

# Spontaneous Praise

Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.  
(Ephesians 3:20-21)

As I have mentioned on other occasions, my first experiences with church, and with Christianity in general, began for me as a young child in a small Pentecostal Church in the rural mountains of Virginia. Being very young, I did not understand much of what I was observing take place in those church services. But I do remember that it left a deeply-rooted impression in my mind that something very special, something very powerful was taking place.

I recall very vividly, now some sixty years later, my hanging onto my Momma's leg as she "trembled" and "shouted" to the Lord.

Again, I did not understand any of it, but on one occasion I asked her what was happening to her. And she said simply that the "power of God" caused her to "shout" as she did.

Those words and those events have left an indelible impression within my memory, watching as she and other people at those services responded to something said by the preacher, or perhaps while singing a hymn, suddenly being caught up with a mysterious trembling and shaking.

I confess to you that I have often wondered why the same "power of God" has not manifested itself in the same way within me and within my worship.

Some preachers and teachers within our traditional Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and other such conservative churches question those behaviors, often scoffing and denying that such responses are really "real", suggesting that they are somehow "made up", and some even declaring that those responses are brought on by demonic influence.

And maybe some of it really is "made up" and maybe some of it even comes from the demonic world. But folks, I confess that I am far more generous in my thoughts and acceptance of those responses.

I knew my mother well and I saw none such foolishness in her. It was not in her character to "make those things up" and she gave no indication that she was influenced by "demons".

What then was really taking place within her and within many of the other saints that have experienced those same moments of the “power of God” coursing through their souls?

May I suggest that it probably came as a result of some of these very truths that we have been studying about over these past several weeks!

These words clearly declare that the very presence of God gains access to our heart, soul, mind and spirit. And as we receive Him as Savior and Lord, He comes to live within us. Those words again, beginning in verse 16 . . .

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

I cannot help but note the words in verse 16, “strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”

Those are very similar to the words my mother used as she tried to explain to me what was taking place within her as she “shouted”.

Here in these words of scripture, we are told very plainly that the presence of the “Living God” comes to live within us, that the very “fullness of God” dwells within us. And He brings with Him a very special power.

And with that being so, should I, should you, not at least on some occasions, erupt into spontaneous praise and adoration and worship of this great and mighty and powerful and loving God who has graciously consented to save us from our sins; and to give us not only a blessed life while we remain here on earth, but to also give us eternal life with Him in heaven?

I’ll pause here for a moment and remind us of why I have brought these several thoughts to us thus far. It is because, here, seemingly out of context, the Apostle Paul stops his discourse and suddenly erupts into spontaneous praise and adoration and worship of God.

Some bible scholars comment that this “Doxology” is simply an appropriate ending to this particular chapter of this Book. But remember, in the original text, quite often, there were no exact chapters.

So then, I am convinced that this sudden eruption into praise and adoration and worship welled-up out of the “Fullness of God” within Paul and spontaneously over-flowed into these words.

And no, we are not told here that Paul was “shaking” or “shouting”. But something very special was obviously taking place within Him. And we know that he was very expressive of his worship in other ways, such as “lifting up holy hands to the Lord”. He said in 1 Timothy 2 . . .

8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands.  
(1 Timothy 2:8)

Again, yes, all of these words come directly from the Holy Spirit. But as God’s words are filtered through the mind of this man, Paul, we can clearly see his emotional, human response to them.

So then, may I take a liberty here and, for myself, believe that Paul was doing far more than just sitting and mumbling these words quietly to himself.

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Folks, these are not the kind of words that are mumbled quietly to ourselves! I am convinced that this was one of those real “hallelujah moments” for the Apostle Paul.

And I believe that he at least spoke these words loudly, even perhaps shouted them to the rooftops.

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And what would be wrong with Paul being a little bit loud? Worship in heaven is loud! Listen to these words in Isaiah 6 . . .

3 And one (angel) called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.  
(Isaiah 6:3-4)

Those “thundering words” do not sound very Presbyterian, or Baptist or Methodist, do they?

Now please, do not be concerned! I am not suggesting that we change the whole order of worship within our church. But I do believe that we ought to be a little more expressive with our worship.

I am reminded of those moments there on the beach just before Jesus was taken back up into heaven. In talking with Peter, Jesus asked him three times, “Peter, do you love me?” Peter struggled to come up with the right answer, though he did protest that yes, he had some brotherly affection for Him.

But ask yourself, how was Peter supposed to express his love? Should Peter have “hugged” the Lord Jesus? I personally believe that he should have “hugged” Jesus! But more than that, Peter should have fallen to his knees and openly, and perhaps loudly, declared his worship for Jesus.

Again, I believe that we could often be more expressive with our worship of the Lord and not be in violation of those long-held traditions and those scriptures that tell us to do things decently and in order.

(1 Corinthians 14:30)

Are we perhaps more concerned about our own “dignity” than we are about the majesty, and the glory, and the honor of our God?

Is God not deserving of at least some show of excitement on our part. After all, did He not send His own blessed Son to die that we might have life? And should we not be very glad that He did, and perhaps show our appreciation in some manner or another.

Folks, these words in this Book are real, really real. And the Holy Spirit really does live within those of us who have received Christ as our Savior and Lord. And as these words tell us, we really are “strengthened with power through His Spirit in our inner being” and we really do have the “fullness of our God” living within us right now.

And yes, I do recognize that all these concepts are difficult to comprehend and to accept, but I am also quickly coming to the conclusion that if I am ever going to become the Christian that God wants me to be, then I am going to need to step on forward, and get on past some of my inhibitions and anxieties, and begin to really believe and to accept each of these things that I read here as being absolutely true.

And beyond just believing these truths, I really do need to begin doing something about them, that the common responses of my daily life ought to clearly and openly show that I really so believe these truths.

And I confess to you that I really would like to have a lot more of these “Hallelujah” moments that the Apostle Paul is experiencing here, moments when I would spontaneously break forth into praise and worship and adoration of the Lord Jesus.

Wow! Would that not embarrass our friends and family if we suddenly blurted out “Amen” or “Hallelujah” to something the preacher might say!

Or even worse, would it not cause them to run and hide if we were to break into a loud praise and worship song as we walked down the street.

Or more wonderfully, it might not embarrass them or cause them to run and hide. It might just encourage them to express their own love and praise and worship for the blessed Lord Jesus.

Folks, I concede that my words today are odd. But are my words any more odd than the ones we are reading here, that God Himself is actually living within me, within you. And more than that, as He lives within us and as we remain surrendered to Him, He actually influences and guides the thoughts we think, the words we say and the way we behave.

And He really does do exactly that! And I know that He does. I can tell the difference in my own manner of daily life now as compared to the way I used to live. And I can see it in my dear wife and in those in my family who have received Christ as their Lord.

And yes, I do fully understand and accept that in each of us personally there is no good thing. But I do also know that because the Spirit of Christ lives in me, in each of us who are saved, I, we, can actually think and do many things in a far better way than we did them before we were saved.

And our praise and our worship brings great delight to the heart of God. So then, should we not be thankful and express our thanks to Him for all His great blessings to us.

And may I add one other thing, as we do show praise and worship to Him; He blesses us all the more. I recall a song that we used to sing at French Camp Academy. Some of its words were . . .

“He lives within the praises of His people. He loves to hear us call upon His name. So set your mind on Him, and let your praise begin, and the glory of the Lord will fill this place!”

As you and I break forth into praise and adoration of God, blessings really do begin to rain down upon us, blessing that would not come to us otherwise.

Again, this is all very real! Is it real in your personal life? Do you offer up prayers and praise all throughout your day or . . . do you just get on about each day in your usual way.

Would you not rather have the immediate presence of God filling all of the circumstances of your daily life, guiding and influencing your thoughts and behaviors? He will do exactly that! And He wants to do that! But we must be willing to accept and receive His special intimate involvement.

Before we close, may I share a recent personal experience? In some family matters that have been taking place recently, my wife and I have been crying out to the Lord for His help, a mixture of praise and worship and tearful pleading.

My wife is especially given to weeping as she prays.

May I declare to you that God listens to her in her weeping and sobbing! He loves her so deeply and I know that it blesses His heart as she cries out to Him. And He comes to her aid and He answers her prayers.

Our children and others are blessed beyond measure and they don't even know why, but I do! It is because my dear wife is continually before the throne of God, crying out to Him on their behalf, praying and praising and worshipping God.

My question for you is, "Are these things also taking place in your life? Are you crying out to God for His help and guidance? And then, do you find yourself spontaneously blurting out, "thank you Lord", "Hallelujah", "praise the Lord"!

I do not suggest for a moment that you "make it up" or that you try to "force" such a response to take place. It simply does not work that way!

True praise and worship will come to you and to me just as it did to the Apostle Paul. When we allow our hearts to be filled with the "fullness of God", praise and worship will simply "well up" within us as we go about the ordinary activities of our day.

And the more often we intentionally surrender over those ordinary matters, the more often we will have our own "Hallelujah moments".

Listen again as we close . . .

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