**POWER IN YOUR PRAISE & WORSHIP**

**(Matt Barnes)**

**Background**

Paul had a dream - God showed him he was to go and preach in Macedonia and he was certain they were where God had called them to be.

[read Acts 16:16-26 MSG]

In order to go deeper, we need to understand the terms ‘praise’ and ‘worship’ more:

**Praise**

Old Testament translators have combined the 7 Hebrew words for praise into the English word we use today. They all have different definitions and still reflect the way we express ourselves today in praise:

**Yâdâh** (*yaw-daw*) To revere or worship with extended hands or to hold out the hands.

**Hâlal** (*haw-lal*) To celebrate or to be clamorously foolish.

**Zâmar** (*zaw-mar*) To celebrate in song and music.

**Tôwdâh** (*to-daw*) A sacrifice of praise. Thanksgiving for things not yet received.

**Bârak** (*baw-rak*) To kneel. To bless God (as an act of adoration). To praise.

**Tehillâh** (*teh-hil-law*) A song of praise. A new song. A spontaneous song.

**Shâbach** (*shaw-bakh*) To shout. To commend, glory, and triumph.

Psalms is full of these acts of worship and in Psalm 7:17 (NKJV), it literally translates as: “I will praise (yâdâh) the Lord according to His righteousness, And will sing praise (zâmar) to the name of the Lord Most High” So these words come together to form the concept of praise and to give honour to God through our outward expressions and actions.

**Worship**

Worship is a deeper form of praise, it literally means ‘to fall down before’ or to ‘bow down before’. It says in John 4 we must worship “in spirit and in truth”.

When you truly connect in worship to God, every part of you is involved, mind, body and spirit - you get personal with God, you step from the outer court into the holy of holies.

**Praise and worship breaks chains**

To understand this, we must understand that there is a war going on, not against things on the earth, but in the spiritual realm. The enemy wants to leave you defeated and make you feel like you’re worthless.

Good news! God is bigger, and He has given us praise and worship as a powerful weapon to use against him.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

*We are human, but we don’t wage war as humans do. - we belong to another kingdom. We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.*

Paul and Silas got that - when they praised, the earth shook! This is the power of your praise and worship! When you get out of yourself, forget about what is going on in your life, around you, chains fall off!

**Praise and worship changes the atmosphere**

When Esther was in labour, she was singing “Build Your Kingdom” through labour pains, and although it may not have been meant in a ‘worship’ sense at the time, it came from the heart of a worshipper and there was a peace that was noticed by the midwives.

Praise and worship music can be a powerful tool to draw us into a personal experience with God. And this effect can be felt in the privacy of a hospital room or in the gathering of the church See 2 Kings 3: 15-16 - Elisha prophesies but only when he has a musical backing.

The guy who co-wrote *10,000 Reasons* with Matt Redman, Jonas Myrin. He was asked to perform it on a secular TV show in his native Sweden. This is a direct quote from the presenter, a nonbeliever:

*‘There was a strange feeling when you sang, it was as if the molecules in the room were stirred up’*

It’s not an accident that we’re singing O Mighty Ones, where it says *‘When I move my body, when I move my feet, when I open my mouth, then the darkness flees’* - there is power in our praise and worship that is used as a weapon against the enemy, and the darkness must flee!

**Praise and worship brings breakthrough**

Have you ever faced a wall? Opposition is an opportunity. If you’re walking in what God has called you to do. It’s not abandonment, it’s that He wants to work a miracle through you.

The Israelites get set free from Egypt, they hit a wall when God says they’re going over there, but there’s a sea in the way and they literally see God part a sea for them - they’re celebrating, proclaiming his name.

Three days later, nothing to eat, they’re like ‘oh God where are you?’ And they forgot what God has done.

God has never left you. Maybe some of you are doubting at the moment with the wall you’re facing. I’d encourage you - break through it.

See Joshua 6:1-21 - the walls of Jericho come down through a shout of praise.

We don’t sing *O Mighty Ones* to stir up an atmosphere - God doesn’t need stirring up, but when we sing *‘strongholds are coming down, Jesus is lifted high’* we proclaim it with our mouths in Jesus’ name, and strongholds are broken!

But if we want to see breakthrough, we’ve got to step out of our comfort zone and believe that when we open our mouths, the darkness will flee and we will see that stronghold, that wall come crashing down.

Steve Carey preached the other week on change - are you happy with where you are in your praise and worship to God? Think about it, do you want to experience God on a greater level?

If nothing changes, nothing changes.

It’s not for anyone else to see, it’s for an audience of one - it’s between you and God.

**Do something different that sacrifices a bit more of yourself so that He can become bigger.**

*‘Often our “reserved temperament” is little more than fear of what others will think of us, or perhaps unwillingness to humble ourselves before God and others. Of course, people have different temperaments, but that must never keep us from worshipping with our whole being’.*

**Richard Foster**

I’m reminded of when I come in from work, and the girls run up to me and shout ‘Daddy!’ - God calls us to be like that with Him, He wants us to grow in our expression of praise to Him and to have a ‘childlike’ faith.

Your worship to Him isn’t dependent on your personality or your current state of sin. Yes you should sort that out and examine your heart before you come before Him.

However, you could be the most proper person to everyone else, but to God, I encourage you to let go of your Earthly feelings and worship Him who is outside of our understanding!

In the context of breakthrough, maybe you need to see this in your marriage, your job, your finances whatever it is, use worship as your weapon. God has given this to you.

Praise and worship is the key that we can use to unlock doors, tear down strongholds and purchase our breakthrough.

**Points for thought/discussion**

1. Are you happy with where you are in your praise and worship?

2. Do you have a preferred place to worship? Do you connect with God in your car?

When you’re on a walk? With others?

3. Can you honestly say you’re connecting with God and stepping into the ‘holy of

holies’?

4. What is stopping you from doing something a bit different and stepping in your

praise?

**Key verses:**

Acts 16:16-26

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

2 Kings 3: 15-16

Joshua 6:1-21