



The UNLIMITED People



A NEWSLETTER OF FOURSQUARE GOSPEL CHURCH, WUSE ABUJA

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EXALTING AND PRAISING THE LORD

LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. 2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built. 3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. 4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. 5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. 6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. 7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. 9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. 10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. (Isa. 25: 1-10)

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As we come to the end of a calendar year and look forward to the beginning of another calendar year, there is the need to praise and exalt God for his faithfulness. God's faithfulness can be described as his reliability, dependability and trustworthiness which is demonstrated in his attributes, regarding who He is, what He has done, is doing and shall do. These attributes are described as wonderful and marvellous which He has planned long ago (v.1) by the prophet in this text.

It is on this note that everyone is expected to reflect on God's faithfulness as this calendar year is about to roll away. A hymn writer once wrote that 'when I think of the goodness of Jesus and all he has done for me, my very soul shall shout hallelujah, praise God for saving me.' Can you also praise God for all that he had done for you, family, business and nation? If you think otherwise, then let us discuss why you need to exalt and praise God from this scripture and other scriptures, despite all odds.

RESOLVE TO PRAISE GOD

The first verse of our main text revealed the resolution of the prophet Isaiah to praise and exalt God. He remarked that God is my God, and his counsels are true and faithful. Things happening around you may seem unpleasant, just as it is all over the world, yet God is to be praised and exalted. Things may have been turned upside down for you and wastes seemed vivid in your environment (Isa 24: 1 & 4), yet God is to be praised. The following scripture succinctly puts it thus:

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments (Habakuk 3: 17-19)

Despite the scarcity, gloom, difficulties etc. surrounding you, God is still God and He is to be praised. Like the Psalmist, *sing of the mercies of the lord and make it known to all generation (Psalms 89: 1)*. This is because he has the power and ability to turn things around at His own time for you. Therefore, resolve to praise ALL THE TIME (Psalm 34: 1-5)

REASONS TO PRAISE GOD

You may be experiencing a hard time and be thinking there is no need to praise God. Your finances may be at the lowest ebb, scarcity may be prevalent around you, meeting necessary needs may be difficult, yet you need to praise God. You may ask why? Here are some reasons

God's Concerns Are Reliable

For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you (Jer. 29: 10-12)

God's plan for you (thoughts towards you) is that you will still experience his visitation. This means that being in captivity of any kind will not be the end of your story. God's visitation to turn things around for you is still possible. GOD WILL RETURN YOU TO PLEASANT TIMES IS WHAT THE WORD OF GOD IS SAYING TO YOU TODAY. You will experience peace and your prayers will be answered is God's assurance that you need to hold unto.

God's Canopies Are Available

Isaiah 25: 4, states *for thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.*

The poor in this description is one who is weak and needs the support of strength. The needy is one whose needs had made him/her fall into a state of pains and agony. Incidentally, this picture seems common in our world today based on the economic hardship experienced all over the world. The picture of the poor and needy of verse 4 should be contrasted with the strong and terrible in verse 3. The fact remains that the harmful schemes of the strong and the terrible cannot overturn the sovereign and eternal purpose of God for his own people. This fact is affirmed in the scripture below.

But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save

thy children (Isa. 49: 25)

The good news is that God will not just provide strength and support for the poor and needy, He is a refuge from the storm as well as the shadow from the heat of these hard times for them (v.4). Recall that the heat of the furnace killed those who were instructed to increase its intensity, but it did not kill the three Hebrew men who went into the real fire (Dan. 3: 19 -25). The heat that killed others around you will not kill you in Jesus name.

The following scripture should be a source of encouragement for everyone going through such a time described in the scripture above. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof (Psalms 46: 1-3)*

God remains a present help in the time of trouble all the times. The import of this scripture is that you need not be afraid of the prevailing heat around you now. it shall not consume you in Jesus name.

God's Conquests are Irresistible

2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.... 5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low (Isa. 25: 2 & 5)

Another reason for praising God is His sovereignty and superiority to win and overcome in any battle. The scripture above showed that God can make a defenced city become a ruin. This is exemplified in the victory that God gave the Israelites over the city of Jericho. The bible describe Jericho as a walled city which fell by the shout of the Israelites after compassing the city wall for seven days (Joshua 6: 1 & 20). The wall was not destroyed by any military weapon. It was destroyed by the shout of praises to God (Joshua 6: 1-20). This was possible because God showed up as a man of war according to Joshua 5: 13-14).

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? (Joshua 5: 13-14)

This is an assurance that there is no battle too difficult for your God to win for you. It is my prayer for you that you will experience God as a man of war, fighting and winning your battle for you in Jesus name.

RESULT OF PRAISING GOD

In verse 6-9 of Isaiah 25, the results of trusting on the faithfulness of God were stated. Note that this is accomplished by the lord of hosts (v.6). The accomplishment is by who wait on the Lord (v.9). recall that it is those who wait on the Lord that he renews their strength (Isa. 40: 31). Note that the text also stated that the mouth of the Lord has spoken it (v 8). All these facts are to give you the assurance that God does not waste words. Whatever he has planned to do, He will do.

Preparation of a Feast (v.6)

For those who have resolved to praise God and who can appreciate the faithfulness of God regarding his concerns, canopies of protection provided and conquests enjoy, then there is a promise of a feast. The feast is described as one with the best delicacies i.e. fat things full of marrow, well-refined wines. The promise of God is that even in this time of scarcity, you will not be starved of necessary provisions.

They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied (Psalm 37: 19). At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh (Job 5: 22)

The picture synonymous to this situation was what happened when the prodigal son repented and came back home. The bible recorded that fatted calf was killed and a feast made for his return (Luke 15: 23) likewise God still makes feast for his people in the land of scarcity. You will experience your own too in Jesus name.

Prevailing Over Foes (v.7)

The next benefit to be enjoyed is that every evil covering shall be removed. Whenever there is a veil-covering, blindness occurs. Wherever blindness exists, darkness, confusion, lack of progress, lack of discernment etc. will abound. The promise in this text is that the covering over people and nations shall be destroyed. Let it be settled in your heart that darkness may cover the whole earth, but for you and I, the light of the glory of God shall shine forth out of our lives in Jesus name.

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising (Isa. 60: 2-3)

Protection from Death, Mourning and Disgrace (v8)

The next set of benefits is outlines in verse 8. Death is swallowed up in victory means that every power of the grave and sudden, as well as untimely death is cancelled and nullified. Notice that in our world today, many situations could lead to sudden and untimely death. Despite such prevalence, the promise of God is that you shall be delivered.

Aside victory over death, the promise of wiping away tear from your face is also available for you. Again, so many things could cause weeping and bitter cry in our world today. Whatever may be the situation causing you to wipe and cry bitterly shall be removed in Jesus name.

And God shall weep away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.(Rev. 21: 4)

Lastly, there is the benefit of taking away every form of disgrace as provided for in the text.

Conclusion

Despite all odds, it is important and necessary to exalt and praise God all the time because his concerns about you are reliable, his conquests are irreversible and his canopy over you are available to keep you from all hurt and harm.

The result of praising God is always pleasant. Therefore, let us resolve to praise all the time because by such acts, more blessings and testimonies are assured. Praise ye the Lord.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Praise the Lord by singing a song of appreciation for his faithfulness thus far over you and family.
2. Thank you, Lord, for you are my strength in every distress,
3. Thank you, Lord, for being a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat and blast of the terrible ones against me and my family.
4. In these days of famine and scarcity, I shall be satisfied in Jesus name
5. I silence the noise strangers in my life, family, business, and nation in Jesus name.
6. Covering over my destiny, I cast you out now in Jesus name
7. O Lord, deliver me from the power of sudden death in Jesus name.
8. I shall not cry bitter cry. The Lord shall wipe away tears from my eyes in Jesus name.
9. O Lord, take away every rebuke from my life and family in Jesus name.
10. I shall end this year in joy, victory and triumph in Jesus name.