



The Gift of Praise

By Shannon Ford on December 14, 2021

READING: Matthew 15

God delights in our praise of His name, His character, and all that He does for us. Praise is simply telling God that you love Him. Every new day should begin and end with praise for our Lord and Savior, not because we “have to” but because we “get to” declare our love and devotion to Him. Matthew 15:8-9 warns of the person who offers empty, meaningless praise.

Here Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13, clearly addressing the religious leaders. Jesus was saying that His generation was doing the same thing as Isaiah’s generation. In both Isaiah and Matthew, the people spoken to are Jews from Jerusalem who had a religion that was characterized by externals based on religious traditions. They said all the right things, giving the impression they were pious; but their hearts and wills were not obedient at all. They had a religious form, but not the obedience and trust that goes with it. So, their teaching was useless because there was nothing of God’s authority and truth behind them.

In 1 Samuel 16:7 God says, “... *the Lord does not look at the things that man looks at. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*” God is not pleased by words alone. He cannot be tricked by a smooth tongue and flattering speech. God sees straight to the heart of who we are. He desires praise from our lips that is rooted in the truth of our deeds. He is pleased by the praise of those who are earnestly seeking Him and are surrendered to Him completely. Do you praise God each day? If so, is that praise in both word and deed, or are you guilty of offering lip service to the only One worthy of all your praise?

PRAYER: God, thank You for the gift of praise. I desire to worship You in both word and deed. Please forgive me for the times I offer lip service instead of worship from a fully surrendered heart. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

TOMORROW'S READING: Matthew 16

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