

Perfect Worship and The Power of Praise Podcast 9

Welcome to podcast #9 in our Quest For Wholeness Series. I am So thankful that you are joining us as we continue to move through this process of learning and growing in our faith and understanding that we may be healed heart, body, mind, and soul and so that we may live whole.

As we strive toward this goal of wholeness, we will see many benefits in our personal lives. Not only will we experience great things within us, but we will also see that our relationships will be helped and healed. This is a valuable and time investment worthy quest!

My daughter Taylor Draughn, who counsels at the Christian Counseling Center in West Monroe, LA is joining me through this journey. Taylor, I am glad you are here! Why don't you get us started with a brief recap of some of the highlights of the various people we have studied over the past 8 podcasts.

Taylor

The last podcast was Hezekiah. He was king of the southern kingdom of Israel, Judah. The Bible states that he was a king like no other king of Judah before him or after him. He had a pretty impressive testimony. He did what was good right and true before the Lord and because of that he prospered. When trouble came his way his response was always prayer, but interestingly, Hezekiah got tripped up in pride along the way. Hezekiah was a great story to study, but his story reminds us that even when we seemingly have it together, we still should be warned that we can so easily step into pride and that does not please God.

We also studied the mess of the Northern kingdom of Israel because they were immersed in the sin of Jeroboam, the first of 19 kings of Northern Israel. Jeroboam led Israel to be wicked and Israel continued in that cycle until they were taken captive by the enemy. For you and I we should be warned of the spiritual significance of this in our own lives.

We studied Caleb and Joshua. Caleb was wholehearted in his devotion to God and he did not give up following God or standing on his promises. Even when it took 45 years, Caleb still trusted God to do what He said He would do. Thus Caleb entered the Promised Land.

We began our quest with Joshua recognizing that Moses was dead and Joshua had to leave the past behind to lead the Israelites into their promised land. We learned that clinging to the past could hinder us moving into our Promised Land and that it is to our benefit to do as the apostle Paul stated in Philippians, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.

Pat

Wow! We have really studied some awesome stories in Scripture. Today we will look at another awesome story of a king in Judah named Jehoshaphat.

4 kings with the testimony that they removed the high places: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, & Josiah.

- The only 4 who showed wholeheartedness in following the Lord.
- Remember "Wholeheartedness is not perfection."

High places were places of worship. Worship of other gods or God and something else. God had said that was not true worship. High places = divided hearts not wholeheartedness.

- What do we have in God's rightful place? Who or what is on the throne of our lives? Who or what are we sacrificing to and trusting in?
- While God gave us relationships with one another as a source of strength and encouragement, no person can be our savior or our source of hope - only Jesus. People will let us down - in our lives one minute and out the next.

- If you want to know if you have a divided heart of worship, ask God, “Lord do I have anyone or anything on the throne of my life that I am bringing sacrifices to? He will answer. We may not like His answer but he will answer.

I remember when God dealt with me about trusting in the resources of On Fire Ministries. I have some of the greatest, godly women working with me on my On Fire Ministries team. It would be easy to trust in them because they were such smart and together women. God began to deal with me that I was putting my trust in them and the gifts and abilities that they brought to the table. They were blessings that I believe God brought to me to work with me in ministry, but He wanted my full and complete trust in Him not them,

Taylor, Are there any other ways you see that we can have high places or idols, or worship other gods in our own lives.

Taylor

One situation I have seen quite often is where a spouse has placed their spouse on this pedestal that is closer to God than human. They have had these expectations that they are going to make everything better, and they are all they need in life. Normally when I have seen these situations play out it is many years later, and they enter into the office with a struggling marriage.

The fact is that no one or nothing else is supposed to take the place of the hole that only Christ can fill. Yet we so often fill this hole with our husband, our children, and maybe even a career. (By the way, when I say this, I need to be looking at a mirror because I have struggled with this as well). Like mom stated earlier, we are meant to be in relationship with one another, and we are meant to put time and effort in these relationships to make them the best they can be. The problem is when we put these other categories above our God.

The fact is that God wants to be in the middle of all of these things. In our relationship with our husband and children, He wants to guide us in how to love them better and be the best wife and mother we can. In our careers, He wants to show us the direction we need to go in, and he wants us to be successful. When we look to Him in our relationship with Him as well as all these other categories that is putting Him first. Having God first doesn't mean that we stop caring or putting effort into other areas of our life. It simply means that we look to Him in all of these areas.

Pat

I once trusted in a glass of wine to make life like I wanted it to be. BUT He wanted me to allow Him to make my life what He wanted it to be and to transform me in the process and journey of life. Why does the Scripture say do not be drunk with wine which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit?

Dissipation – G810 – asotia – an abandoned desolate life – having no hope of safety, prodigality

- “A prodigal is one who spends too much, who slides easily under the fatal influence of flatterers and the temptations with which he has surrounded himself into spending freely on his own lusts and appetites.” CWSNT

Jesus is the only One we can fill our lives with and be satisfied and fulfilled in life no matter the circumstances we find ourselves in – anything else will eventually fail us.

Uncomfortable question –

What have we, in the Christian community – as believers in Christ, deemed as acceptable but is really a high place? What have we placed on the throne of our lives and sacrificed to?

Taylor, talk about how you see this in your counseling practice.

Taylor –

When thinking about the Christian community, I believe that we have put doing “ministry” in a high place. I can hear people gasping as I state this, but give me a second and let me explain. Obviously as Christians we are meant to minister to others and do activities that involve being part of a Christian community. What I am talking about here is when us as Christians put the ministry above God.

The best example of this is the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10. Just to give you a quick synopsis. Jesus came to these sister’s homes, and Mary sat at Jesus’s feet learning from him. Martha on the other hand was running all over the place trying to prepare everything. Martha becomes angry with Jesus for not telling her sister to help her, but Jesus states “You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her”.

If I had to guess, Martha’s sense of purpose came out of being the person that prepares everything. I believe the Christian community is filled with individuals like Martha who gain their purpose from doing not from sitting at the feet of Jesus. Jesus so often wants to get our attention and tell us to stop and come sit at his feet to learn from him. I want to clarify again that this is not me stating that we should not be involved in serving and ministering to others. What I am stating is that when the motive of our heart when we do these things is to fill a hole that can be only filled by Jesus then it becomes an idol for us. I have found that there is time that we minister to others and there are times when we need to sit at the feet of Jesus.

Pat

My question is: Are you willing to ask God to show you any **HIGH PLACES** in your life?

God is faithful. If we are willing to ask God in sincerity to show us areas of our life that are out of balance, He will be faithful to answer us and then help us to remove them. Remember, that you may not be able to do this on your own, but with God all things are possible and you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you!

Before we talk about Jehoshaphat, I want to begin with Psalm 100 and I want you to listen carefully to the repetitions you hear as I read.

Psalm 100 - A Psalm of praise.

1 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing. 3 Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. 4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. 5 For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.

Did you hear the repetitiveness? 16 times in 5 verses God’s name or a personal pronoun indicating God was used. The Lord is the focus of Psalm 100 whether in name or personal pronoun, the psalm is all about God. Today - We will see the importance of this kind of focus as we open our study Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:1-12.

2 Chr. 20:1-12 - The focus

1 It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great

multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). **3** And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. **4** So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. **5** Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, **6** and said: "O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? **7** Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? **8** And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, **9** 'If disaster comes upon us--sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine--we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' **10** And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir--whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them-- **11** here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. **12** O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."

Did you hear that same repetitive theme and focus that was in Psalm 100? The Lord, His word, and His work were Jehoshaphat's focus as he prayed.

Let's talk about the situation that Jehoshaphat find himself in.

There is "a great multitude" coming against Israel and Jehoshaphat.

We learned from Hezekiah's story and now we see the same lesson in Jehoshaphat's story that the enemy comes **even** when we are **wholeheartedly** following God.

Taylor

Some of you are probably thinking after that last statement mom made, "then why should I wholeheartedly follow the Lord". The fact is that when it comes to wholeheartedly following the Lord it is not about what we want. Following the Lord means giving up what you desire if it is not in God's will for you and trusting that He has a better plan in store for you. One question that I think we need to think about in these situations is "why does God allow the enemy to come after these individuals that are wholeheartedly following the Lord". I believe that there are a couple of reasons. The first we discussed earlier and how trials even brought on by satan are used for our good and to strengthen us. If we never had an enemy, I don't believe that we would ever grow in any way. Resistance brings about change. Another reason is because God knows our fleshly tendencies. When things are going good, how easy is it for us as humans to look at ourselves and say that it is because of us that things are good. We become prideful and arrogant. When we have an enemy, and we have a God that fights for us we get to see a God that is so much more powerful than us who fights for our behalf. Going back to the first question of why should I wholeheartedly follow the Lord I believe the answer is because we don't know what is best for us, but our God does. When we follow Him we will be much more content and fulfilled when we follow Him.

Jehoshaphat's Pattern when the enemy came – noted by bold numbers

1. He was **afraid** so he **set** himself to **desperately** seek God. (vs 3)

We have already went over the fact that fear is real but we have to see past the fear and seek God, but today I want to talk about this point:

Desperation may be best expressed in a **fast**.

There is a story in the NT where disciples could not perform a miracle casting out a demon and they should have been able to. When they asked Jesus why they couldn't He told them because "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." **Mark 9:29**

Sometimes the intensity of prayers need to ramped up by fasting.

The Scripture is filled with people who fasted and prayed until God answered them.

- King David fasted for his sick son.
- Esther fasted for such a time as this as she sought the king's favor.
- Nehemiah fasted for the Kings favor.
- Daniel did a vegetable fast that showed up on his appearance – he proved God by not defiling himself with the food from the pagan king's table and

But I am reminded of what Jesus said in Matthew 6:16. He said, WHEN you fast. That terminology lets us know that fasting is part of our prayer life.

Taylor, what do you think holds us back from fasting?

Taylor

Fasting is one of those things in the Christian life that I think can often be kind of scary when asked to engage in it. I know when I was younger I thought that the only way to fast was to completely give up food, but there are many ways that we can fast.

Fasting can involve so many different things. I know I have fasted from television before. I know others that have fasted from social media. The fact is that it doesn't matter what you fast from as long as it is something that hurts having it removed from your life. I believe it also needs to be something that you can easily replace the time you usually complete the task with by seeking the Lord. For example, rather than looking on Facebook you pray. When you see it from that aspect, you have many different options of what to fast from.

Another thing that I believe holds us back is failure. I know that I have tried to fast before and failed miserably, and it really puts you off from trying again. A helpful way to look at this is the same as making a goal. You have to start out making a realistic goal that you can achieve and move from there. For example, if you are a social media junkie and decide to fast completely from social media for a whole month that is a huge goal to set that you might not make. Where if you start off with fasting from social media for Monday through Friday of a week then that is a fast that you could complete.

Obviously there are times where God might call us to fast from things in an extraordinary way, like not eating for a month, but I believe God wants us first and foremost to be faithful to him and complete the things that He has set in our heart. That means setting realistic parameter around fasting.

Pat

I want us to see the significance of how Jehoshaphat fully focused on God when faced with a enemy that was sure to destroy him.

Remember Psalm 100 and the repetitive nature of God's name and personal pronouns for God. Jehoshaphat's prayer very much parallels Psalm 100 - 6 verses and 22 times God's name or the personal pronoun for God

I absolutely love how Jehoshaphat ends his prayer.

2 Chronicles 20:12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."

- *He doesn't have a clue what to do*

- *He has no power to do anything*
- *BUT his eyes are on God*

One thing he had gotten right His eyes were on the one who could save him.

Taylor – Did you already talk about the story where Jesus was walking on the water and Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water until he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the waves (circumstances) around him and then he sank – but Jesus saved him?

How you might see this from personal experience or counseling experience...

In one of the blogs from this series, I talked about the story of Peter walking on water to Jesus. I compared this story to how us as Christians can often live hopeless lives. When Peter was walking on the water and His eyes were on Jesus he knew that he would be fine because he was looking at the one that gives him confidence. Immediately when he took his eyes off of Jesus and on the storm he began to sink. Isn't this a story that can so often resonate in our lives today? So often in my counseling practice I see individuals that are hopeless, and what I find is that their sight is set on the situation (on the storm), and they can't see past the storm to see how or even if the situation can be resolved. The best thing that I can do in this situation is point their gaze towards Jesus. When this happens what I have found is that the hopeless situation changes.

One thing that I stated in the blog that I wanted to make sure that you ladies heard that are listening to the podcast is:

- If you are drowning, all you have to do is look to Christ and He will rescue you. Does this mean that you will never face any other hard times? Absolutely not! It means we don't have to do life by ourselves anymore. Regardless of the hopeless situation you are in Jesus wants to show up, but we have to be the first to act and that involves not looking at the situation but at him.

Pat

Let's look at the Lord's response in

2 Chr. 20:15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

God confirmed that even the battle that Jehoshaphat was facing wasn't about him. It wasn't even his battle. It was God's battle.

I want to end with a word of encouragement if you are facing a battle. Maybe your battle is not your battle, but the Lord's. Exodus 14:14 says, "The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

I hope you will join us as we finish the story of Jehoshaphat in our next podcast. He still has powerful lessons to teach us.

Until then, we hope you are enjoying the journey and striving for the wholeness God intended you to have. We want to hear from you. Contact us at onfire-ministries.org.