Restored. Forgiven. Who like me. His praise should sing. That line is worth the whole hymn. If it just quit right there. Ransomed.

[18:11] How were you ransomed? Soul. Not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. Healed. How were you healed, John? By the wounds of the great physician we are healed.

Restored. How were you restored, John? By the regenerating power of God. The sanctifying, recreative power of God. Forgiven.

How were you forgiven? By the grace of God that was willing to receive the blood of his son in place of the payment that you owed for your sin. And you've just come through four words and you're saying, who like me his praise should sing?

If there was nothing else that he ever did. Surely there's cause here for praise. And that's how Henry is stirring up. You see, it's really a hymn based off of Psalm 103.

You see that even in the scripture that has been aligned with this hymn. And the rest of the psalm really does trace out much of the words of Psalm 103.

[19:24] He's reminding himself of the benefits of belonging to the living God. Now, we're still looking for reasons here in this psalm.

It's not only his blessings received, but it's also the duties growing out of such blessings. If you're looking for things to move your heart to praise, it's not just for all the blessings themselves, but there is the motivating power of the duties that grow out of having been a receiver of so much.

And I think that's what we have in the second part of that line. Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven. These are the blessings. Then the duty. Who like me his praise should sing? This is my duty. I should praise him since he's been so gracious to me.

What is the duty that is owed to the everlasting King of Heaven? Praise my soul, the King of Heaven.

What is the duty that we owe him for such blessings? Praise. You see that? Praise.

[20:36] Praise. The first line. Praise my soul, the King of Heaven. To his feet thy what? Thy tribute bring. What's tribute? What do we call tribute in modern parlance?

Taxes. Right. It's coming tax time. We owe something, don't we? What do we owe our government? We owe them tribute. Romans 13. Taxes.

Well, we have a King in Heaven. What is our tribute? What is our tax? What do we owe him? Praise. Now, turn over to Psalm 96.

You're right here. Notice this element in Psalm 96 and verse 8. Another psalm of praise.

Verse 8. Ascribe. That means to give or to speak of. Ascribe to the Lord the glory what?

[21 : 52] Do his name. Oh, you mean there's something due him. There's a tax. There's a tribute. There's something that I owe him.

That's right. And the psalmist is challenging himself and all the people of God to pay your dues. To give to God the glory due his name.

The glory, the praise that we owe him. We sang, I think, a while back, Come Christians, join to sing. Loud praises to Christ our King.

Let all with heart and voice before his throne rejoice. Praise is his gracious choice. Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord. Praise is his gracious, gracious choice. So, our heavenly king has chosen for the tribute that we're to bring to him the praise of our hearts and lips.

[23 : 10] What a kind tax for a king to require of his subjects. What a gracious choice. I mean, he could have chosen blood.

Bring me blood. Bring me your blood. Bring me the blood of your firstborn. Bring me an animal.

Praise is his gracious choice. Isn't he a kind king?

So, I'll save you from endless torments. And in return, you praise me for it. And I'll give up my own eternal son to the horrors of the cross in your place.

And in return, you praise me. And I'll put my spirit in you as comforter and guide and teacher. And you praise me. And I'll follow you all the way to heaven with goodness and mercies all the days of your life.

And after that, a place in my house forever. And in return, you praise me. Both now and forevermore. Praise is his gracious, gracious choice. And so, to his feet, our tribute bring.

[24 : 16] And no wonder the psalmist is found saying things like this in a couple places in the psalms. It's only fitting for the upright to praise him, isn't it? I mean, when we see all the reasons and he just says, pay your due.

It's just to praise me. Well, it's our fitting. Praise is only fitting for the righteous. I mean, where do the righteous get their righteousness? It's all from him. Both that which is imputed to our record in heaven, when by faith we trust in Christ, all of Christ's righteousness put to our account, and any righteousness found in my heart and life, the work of his spirit recreating the image of God in my heart.

So, it is fitting for the righteous to praise him. Well, so I say, we need to remind ourselves often. Be on the hunt. Count your blessings. Be on the lookout for reasons to praise the Lord. Any other practical suggestions you'd like to mention and to share of ways that help trigger your mind and heart to start thinking and to run down this path of praise?

Anybody? Yes, Karen. Posting scripture around your home, especially key places where you tend to be.

[25 : 42] Sometimes you can't listen to music. Sometimes you can't have time to hear a sermon. But there are those moments that you were there, dishes, getting ready in the bathroom, washing your hands, whichever.

And to have that scripture or even a promise I find very helpful throughout the day. Any nods on that one? Any of you found that helpful?

Yeah. Very good. Somebody else over here. Raj? I find when I plan my day out and all of a sudden my plans are destroyed for the day and I have to throw them out the window and rearrange and it's a good time to praise the Lord and say, hey, it's really not about me.

This is the day of the Lord to me and I'm to rejoice in that and praise Him for it and realize that He's the one in charge. Hmm. Hmm. Wow.

So, praise the Lord. I will praise the Lord at all times. And so Roger's saying a good trigger for me is when I hit bad times. And that's my trigger.

[26 : 53] Just remember. Yeah, I've come upon the scrapping of my plan. Okay, this is the time to praise the Lord. Excellent. If we could do that every time, we'd be praising a whole lot more, wouldn't we?

That's excellent, Roger. What else? ways to help you focus and praise the Lord. Scott.

I enjoy listening to the radio when I'm in a car, a truck, sports, Russian ball, but I turn that off when I hear that and just think about what He's given me and try to praise Him.

Hmm. Turn it off. Okay. Good. Time's in our vehicles. You know, I'm reading the life of George Whitefield and some of these old saints.

Before there were cars, they had autopilot on those horses. And so they could be reading books and Bible as they traveled. And though we don't quite have autopilot perfected, we can be listening, can't we?

[28 : 04] to things in our car that lay hold of that time and move us to praise. Anything else? Turn over to Psalm 106.

I think if we could learn with Roger to let the trials in our life be trigger moments to reassess and to not let our first response be our last response but to turn it to praise and to thank the Lord that He's made this day and planned it out and He knows what He's doing and He's got my good at heart. If we could do that with our troubled times just how helpful that would be in developing an attitude of praise at all times.

Here in Psalm 106, it's a rehearsing of the history of God and His people Israel and I want to just it's rehearsing the time when they came to the Red Sea.

And so the chariots of Pharaoh were coming the Red Sea in front of them the chariots behind them and no way around the geography was such that they were hemmed in.

[29 : 26] And now just notice this and think with me about what Roger's talking about that okay we're going along we're running away from Egypt we're doing fine everything's going our way and now suddenly there's a Red Sea in front of us with a pursuing enemy.

Think about praise now okay so here we are in Psalm 106 verse 7 when our fathers were in Egypt they gave no thought to your miracles they did not remember your many kindnesses and they rebelled by the sea the Red Sea you can take time to turn back to Exodus and you'll find what they did at the Red Sea was not turn in faith to God but complain to his messenger why did you bring us out of Egypt did you bring us out here to kill us in the desert we would have been better off back there and God says that's rebellion complaining that this is not for our good but for our destruction they rebelled by the sea there as they stood by the Red Sea yet he saved them not because of their righteousness but for his namesake to make a name for himself to make his mighty power known he rebuked the Red Sea and it dried up he led them through the depths as through a desert he saved them from the hand of the foe from the hand of the enemy he redeemed them the waters covered their adversaries not one of them survived that's the signature mark of God dealing with an enemy whenever you see that not one surviving that's his signature to the battle and verse 12 then they believed his promises and sang his praise when did

Israel praise the Lord then on the other side of the Red Sea after the trial was all done then they believed the promise and then they sang their praise to the Lord when does the Lord want us praising him from the near side of the Red Sea as soon as we face that frustration of our plan that oh no moment and that oh not this moment that's when he wants praise no they rebelled them and only here do they sing his praise so this is a challenge to learn to praise God on the near side of your Red Sea rather than waiting to get on the far side why didn't they praise him on the near side their unbelief they didn't believe the promise he said

I'm going to take you out that I might bring you in to a better land they didn't believe and so therefore they didn't sing his praise but but if they believe the promise you see the promises are a rich field of raw materials for praise when we come up to our red seed Roger was sharing that in his own life so my day is scrapped well God's got some plans for me this is a day the Lord has made and I'm to rejoice in it there's reasons to praise him right now in my trial I don't need to wait till I get through it and God will be robbed of his glory if we only praise him on the far side of our problems and not on the near side and not when we're going through them but God is greatly glorified by saints who sing praises in the midst of their problems it was a few months ago Pastor Jason gave us a lesson out of 2nd Chronicles chapter 20 where we saw King Jehoshaphat facing a great army of Midianites and Munites and way outnumbered and they cried out to the

Lord and then they did something rather peculiar King Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army saying give thanks to the Lord for his love endures forever and as they began to sing their praises the Lord set ambushes against their invaders and they were defeated now there's another picture isn't it so they're on the near side of their Red Sea it's a sea of enemies and they're praising they're going into

battle praising literally singing the goodness of God and that's the way we need to view this thing of not letting our praise srivel up I just think of the positioning of the new covenant Lord's day the day of worship for the new covenant saints is which day of the week it's the first day of the week [34 : 21] I don't know what you're facing this week maybe some of you've got some fearful things on your calendar the truth is that none of us know what we're facing this week completely do we we don't know what a day will bring forth so as we stand on the shore of this red sea of the week with things that might be foreboding and fearful how are we going to start the week we're going to start with a day of worship and praise with the people of God we're going to focus on our God what he said what he's!

done for us we're going to talk with each other about how good God has been to us and his promises to us and we're going into the battle with praises in our mouths and in our hearts the very positioning of the Lord's day for us I think is helpful yes we can look back over this past week and say look at all the red seas he's brought us through and we praise him but then there's this praise of faith isn't there this praise of trust that prepares us for the coming week Paul and Silas when did they praise the Lord it was midnight bloodied and beaten and in the dungeon so right in the midst of their red sea they didn't see the deliverance that God was going to bring they didn't wait till the earthquake had freed them no they sang in their midnight hour they praised him they sang praises to him and the world got an idea of the kind of God they served as those other prisoners listened in G. Campbell Morgan says any man can sing when the prison doors are open and he set free but the Christian soul sings! in prison anybody can sing from the far side of!

the! the praising! Christian sings on the near side so let's learn to praise the Lord at the very appearance of our troubles and find him to meet us in them and to lift our hearts to true praise think of the pleasure God gets when his people are praising him on the near side of the Red Sea going into the battle in the midst of the dungeon the pleasure that comes to him we're not guessing he's got a job and he's in the midst of his Red Sea and his dark midnight dungeon and what is Job doing not cursing God but falling down and worshiping naked I came from my mother's womb naked I will return the Lord gave and the Lord has now taken away may the name of the Lord be praised there it is praise and what what's

God's attitude in heaven toward his afflicted servant praising him in the midst of his trouble Satan come here I want to show you something have you seen my servant Job you incited me to take all this away I gave you freedom to do all this and look he's not cursing me but he's praising me the pleasure the pleasure of God boasting to the devil about his servant praising in the midst of such trials and so our author PB Power speaks about when you're even not able to rise from your beds you're still able to give God praise from your sick bed such praise is of exceeding value to the Lord to hear such sweet music from such poor instruments isn't that good when your instrument is at its weak still to hear such sweet music as praise and I'll close with a footnote the author has heard continual praises from a tongue half eaten away with cancer what use beloved reader are you making of your tongue wow there you go go on that and as we have tongues to sing let's gather in a few moments and sing the praises of

[38 : 25] Jesus and remember this that all these resolutions we're relying on him for grace to help us that God who works in us both to will and to do his good pleasure he works in us the resolution and the performance of it let's look to him for both we'll go and be blessed!

we're dismissed