



Message **Transcript**

Praise the Lord

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Pastor Jeff:

Father in heaven, we give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise for who you are. And Lord, our prayer this very morning is that you speak directly to all those who have ears to hear. Because Lord, we believe that every time that your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed, that you have a word for all who are listening. Lord, we're inviting you to come and speak and do your work among us as you always do and today is no different. And now for everybody who has gathered here, who desires to hear the Lord speak directly to you, who will believe what he says and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word, amen? Amen.

Some events in life are so spectacular that we want to go back and relive them. Oftentimes when someone is getting married, they'll have a videographer and photographer come and take video and pictures so that when the day is over, it's such a wonderful event that you want to go back and relive it with family and friends. Sometimes if there's a sporting event that ends up being so spectacular, they'll put it on rerun, on a classic rewind immediately afterwards and just play it over and over. Because when something is so spectacular, it seems as if we want to tell everybody else about it. As we've been going through the Book of Exodus, perhaps no story is more spectacular than the story we read about in Exodus Chapter 14. The parting of the Red Sea, God taking his people through, God then destroying the Egyptian army as they tried to follow and take them out. And what is the response when they're done?

You see, at this time in history, they didn't have videotape. There were no videographers in Israel that were videotaping, nobody was taking pictures. And so what they did to make sure they could pass on from generation to generation to generation is that they wrote a praise song and they sang it because as they sang songs of praise to God and they put it into lyric, then they could remember that and as a nation, they could continue to remember that specific event over and over and over again. There's something special about praise that when we spend our time praising Lord, honestly, it is a response to the greatness of who God is. It's a response to who he is and why he's so great. And when we see our God at work, that's what we should do. We should always respond in praising the Lord. And by the way, praise is not a have to, praise is not, "Well, you better or else."

Praise is not you must, praise is not because you're in church we expect you to, praise is because my God is so incredible and my God is so good and my God is so awesome, I can't help but praise his name, I can't help but sing to him. That's what praise really is. And regardless of what your experience is in church, sometimes we get skewed in what we understand praise being because based on our experience in a religious service, we think that's what praise is. Some of us grew up in small churches, some of us grew up in large churches and I've been in all of them. If your experiences being in a church of 24 where somebody was planking on the piano and they were deciding what to sing at that time, that may be your understanding. Well, that's what praise is.

If somebody had somebody on a pipe organ, you might say that's what praise is. If somebody sang without instruments, you might say that's what praise is. And so oftentimes in church, people will say sometimes, "I'm just really not that into praise. That's not really my thing." Really, it is your thing because God created you in his image and he created you for praise, he created you to respond to him. And oftentimes we link what we've seen that, that's what we're actually praising. So for me, growing up in a small church, watching an older woman playing the piano and people singing songs, I would tell you I'm really not into older women playing the piano and singing songs I don't understand. So I would've said, "I'm not that into praise." But it's not who is playing music or not playing music, it's who are they directing us to.

And when we get a picture of what true praise is, that we're praising the God of the universe, the one who created everything out of nothing, the one who created you in his image, the one who made you fearfully and wonderfully made, the one who loved you so much, he sent his only begotten son to rescue you from death and give you life, you can't help but to praise his name. Now we're fortunate here at Brave, we have a wonderful praise team, but on our praise team, we tell them all the time, "Prepare yourself and praise and worship all week long because your job is to guide people to God." It's not about who's good and who's singing and who does... It's about directing the worship to the Lord. And so there's all different kinds of styles in all different kinds of ways, but the Lord wants us to praise. Even in the Psalms which are basically hymns that are written of praise in the very last Psalm, Psalm 150, it talks about praise the Lord, praise him with the lyre, praise him with a timbrel, praise him with all these

instruments.

And then Psalm 150 Verse Six says this, "Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord." That means this. If you're still alive, what's God asking you to do? Praise him. Now, hearing this story that we read about last week is completely worth repeating. So I'm going to invite you, if you have your Bible open up to Exodus Chapter 14. Exodus Chapter 14, I want to read through the end of that chapter again just 19 through 31 just to tell you about this story because praising God is honestly a response. It's so natural, it's so instinctive, it's so legitimate, that's what it's about. And so think about this story and think about if you were an Israelite in there and you were one of those who crossed the sea, what might your response have been when you were part of this story?

Now remember, Israel's been crying out, they've been delivered, God's been doing amazing things and yet when they get to the banks of the Red Sea, they're between a rock and a hard place. They can't go forward in the sea and they can't go backwards because the Egyptian army is coming and closing in on them. So what do they do? They're not fearing the Lord, they're fearing Egypt so they begin to whine and complain and grumble and, "How come we didn't die in Egypt? It would've been so much better to die there than to have to go all through its work just to die out here." And God tells them what? "Tell your people to just remain silent and see the salvation of the Lord. Stop talking and watch me work."

And this is where our story picks up. I'm in verse 19 of chapter 14. "The angel of

God who had been going before the camp of Israel moved and went behind them and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light as night. Thus, one did not come near the other all night." God has been leading them by a pillar of fire at night, a pillar of cloud by day, God says, "I'm about ready to work so just keep walking." The cloud now, which represents the Lord's presence, goes behind them as a rear guard to protect them from Egypt that's coming. What's God saying? "I got you in this and I'm going to give light through my cloud so even though it's going to be night and even though you're going to need to move through the sea, I've got you taken care of, I'll protect you and I'll provide light to your way."

"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land so the waters were divided. The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." Now if that doesn't cause you to gasp, it's because you're way too familiar with the story. Moses stretched out his staff, that was his responsibility, when he does God parts the waters wide enough for 2 million people to walk through. And what kind of ground did they walk through on? Was it damp? Was it muddy? No, it was powder dry. That's how we know it was the Lord. He drove the waters back so much that there's a bank of water on their right and there's a bank of water on their left.

We've never seen anything like it, even if you've been to Universal Studios and

walked through their thing, it's nothing like what actually happened. I mean, this is amazing, you can picture little kids going along and dragging their hand in the water like, "This is cool." And all the way they go through. Now look what happens with Egypt, verse 23, "Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit and all pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea. At morning watch the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion." This is like a grand finale at a fireworks display. We had the cloud, now the pillar of fire is there and where's the Lord? He's looking down from heaven at Egypt.

That is to signify, as big as an army as Egypt was, they were the most powerful force to be reckoned with in the day. What did the Lord have to do? He had to look down on them. His pillar of fire, his pillar of cloud, his presence is with them. I mean, this is a spectacular display of the Lord's presence in a way that Israel has never seen before. And as he looks down, he causes the Egyptians to be confused. They're not aligned in their mission anymore because look what happens next in verse 25, this is talking about the Lord still, "He caused their chariot wheels to swerve and he made them drive with difficulty." So they're going in with chariots, the chariot wheels are swerving, they can't keep the chariot on the road, so to speak, they're swerving all over the place and notice how they respond.

So the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel, for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians. Their God is fighting against us and he's for them." They've had 10 instances in their history where the Lord has shown up in plague form where they

know that God is powerful. Now, personally, they recognize as they've gone in after the Israelites, "We picked the wrong day to fight this God. This is not just Israel, this is Israel's God and he's fighting against us." We can't keep our chariots there, nobody's in alignment, everybody's arguing with each other. And so notice what happens in verse 26, then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and over their horsemen." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the second time he's done this and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it.

"Then the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horseman, even pharaoh's entire army that had gone in after them." Listen to this, not one remained, not one troop survived, all dead. But the sons of Israel walked on what kind of land? Dry land through the midst of the sea and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and their left. He has to repeat it because it's so amazing. Thus, the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand or the power of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Can you picture what they were watching? All those that they were afraid of that were coming after them are now floating corpses on the sea. When Israel saw the great power, which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord.

Who were they fearing before? They were fearing the Egyptians before and now who are they fearing? We're fearing of the Lord. That's a good kind of fear to have.

And they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. This is the first time we really see Moses being elevated. All this time as Moses has been doing everything the Lord's calling him to do, Moses has been ridiculed even by the Israelites and saying, "Why'd you do this? Why'd you bring us here?" Now on this final effort where the Egyptian army is destroyed, what's Israel saying? "Okay, God is worthy of being feared and maybe Moses does know what he's talking about. Maybe he has been listening to that God, we needed this today." That's what's going on. So praising God now then is a response. How are they going to respond to what God did? I mean, you can't go through an event like that and be the same anymore.

You can't go through something like that and say, "Hey, what's for dinner tonight?" It takes about three days to ask that question. But when you go through something like that, there has to be a response to God. When you experience God in the big or you experience God in the little, God needs to be praised. And praise is simply that, praise is a response, it's a joyful recounting of all that God has done for us. It's clapping, it's applauding, it's raising our arms, it's telling him that he is worthy for who he is and all that he's done. So today I want to talk about four ways we can respond to the Lord or four reasons we can respond to the Lord and praise, I've entitled this, Just Praise to the Lord. And here's why. Because as we go through the first part of chapter 15, the first part of the week is I'm saying, how do you preach a song?

I mean, I felt like for those of you that are old enough, and I'm dating myself

here, I understand, but for those of you that grew up in the '70s and the '80s, remember American Bandstand with Dick Clark? And you'd have this young couple on there and he would play a song for him and he'd say, "What do you think?" And they would say something like this, "I don't know, it was good beat, it was easy to dance to, I'd give it a 75." At the beginning of the week, that's how I felt about Exodus 15. How do I grade a song in God's word? But as the week went on, I realized God didn't put that song in there just for us to grade it, this is written by the Holy Spirit through Moses. The song is fine, he wants us to see attributes of why we're called to praise our God.

And the first is this, we are called to praise the Lord for his unparalleled attributes. His unparalleled attributes. You'll hear in the psalm today, who is like our God? There's no one like our God. Notice what happens. Verse one of chapter 15, this is right after all this happened. "Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang the song to the Lord." Can I pause here for one minute? What's the first thing that's the knee-jerk, natural reaction of the nation of Israel when they see God move? The spiritual leader writes a song and all the men sing it together. You didn't hear what I said. Men are leading worship. Men, you may not like certain styles of worship, but God created you to worship.

I went to the State Championship game at Mile High yesterday and on both sides of the field, each team had some great plays. And when they did, one side of the field would erupt and then when this team did good, the other side of the field would erupt. Nobody was holding up signs saying, "Please applaud now." Why? Because when your

heart is attached to someone or something that you believe is worthy, it springs forth from you. Praising the Lord is a natural response for looking at the things of God that you can ascribe to him.

Psalm 19 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." Even if you're not a believer, non-believers look in creation at the stars in the mountains and the oceans and they say, "Wow, it's amazing." We as Christians say, "Praise the Lord, he created it." Amen. That's what it means to praise. And so if you can't respond in praise, it's because your heart is not set on the things of God. So notice that because we'll see this at the end when Miriam gets involved, but the men are leading worship, that's always been the way it's supposed to be.

If you get in the Book of First Timothy where Paul discusses what should happen in the church, he goes, "I expect men everywhere to lift up holy hands." What are men doing? Men are seen in the congregation of God leading the praise and worship to the throne of God. Why do I have to say that in our generation? It doesn't mean women are not called to worship because women are called to worship and women can be great worshipers, but so often in church we tend to relegate that out and say, "Well, that's a woman thing or that's a feely thing or that's an emotional thing." Friends, I've been to rock concerts, I've been everywhere, when something is good, I've watched men stand at their feet, applaud and raise their hands. Even the deepest pagans that you've ever seen.

How come it is in church oftentimes that's not a response? Here's why. Because our heart for God is not nearly big enough, that's why. Does that make sense? So

we're praising God for what? His unparalleled attributes, there's no one like him. He says this, "I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted. The horse and his rider, he has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song." Not just my strength, he's who I'm singing about and has become my salvation. "This is my God and I will praise him, my father's God and I will extol him." The Lord is a what? A warrior. The Lord is his name. What's he talking about? He's talking about the attributes of God and who God is. And if you study the attributes of God and who God is, he is worthy of your praise, he is worthy of your response to him.

If you want to understand what mercy looks like, study God. If you want to understand what forgiveness looks like, study God. If you want to understand what justice looks like, study God. If you want to understand what any good attribute, love, grace, all of those things are found in the person of God. And when we truly understand how great our God is, we can't help but burst forth and praise to our God. It is so natural and it's the way that God created us. And let me just say this, if you don't praise God because you were created to praise and worship him, you will find something less than to praise and worship and it will never satisfy completely. Never. You'll give your heart, you'll give your soul, you'll give your mind, you'll give your praise, you'll give your thoughts to someone other than the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We praise him because of who he is and notice what he says, "This is my God and I will praise him." It's personal, he's worked on my behalf, he's my father's God,

the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. What does that mean? It means when I'm praising God, it means when I'm worshiping the Lord, I'm saying, "This is my God. I'm praising him because of the testimony that I have, this is my father's God, this is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this is the God of Moses, this is the God that parted the Red Sea. This is the God that rained down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, this is the God that sent his son Jesus Christ, that's who he is. He's the God of every single generation and God allows me to worship him." Isn't that good news?

We praise him for his attributes. If you study his attributes, if you spend time in the word, you'll learn that praise glorifies God, praise builds your faith and praise sends Satan flee. When you're going through a tough time, sometimes we want to just talk about it. Praise is like kryptonite to Satan when you're going through a hard time. When you're praising God in the trial and you're praising God in the storm, when you're praising him with all that you have, Satan can't handle that because when you're going through a trial, he's trying to lie to you and tell you if God was so good or if God loved you, then here's what should be happening. But the reality is God loves you so much, he's entrusted you with something difficult to see if you'll still praise him. And when you can praise him in the difficult and you can praise him in the hard and you can praise him in the tribulation, it sends Satan running because he knows he has no grip on you.

Praise God for his unparalleled attributes. Our God is good all the time, all the time our God is good. Our God is merciful all the time, all the time our God is merciful. Our God is forgiving all the time, all the time our God is forgiving. I mean, he doesn't stop his goodness, his greatness, that's why when we truly ascribe the word awesome

to God, we're rightly placing that word where it belongs. Our God is awesome. He's beyond words, he's incredible, he's worthy of all of your worship, he's worthy of all of your praise. Amen. And here's the question, in your praise, is it becoming something that you prioritize or something that gets marginalized? Because we live in a culture that's trying to get you to be busy so that you think of anything but worshiping the Lord, it has to be for you a priority.

Here's the question I have for you, will your worship endure persecution? Will your worship endure trial? Will your worship endure tough times? Are you growing in your love for Christ, your passion for Christ, your yearning for Christ? I mean, I love the Psalms, the Psalms are a great place to go if you just want to praise him with your voice or sing. And oh by the way, you don't have to have a good voice, the Bible gives you permission if you don't to just make a joyful noise. So you can squeak out something as you sing these things. But I think about Psalm 34, the entire Psalm is really about praise, but hear these first three verses.

"I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its boast in the Lord, the humble will hear it and rejoice. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together." What's the psalmist saying? He's not saying, "I can make God bigger if I sing louder. God is who he is, but I want to magnify him. I want people to know how great, how big my God is." I'll bless him how often? All times. His praise shall continually be in my mind, I'm praising him, I'm speaking of him, bless the Lord with me. Or how about Psalm 95 Verses One to Seven where he invites the congregation, "Oh, come let us sing for joy to the Lord. Let us shout joyfully to the

rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and shout joyfully to him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all God and whose hands are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are his also."

See how he wrote Denver, Colorado in his word? The sea is his and he made it and his hands formed the dry land. Oh, come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. What is it? It's an invitation to come worship. You say, "Well, how? What should we write songs about? What should we sing about?" Anything that would bring the Lord praise. I mean, I've been to enough conferences in my life to listen to people talk about worship enough in my life to know that we all have different areas and different styles of ways in which we prefer to worship the Lord and I understand that.

But God doesn't give us a certain style to worship, God wants us to have a heart of praise and worship for him. There are some people that will say, "Well, anything contemporary is bad, we believe in the rich traditions of the Christian faith." And then they go back 300 years and I think, "Well, what about the 1700 years before that?" Because those were contemporary songs in 1600 and 1700. And just because it was written 400 years ago, although there's some phenomenal hymns, ones that I used to sing to just get through the service to get home and watch football like, O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing, My Great Redeemer's Praise and I sang that song because everybody else sang that song, but after I got saved, I was wishing that I had a thousand tongues to sing my great redeemer's praise because he's so worthy and I

can't bring him enough just on my own.

So there are great hymns in the history of the church, great worship and praise in the history of the church, but notice Psalm Chapter 96 and Verse One, the very next, it says, "Sing to the Lord a what? New song." I mean, aren't you glad that Moses wrote this song? If Moses would've crossed the sea and be like, "Oh man, I don't know what fits this genre, what song can we pick?" He just wrote one about everything that God did and all of his wonderful attributes. And as we go through this song, you're going to hear more of God's attributes come up, it's not like he sectioned them in this first section. But if you're looking for what to praise God for, praise him for his goodness, praise him for his mercy, praise him for who he is. Because really what we need in this life is we need more of God, don't we? We need more praise.

Friends, we're called to be wise as serpents and generalist does, we're called to be aware of what's going on in the world and then engage it and do our part to fix it. But what's even more important than that? It's praise of the Lord. It's the praise of the Lord. We need God to be the Lord over our church, we need God to be the Lord over our family, we need God to be the Lord over our kids, we need God to be the Lord over our politics and God to be the Lord over our economic condition and God to be the Lord over our education and really God to be Lord over the entire world, don't we?

So at the end of the day, we can spend our whole life trying to fix all the problems, but friends, this world's broken, you're not going to fix it, it's not going to be fixed until Jesus gets back, but what can change things is your praise before God in

the middle of that brokenness. And not just when you come through, but knowing that you will. That's why we praise the Lord. We praise the Lord for his attributes, for his attributes that are unparalleled, there's no one like our God, there's not even a close second there. There's not anyone that's like our God. Second reason to worship the Lord is not just for his unparalleled attributes, but we praise the Lord for his incomprehensible power. We can't explain how powerful our God is. We can read about how he is, we can understand what he's done to a point, but we'll never understand his incomprehensible power.

Notice verse four, in following, he says, "Pharaoh's chariots and his army has been cast into the sea and the choices of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deep covers them, they went down into the depths like a stone. Your right hand O Lord is majestic in power, your right hand O Lord shatters the enemy. And in the greatness of your excellence, you overthrow those who rise up against you, you sent forth your burning anger and it consumes them as chaff. At the blast of your nostrils the waters were piled up, the flowing waters stood like a heap, the deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea." I mean, do you hear what he's talking about? What's he made a praise song about? He's made a praise song about everything that they've just been through.

They've been terrified that they're going to get killed, now they're calling out, "The Lord is a warrior, the Lord is his name, that is his reputation, he's a fighter. He said he was going to fight for us, he fought for us. Do you know what he did? He killed everybody. Isn't that awesome? Praise the Lord." That's what they're singing about,

that's what they're talking about, that's what they're excited about is the Lord's hand to bring justice to those who are evil. And notice what it says, it's a mockery of Egypt. They're writing a little stanza here about what Egypt thought they were going to do. Verse nine, the enemy said, that's the Egyptians, "I will pursue you, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall be gratified against them, I will draw my sword, my hand will destroy them." They're mocking Egypt, they're singing a song about Egypt, "You thought you were going to destroy us, you thought you were going to pull out your sword, you thought you were going to kill us all." But notice what he says next about our God.

Verse 10, "You blew with your wind, the sea covered them, they sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like you among the gods, O Lord? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in your praises, working wonders? You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them. In your loving kindness, you have led the people whom you have redeemed, in your strength, you have guided them to your holy habitation." Do you hear the heart of this? I mean, what's their viewpoint now? Corpses floating on the Red Sea. And what are they doing? They're singing about the dead bodies. "You thought you were going to kill us and our God drowned you and that's awesome."

That's how they're singing. They're singing about the incomprehensible power of God. They thought there was no way out, they thought there was no way they could get to the other side, they thought it was impossible, but with our God, all things are possible. And when they saw God move, Moses and the sons of Israel, all the men

gathered and they started singing songs, not about how good they were, but how good their God is and what he has done. Isn't that incredible? Isn't that worthy of our praise?

Now, here's where the rubber meets the road because when we start talking about this, sometimes we hear this story and are like, "Okay, cool. But I mean, this happened thousands of years ago, I mean I can't get all that giddy about it. I mean, I understand that, that's the God we serve and I understand that he's that powerful." And for many people that are coming to church, they would say something like this, "Had I been there or if I could see God work like that today, then you could count on my praise." So I want to tell you that you've seen God at work like that in your life. If you've been saved, you have the exact same story that Israel has. If you've been saved, it means that God delivered you from the kingdom of darkness and delivered you in the kingdom of God's beloved son in whom you have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

If you've been saved, you were once about ready to be drowned in the sea or killed, but God in his mercy set you free. If you've been saved, you have a testimony that's worth praising. But here's why we don't praise. We don't praise because of two reasons. Number one, your view of God is way too small. And number two, your view of yourself is way too big. For many people that come to church, they would concede, "Yeah, God's big, he's bigger than I am, he's doing some stuff I can't do, I get that and I'm really good too. And we're a good team, we're a good pair. There's God and there's me and he's bigger than me and he's better than me and he can do things I can't do, like know everything and create everything out of nothing, but other than that,

we're pretty similar."

And one of the doctrines that gets really difficult to believe in the church that I believe is the most hated doctrine and great theologians would agree with me throughout the ages is called oftentimes, the doctrine of depravity, the sinfulness of man. And here's why we need to land here for a second because some of you will say something like this, "Well, I grew up in the church or I've been saved for a long time." If it doesn't cause your heart to praise, either, A, you don't know what God did in your life or B, you're truly not saved. Because if you're truly saved and you understand what God did, it will cause you to respond extemporaneously in all sorts of praise. So let me tell you what many people think, I'll put it in first person, how you think when you're born. You think that you are good, you think you're a pretty good person, you compare yourself to others and you come out good.

You think that you're alive because you blink and you could talk and you can eat food and you're doing all sorts of different things. You think that you do good things. You may not always do good things, but for the most part you're a pretty good person. And you will likely go to heaven when you die because of, A, your good outweighs your bad. Or B, God is a loving God and how could a loving God send someone to hell? So of course it's all going to work out in the end. You think you see the world clearly, you see yourself as a visionary and you think that you're very smart. You think you have God figured out and because you know God loves you, you're not worried about too much. So when people come and present the gospel to you, you think like this, "I'll get

ready when I'm ready. I'll get right with God when it's time, I have as much time as I need."

Or you will say this, "Okay, if all I need to do is believe Jesus died and rose from the dead, I'll take that. Now I get to go live my whole life any way I want and that sounds really good to me." If that's the gospel, you have nothing to praise God for. If that's the gospel, what you're saying is, "I'm a good person and Jesus came and died and with my good works and Jesus' efforts, we'll get to heaven together." You're saying that the gospel is "I'll concede I did a thing or two bad in my life or I've done 100 things bad, but if God will forgive me, I'll take that and if that's my fire insurance, I'm in on that and I'll go continue to live my life."

But can I tell you about the doctrine of depravity? The doctrine of depravity teaches from God's word that that's not who you are, that's just what you think you are. Here's what the doctrine of depravity would teach. You are thoroughly depraved in every area, from the time that you're conceived, you're conceived in sin. And the Bible would say that you are already dead because of your sin. For we are dead in our transgressions and sins. So you're all stillborn even though physically you're alive, spiritually, you're dead, you're born dead. And the third tragedy of your depravity is you're unaware that you're already dead. You don't think about yourself as dead, you think about yourself as alive and how you can live your life in this world. The Bible says you are engaged in evil deeds because as a sinner you all sin.

You say, "Well, not me Pastor Jeff, I mean, I don't sin as bad as those other people." God would say of you in Isaiah 64, "On your best day, your best works are

like filthy rags." The Bible would say there is no one good in Romans, not one. Do you know who that includes? You. You're not good, you're not doing good works. Your good will not outweigh your bad, your bad is all you are. It's not that you've done bad things, it's that you are a bad thing, according to the Bible. That's why people don't like this doctrine because it's offensive. It's offensive to my human nature, which is depraved that thinks that I'm good and the gospel tells me, oh no, you're not. Here's what you get for your evil deeds. You are going to hell. From the time you come out of the womb, you are on a fast moving train, car or walk on your way to hell. People go there every day, it is a real place where real people go and spend all eternity there.

Here's what's horrible about this doctrine too, the Bible says that you're blind to this, that the God of this age in 2nd Corinthians 4:4, is blind to the minds of unbelievers so they can't even see the light of the truth. So you would say, "Well, I'm not even aware of this. I don't even think about these things." And chances are, unless somebody stands up like me and says them, you're not even bothered by any of these truths. And if you hear them, you'll push back on them. The hardest group of people to see get saved besides family are religious people. Some of you think because you're religious or you've gone to church your whole life or you go to Brave or you give money or you're in a small group or you have regular church attendance or you're a good person that you're going to heaven. None of those things save you. You can do all those things and bust hell wide open. That's not the gospel.

Furthermore, some of you are bothered that I'm saying all this stuff today and here's why. Because you're already dead in your sin and you've been inoculated with a

false gospel of religion that tells you, "You're okay, don't listen to that guy, he doesn't know what he's talking about." I'm telling you on the authority of God's word, I know exactly what I'm talking about and that's why you're feeling conviction in your soul. And here's what you can be certain of, not only are you going to hell, but you're going to experience God's divine wrath. You will experience God's divine wrath. And here's the worst part about depravity. You can't do anything about it. You can't change God's mind, you can't be good from this moment on, it's already set for you and there's nothing you can do. Now if you don't understand that, you don't understand the gospel. Because if you don't understand that then why would you need Jesus?

Paul says in Galatians 2:21, "For of righteousness could be gained through observation of the law, then Christ died for nothing." If you can get to heaven based upon your good works or your church attendance or your religious preference or trying to be good or thinking that you're better than other people, then Jesus didn't need to come. He came because you're dead, you're blind and you're unaware and you're facing divine judgment and Jesus came to tell you the truth. Now think about this. People will say, "Well, everybody loves Jesus." No, they don't. They didn't when he came and they don't now. Jesus came to those who were his own in John 1 and they could not comprehend it, they rejected him. And Jesus said this to those who are going to go share his message, "Don't worry, do not be afraid if they hated you. Just know they hated me first."

If you hate me for telling you this, don't worry, they hated Jesus for saying the

exact same thing that he was the son of God and the only way to heaven. Do you understand what I'm talking about? Some people think they're going to heaven because they stood as a profession of faith or they did some good things, but they've never owned the fact that they're dead, blind and under divine wrath so there's no need for Jesus. Now, the first time I really heard this, where it sunk into my heart, I was at a camp when I was 18 years old and somebody began to spell these truths out to me and I was beyond offended. And I remember talking to my leader, I'm like, "Listen, I'm the one that's led Bible studies in the cabin, I went to a Lutheran grade school for eight years, I've been going to church my whole life, I know this stuff. Why are you telling me I need to get saved? I'm more saved than anybody here."

And yet it was that week where God convicted my heart and showed me religion wouldn't save me and showed me that I wasn't nearly as good as I thought I was and showed me that I was on my way to hell if I didn't repent and trust Christ. And when that happened, do you know what happened to me? They gave an invitation in that place, I couldn't jump out of my seat fast enough to say, "This week I profess Jesus Christ as my Lord and savior and my life's been changed." Now if you are a Christian, you have that testimony because people will ask me all the time, "Pastor Jeff, do you think every Christian needs to have a story like that?" Yes.

Now you may not remember the exact date, you may not remember the exact hour, you may not remember the exact moment, you may not remember where you are, but maybe it's over a period of time or a season, but you know went from death to life and you know that you knew you were a sinner and you knew that God saved you

and made you a saint. You know that. And if you don't, here's my question. Are you really a Christian? One of the biggest tragedies I think as a pastor pastoring this church is to know that the word is faithfully preached here, at least I'm trying to do that every single week, and for you to come to a place where the word is faithfully preached and still not respond to the gospel will be the biggest tragedy in the world.

That's why even right now I'm going to pause in my message, I wasn't planning on doing that. I'm pausing in my message because it's so important there. There's certain weeks I prepare and it's more in my head and there's other weeks I feel weight and spiritual oppression, this was one of those weeks for me. Friday, yesterday, this morning, just feeling the weight because I know there are people who are here, who are listening to my voice that don't have a relationship with Christ and I endured what I endured this week for you because I want you to know Jesus. And in a minute I'm just going to have each one of you stand, I'm not even done with my sermon yet, but this is more important, that need to trust Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. So why are you going to have me standing? I'll tell you why. Because everybody that Jesus Christ called, he called publicly.

He said, "Follow me, I'll make you fishers of men. Stand and come after me." That's number one. I'm doing it because Jesus did, I'm doing it so you'll always remember this and I'm doing it, number three, because there's a lot of people here who are already Christians that will celebrate with you when you stand. Because the Bible says there's more rejoicing over one sinner that repents than over 99 that don't need to repent. It means you could be standing here today with your mom and dad and

they think, "well, you're a Christian, you've always been a Christian." And you know today the Lord's showing you, "I'm not a Christian, I didn't give my life to Christ."

You may be with your spouse and say, "I know I'm not a Christian, I didn't give my life to Christ." But why wouldn't you stand in response to God so that you'll be able to praise him because he removed sin and death from your life and gave you life in his name? Amen. So if that's you here today, here in Inglewood, here in Westminster, if you're at home online, you can do this. I'm just going to invite you right now to stand. If there's just one of you, if there's several of you, I'm going to invite you just to stand to your feet. Thank you. And we're just going to praise God for you, for all that God's doing in life. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Remain standing if you would, just one second. Remain standing just for a second. Praise God for you. All right.

This is why we preach the word. So I'm just going to pause and pray over you and then you can be seated. Father, I just pray for all those who stood, I'm praying for those that said, "I should have stood." But can still stand in their heart right now, Lord, that said, "I was dead and now I'm alive." Lord, you did a work here this morning already, we're praising you for that, we're celebrating with the angels. And if that's you, here's what you've said in your heart, "I know I'm a sinner and I know I'm dead. Jesus, come and be the Lord of my life, I turn from my sin and turn to you." Lord, fill these people, these men and women, these boys and girls with your Holy Spirit so that they can live with you and grow in you for the rest of their life here and for all eternity, in Jesus' name. Amen. You can be seated. Can we praise God?

You see, if there's no bad news, there's no good news. If that's not true of who we are, then why do I need a savior? If that's not true of who I am, why do I need the Lord to save me? I don't, I'll just be a good person. And if you go out and pull people on the streets, that's what you'll ask them, "How are you going to get to heaven?" Most people will tell you, "I'm a pretty good person, my good outweighs my bad, I think God's loving." No. God is loving, but he's holy and he's just and he's righteous enough to punish sinners for their sin if you don't repent. But he loved you so much, he sent Jesus to die for you so that you could have life in his name. He paid for all your sins, he rose from the dead in victory, he's willing to come into your life.

And I just want to tell you this, if you didn't stand and you said, "Well, I need that." You can have it right now. Standing doesn't save you, responding to the truth of God's word does. Amen. We praise God for his incomprehensible power, we praise him for his unparalleled attributes and then third, we do this, we praise him for his omnipotent authority. Omnipotent means all powerful. Authoritative means I have authority over everything. When Jesus commissioned his disciples before he did, what did he say? He said, all authority, where? In heaven and on the earth has been given to me. He's saying this, all authority in the universe is now mine. Anywhere I go, anywhere that I'm at, I have authority over every situation and I have the power to deliver that authority. It's not just that I've been delegated some authority, I have the power in that authority to do everything that God wants.

Now notice verses 14 and following, "We've worshiped God for who he is with his

attributes. We've worshiped God for what he was, whether it was five seconds ago or thousands of years ago. Now we're going to worship him for who he is to come. What the future's going to be like." And notice what he begins to praise for. He says, "The peoples have heard and they tremble." Well, what peoples have heard? This has been five seconds old, who's really heard it? You know what this is like? This is like a team that is playing their Red Letter game in game three of the season. They're supposed to get trounced in this game, not even be able to score, not even be able to do anything and not only do they win, but they win convincingly.

And what they didn't think was possible for them to even win, now they're looking ahead at the rest of their schedule and they're like, "Oh man, they better look out and they better look out and they better look out because we've got God on our side." When you see the power of God at work, the power of God will change you as you move forward, as you think about what's to come. Because they're talking about how God's going to take them to the holy habitation, what's that? That's the Promised Land that he promised Abraham years ago. He's going to get them there, but until he gets them there, he's going to go with them in the process.

They said, "The peoples have heard and they tremble. Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Eden were dismayed, the leaders of Moab, trembling grips them and all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away, terror and dread fall upon them. By your greatness of your arm, they are motionless as stone until your people pass over, O Lord. Until your people pass over whom you have purchased, you will bring them and plant them in the mountain of your inheritance. The

place, O Lord, which you have made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established."

What's he saying? He's looking out at every place they're going to go through the wilderness and all the different areas they're going to have to go through and how they're going to have to get in the Promised Land with Canaan and he's looking at all them and he's saying this, "God, because of who you are and because of what you've done and because we've witnessed all that and we know who you are, we believe you hold our future too." Praise has a way, when you start praising God presently for all of his attributes and you start praising God that you serve the God that's done everything you read about in the Bible and you praise God for your testimony that you have and everything that God began to do, you'll also begin to say, "There's nothing I can walk in that can be too hard for me."

The way Paul would write it in the Book of Romans, Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us? If God is on our side, we've got nothing to fear." And think about this. I thought about this verse when I was preaching during the first service of Deuteronomy, Chapter 31 Verse Eight. Deuteronomy Chapter 31:8. I think I have it memorized, but I want to make sure I say it correctly. Deuteronomy 31:8 says, "The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you, he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you, do not fear or be dismayed." So when the Lord finishes his work, what's he doing? Well, he's walking ahead of you, he's a lamp unto your feet and the light to your path. And what else is he doing? He will be with you in the present and he won't fail you and he won't forsake you. So do not fear, do not be dismayed.

Not only are they celebrating God in the present, but they know that God's going to take them forward. So what do they have to do? They have to keep taking the next step. Where's God? Right where they're going to step, right where they're at. And what's he going to do when they go where they're at? He will never fail you, he will never let you down, he will never leave you, he will never flee from you. One of the biggest lies of the enemy is to tell you, "God's no good, he's going to let you down, he has let you down, he's going to leave you. You're too big of a sinner for him to still love you." All of those are lies. God's always been with you, he's been around you, he's been drawing you to himself and if you're a believer, he goes with you, he stands before you, he won't fail you, he won't forsake you. So don't be afraid.

Now, can you see what's happened in just a moment here? Israel has gone from saying, "Ugh, I wish we were dead. Moses, you are a horrible leader. Why didn't we just die in Egypt rather than come with you?" A couple hours later, "Praise the Lord. Moses, you know what you're doing. Let's sing to God, our enemies are afraid of us now. God, you're so good. We fear you. You'll be with us, if you can defeat the Egyptians, who can't you defeat?" You see the change? Because they're just like us and they need to be reminded that when we praise, we praise the God who is, we praise the God who was and we praise the God who will always be. Amen.

That's what they're praising right now. They're seeing his hand go before them, they're seeing what he's going to do for them and he says at the end, "The sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established." I don't believe he's talking about a

building. I believe he's talking about his presence among the people. In the New Testament, for those of us who are believers, those of you who just came to Christ, I have really good news for you, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell everybody who believes in Jesus. And where is God's temple located today? It's in the heart of everybody who believes. Meaning everywhere you go, that is the temple of God. Every time we gather, that is the temple of God, getting that work done. God is worthy of being praised because of his omnipotent authority. Everywhere you go, he has power and authority to accomplish anything he needs to accomplish in your life.

Yes, you're going to go through trials. Yes, you're going to go through tribulation. Yes, there will be difficulties. Yes, there will be things that you don't understand. But as you praise God through them, God has the authority and the power to bring you through them to his glory. Isn't that good news? And much like Israel is celebrating the Lord because they're going to make it into the Promised Land, even though they're not there yet, even though it's going to take them a little longer because of their disobedience, they're going to get there. In the same way, if you've trusted in Christ, I have great news for you today. You will meet your king face-to-face, he will bring you home and it will be an incredible, glorious day for you. Amen. That's what he's saying.

That's why we praise God. We praise him for his unparalleled attributes and his incomprehensible power and his omnipotent authority and then we finally praise him for this. This fourth one, we praise him for his contagious goodness. His contagious goodness. Verse 19 really wraps up this song, it's bringing it all together, it says, "For the horses of Pharaoh and his chariots and his horseman went into the sea and the

Lord brought back the waters of the sea on them, but the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea." There's the summation of everything that we've been talking about in this song that they've been singing about. But notice what happens next. Miriam, Aaron and Moses' sister, it says that Miriam the prophetess, prophetess means that she was given words of encouragement from God to speak over the people.

"Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand." That's a tambourine. "And all the women went out after her with the timbrels and with dancing. Miriam answered them, sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted. The horse and his rider, he has hurled in the sea." Now think about Miriam for a second. Do you remember when Moses was born and put in a basket? Who was the sister standing there as the basket was going downstream? That was Miriam as a little girl going up to the Egyptians saying, "Hey, can I get somebody to nurse him and bringing him back to his mom?"

She saw him grow up in the palace, she knew of what he had done when he had to flee to Midian, she's been watching the life of her brother for 80 years. She's watched all the plagues, she's seen all the different things and now guess what? She's seen God's faithfulness through her brother, God's faithfulness to the nation, she sees all the men singing and she says, "Don't leave us out. Come on ladies." And she grabs her tambourine and they grab tambourines and they go out doing what? Singing and what else? Dancing. Do you know those are two ways you can praise the Lord?

Now, some of you say, "Well, I'm not much of a singer." I would tell you this, I'm

not much of a dancer. I'm a little nervous sometimes to dance in church, but I do dance before the Lord, it's just not when my family's around. Because he is worthy of praising, he's worthy of singing to, he's worthy of celebrating. And what you see is when Miriam sees the men all praising the Lord, she says, "Don't leave us out. I've watched my brother, I've watched my God, I want to sing and praise him too. Let's do all this." And that's what you see the body, the covenant community of Christ come together in celebration. And she's leading that and she's saying the same things that Moses said, "Sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted, the horse and his rider, he has hurled into the sea."

Some of you, if you grow up in church or went to vacation Bible school, you may know the song. There's a song that's been written about this. I'm not singing it today for you, but you can look it up online. But it's just a memorable song that talks about what God was doing. And we don't know if that was the lyric or the rhythm that probably wasn't what they sang to, but at the end of the day, the words are the same and our God is the same. And our God is worthy of praising for who he is, with his incredible, unparalleled qualities, worthy of who he was, what he's done, his incredible power, incomprehensible in what he's done and for who he's going to be and what he's going to accomplish, his omnipotent authority. And when you see people praising like that, regardless, it creates this contagious goodness.

When you see Christians who praise God in spite of circumstances, Christians who are praising God when there's really nothing seemingly to praise him about other

than who he is and what he's done and what he's going to do, it's contagious. When you get a church together, it's contagious. Do you know that's why it says in the Bible that one day at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Even if you sit here with the hardest heart and you never respond to the gospel, you will tell Jesus that he is Lord of all. You won't be able to help stop yourself from doing it, it's who he is.

Now, when I read stories like this, I think, "Well, that was thousands of years ago, wouldn't it be cool to sing that song? You know you're going to get a chance to do it. Open your Bible to Revelation Chapter 15. This is where I'll end. In Revelation Chapter 15, there's a scene that you can see from what's taking place in heaven, it says, "Then I saw another sign in heaven. Great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last because of them, the wrath of God is finished."

These are the seven bowl judgments, the quick ones that get poured out at the end. And verse two says, "And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire." What did God bring Israel to? He brought them through the Red Sea. Now, what do we have in the book of Revelation? We have a sea of glass that's mixed with fire. What color is that going to be? It's going to be red. And those who have been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name standing on the sea of glass, holding harps to God. In that last generation of the church, when he brings them through the rapture and the resurrection of the saints, and they're standing on this Red Sea, this sea of glass mixed with fire.

This is what's going to take place. And notice what verse three says, what are

they singing? And they sang the Song of Moses. The bondservant of God and the Song of the Lamb saying... And it goes on and talks about the Song of the Lamb. So we didn't get to be there, we didn't get to celebrate that victory, but for those of you who are believers, we'll get to sing the Song of Moses with Moses someday and with Jesus someday. Amen.

So here's my question to you. How's your praise? Because praise is more than just an activity that you should do or an activity that you must do, praise is a response to your understanding of the awesome character and quality of our God. The God who is, the God who was and the God who is to come. That's who we serve. That's why when we gather, we're not asking you, "Hey, do you like this tune? Do you like this lyric? Hey, let's vote on it and make sure everybody's happy with it." Here's what we're saying. We're saying, "This is our God, he is worthy of our praise, he is worthy of our honor. And because of who I am, I want to sing to him, I want to honor him, I want to clap, I want to raise my hands, I want to kneel, I want to do whatever I need to do to make sure that Jesus Christ gets all the glory in my life."

And so the way we wanted to end today is to praise by singing being thrown upon our praises because when you praise, you're not only praising what you're experiencing right now, you're worshiping the same God that we've been worshiping from generation to generation to generation. And one day friends, listen, for those of you who are believers, we're going to gather with people from every tribe, tongue and nation, from all over this planet and from every generation to sing praise to the living God. Amen? Amen. Would you stand with me?

Father in heaven, we glorify your name. What a great and awesome day for you to remind us of how worthy you are to be praised and for you to bring many into the family of God. For those of you who trusted Christ, I invite you to come forward during the singing of the song, we'd love to pray over you, we'll have elders on both campuses, pastors on both campuses. Or if you didn't stand and say, "I just need to learn more about this Jesus." Come forward. And Father, we pray that during the singing of this song, that the praise that goes up to you would be delightful to you and the work that you're doing in this place would be pleasing to your ear. And God, go before us and do what you can to glorify your name as we give you all the praise in Jesus name, amen and amen. Let's praise the Lord today.