

Part 5 – Serving, and Praising, the Lord

In part 4 we saw the Psalmist wonder how he could *possibly* thank our Heavenly Father for all He'd done for him. And truly, this is likely a question we've all had! And we learned that, while there's *nothing physically* that we can give our Heavenly Father (for He owns everything), the one thing He sincerely wants from us is to 'take up' (lift up) the 'cup of salvation' through ***believing in God's Savior, Jesus Christ!*** And *true* belief *will* impact *the way* we live our life. For, when we *truly* believe in the Messiah (Jesus Christ) we will *earnestly* strive (from the heart) to learn, *and obey*, God's Word, repent *sincerely* when we see our sins, and strive *hard* to stop sinning (*from the heart*, to our words, *and* actions). And it is *this process* of faith in God's Word, impacting the way we live (edifying how we think, desire and behave), that **is** 'taking up the cup of salvation', which pleases our Heavenly Father ever *so much*! And we also learned the Psalmist promised to 'call upon the name of the Lord', which means to call upon the one, *and only*, **true** (and *Living*) God, Yehovah... which means we will not 'call upon' false gods, or idols for help – *nor* give them any praise, worship or glory! Thus, to truly 'call upon' God's 'name' means you seek Him (and Him *only*) for help, guidance and protection (even blessings) and strive to learn His Word and obey Him, *from the heart*. So, in essence, 'calling upon' the name of the Lord (YHWH) means having an *intimate* relationship with Him, i.e. worshiping Him 'in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23-24).

And then we also read of how the Psalmist promised to pay his 'vows' to the Lord (YHWH) *and* to do so *publicly*, in the presence of all His people (the congregation). And we learned this means that, he promised to be *just as faithful* to perform his promises to God, as the Lord (YHWH) is *faithful to keep His Word* (promises) to those who *obey* Him. And back in those days people often made 'vows' to give God a specific blood sacrifices (typically a 'thanksgiving' offering), as the Psalmist of Psalm 66 (vs 13) did. However, David also made 'vows' to *publicly* praise the Lord (YHWH) before the congregation (Ps 22:25, 56:12, Ps 61:8), which he certainly fulfilled, because we still have many of his Psalms to study today. So, while the Psalmist didn't specify *what* 'vows' he had made to the Lord (YHWH), we can be assured he kept them! Yet, we also learned that today we should be careful of making promises to God (specially to stop a sin we're struggling with) because Jesus told us it's better not to do so. Rather, we should simply be *firmly* committed to continue to love, trust, and obey the Lord (YHWH), *earnestly*. And, when we do have unwavering commitment to love, trust and obey Him (earnestly) – for the rest of our life – that *will* impact that way we interact with, and communicate with, other people. So, our *firm* commitment will be 'in front of all His people' simply because *they will be able to see* our earnest faith (and commitment) to the Lord via our good words and works. As Jesus said, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven* (Matt 5:16).

And then the Psalmist made the profound statement that, “*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints*”. So, our Heavenly Father is *not* ‘careless’ about the lives of those who *faithfully* serve Him; rather He’s *very* diligent to take care of us. And, therefore, He’s also very diligent (careful) about *when* He allows us to die - for letting one of His faithful servants depart from this flesh body means He cannot use them in this fleshly (carnal) dimension anymore. Yet, we also learned that, what’s *also* very precious (valuable) to Him, is when His faithful servants are *willing* to die *for His sake*, i.e. to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the death of His ‘saints’ (those who fervently serve Him) is *indeed* precious in God’s eyes (sight) because they are *willing to die for Him*. And, as Jesus said, there’s *no greater love* than that (John 15:13). So truly, if we really do love the Lord, we *must* be willing to die for His sake. While we may never have to, we must be *that* devoted to Him! So, we must have the *mindset* that our devotion, and commitment to Him, is *so firm*, we won’t *ever* renounce our faith in God, **or** Jesus Christ (Matt 16:24-27), *even if we are killed for it*. After all, Jesus warned us that we would have to endure (at least) *some* persecutions for serving Him (John 15:20); yet, He also told us the rewards for enduring those persecutions (for His sake) will be *awesome* (Mth 5:10-12). So again (to reiterate), not only does God consider the death of His ‘saints’ (devoted servants) very precious (valuable) in His eyes (sight), He also considers their *willingness* to actually *die for Him* also very precious (valuable). And that’s really *why* the Psalmist brought out this point here, for he was essentially saying that he truly was *so devoted* to the Lord (YHVH) that he *would* be willing to die for His sake. Which is *why* he will go on to declare that he was the Lord’s (YHVH’s) servant...

Psalm 116

16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

Here again the Psalmist uses God’s Sacred, and covenantal, name, Yehovah (#3068) (rendered as ‘Lord’), which means He’s the *only* One who is self-existent *and* eternal. And it also means He’s our *Creator*, which is one of the reasons *why* we should serve *Him*. For, as Paul told us, in Rom 6, we all serve *something* and there’s only two choices, i.e. we can be a servant to sin (Satan) or righteousness (Jesus Christ). And the only way to live forever is to serve the *true* (and *Living*) God (Jesus Christ) because serving sin *only* leads to death, but serving righteousness is (through Jesus Christ) what gives us *eternal* life (Rom 6:23). Note also that the Psalmist *twice* declares that he is the Lord’s (YHVH’s) servant; he does this for *emphasis*, to *stress* the point that he *only* serves the *true* (Living) God, Yehovah (YHVH). And the word ‘**servant**’ does indeed mean *servant* as does the word ‘**handmaid**’ but, it’s *specifically* a ***maid-servant***, i.e. a *female slave* (#519). And the reason the Psalmist says that he is the ‘son of thine handmaid’ is to point out that he was *born into* the relationship of serving the Lord (YHVH) *because* his parents raised him to fear (revere) and serve (obey) the Lord (YHVH). And, interestingly, the word ‘**truly**’ actually means *oh now!* (#577).

So, the fact the Psalmist pointed out that he was taught to serve the Lord (YHWH), from his youth, *and then* declared that ‘*oh now* I am thy servant’ means that: despite being taught how to ‘fear’ (revere), and ‘serve’ (obey), the Lord (YHWH) from the time he was born, it wasn’t *until* the Lord (YHWH) ‘loosed my bonds’ that he *really* learned *what* this meant. The word ‘**loosed**’ means *to open wide* (literally or figuratively) and (specifically) *to loosen, begin, plough, carve* (#6605) while the word ‘**bonds**’ means either *chastisement*, a *halter* or *restraint* (#4147). So, it took some time for the Psalmist to realize how to *really* serve the Lord (YHWH) *from the heart*. While his parents taught him how to do so *in action*, it takes living life for a while (and gaining experience) to *really* understand what sin **is** and *how to control* the sinful part of us (our carnal mind, Rom 8:5-8). Only *then* can we be freed from the ‘bonds’ of sin. Again, Paul explains this *really* well in Romans 6 [https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Romans/37], especially when he says we *shouldn’t* let sin reign in (control) our mortal (carnal, flesh) body, i.e. we should not obey the lusts of carnal (flesh) body (vs 12). For, whatever we *allow* ourselves to serve (whatever controls us), **we are the servant of it** (vs. 16). That’s *why* we either serve righteousness (Jesus Christ) **or** sin (Satan)! And again, only *one* leads to death (sin) and *only* one leads to life eternal (righteousness)! Therefore, ‘freedom’ is also *a choice*. You can be free *from righteousness* or, free *from sin*. But again, the consequences of your choice are *non-negotiable*. For wages of sin are *always* death, but wages of righteousness are (*through* Jesus Christ) *eternal* life (Rom 6:22-23).

Psalm 116

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

Now, in response to the freedom (from sin) that the Lord (YHWH) gave the Psalmist, he promises to offer the ‘sacrifice’ of thanksgiving and (again) to ‘call upon the name of the Lord’. So, now we see just *what* ‘vows’ the Psalmist made to the Lord (back in verse 13). The word ‘**offer**’ here means *to slaughter an animal* (usually *in sacrifice*) (#2076). And the word ‘**sacrifice**’ is *very* similar, for it means *a slaughter*, i.e. *the flesh of an animal*; and, by implication, it means *a sacrifice* (the victim or the act) (#2077). In fact, #2077 *comes from* #2076. And the word ‘**thanksgiving**’ here means *an extension of the hand*, i.e. (by implication) *avowal*, or (usually) *adoration*; and, specifically, it can also mean a *choir of worshippers* (#8426). So, the Psalmist promises to give a ‘sacrifice’ (animal) to the priests to slaughter as a ‘thanksgiving sacrifice’ unto the Lord (YHWH). As Lev 7 explains, this was offered with a ‘peace’ offering and it was always something the priesthood had to offer (at behest of the offeror) according to God’s Laws back then. You can learn more about this in **The Different Blood Sacrifices and What they Mean to Us Today** [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1094>] but, we should always remember that today, since Jesus Christ has *already come* and fulfilled **all** blood sacrifices (once and for all) we are not ever to offer animal sacrifices (Heb 10:10, etc.), for what He truly wants are the *spiritual sacrifices* (1 Peter 2:4-6, Ps 141:2), such as: **thanksgiving** (Ps

50:7-15, 107:11, 116:17, Jonah 2:9, Amos 4:5), **praise** (Ps 54:6, Ps 141:2, Jer 17:26, 33:11), **joy** (Ps 27:6) **righteousness** (Deut 33:19, Ps 4:5, Heb 13:15), **controlling our body** (Rom 12:1-3) **including our mouth** (Ps 119:108). You can learn more about this in the special study **Sacrifices God Really Wants** [<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/1400>].

And then the Psalmist *again* promised to ***call upon the name of the LORD***. And, as we learned in our last study (of this great Psalm 116), this simply means to call upon the one, *and only*, **true** (and *Living*) God, Yehovah (and *not* false gods, or idols) for help, guidance and protection (even blessings) and strive to learn His Word and obey Him, *from the heart*. So, in essence, ‘calling upon’ the name of the Lord (YHVH) means having an *intimate* relationship with Him, i.e. worshiping Him ‘in spirit and in truth’ (John 4:23-24). So clearly, the Psalmist *fully* understood that our Heavenly Father wants our *true* ‘inward worship’ - not merely *fake* ‘outward’ worship. But, when he wrote this Psalm, the Messiah (Jesus Christ) had *not yet* come to die for our sins (which fulfilled the blood sacrifices, *once and for all*, Heb 10:10; Col 2:14; Eph 2:15). So, he *still had* to offer blood sacrifices to the Lord (YHVH); but his understanding of *what they symbolized* reveals that he *really was* worshiping the Lord (YHVH) with his *whole heart* and trying to *earnestly* obey Him, which is why he proclaimed (twice) he was the Lord’s (YHVH’s) servant...

Psalm 116

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

Now the Psalmist reiterates what he stated back in verse 14. So, the Psalmist is really stressing that he was determined to be *just as faithful* to perform his promises to God, as the Lord (YHVH) *is faithful to keep His Word* (promises) to those who *obey* Him. And let’s remember that, while back then, making ‘vows’ to God was a common thing, Jesus Christ warned it’s better that we not (i.e. we really *should not*) make oaths (vows) to God (or anyone else) because, our word should be *so good* (reliable) that we don’t *need* to ‘swear’ we’ll do something (Matt 5:33-37)! After all, sometimes things happen (that are totally out of our control) that might make it *impossible* for us to keep our vows to God, or our promises to other people. After all, we all fall short and sin at times, even when we’re trying not to (Rom 3:23). So, we really should not swear ‘by God’ (or his throne, or heaven) when promising to do (or not to do) something, for we cannot always control our own body (and tongue) let alone control all things. That’s why Jesus told us to “*let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil*”.

So, if you are having trouble with kicking out a sin (physically or spiritually), don’t promise God you’ll stop it, *especially* when you know you are still weak and might very well do it again! Rather, ask Him for the *strength*, and *understanding*, to stop it. He respects that request *much more* than an empty promise to stop something you are struggling with; and therefore, He will

help you ‘kick’ that sin (with time), *so long as* you continue to strive *earnestly* to do so. So, today our ‘vows’ to God should simply be our total (firm) *commitment to continue* to love, trust, *and obey* Him, *earnestly*. For, as Jesus warned us, if we deny Him, then He will deny us (Matt 10:32-33; Luke 9:23-26). So, we should *never* renounce our faith in Jesus Christ, nor hide it. And, when we do have unwavering commitment to love, trust and obey Him (earnestly) – for the rest of our life – that *will* impact that way we interact with, and communicate with, other people. So, our *firm* commitment will be ‘in front of all His people’ simply because *they will be able to see* our earnest faith (and commitment) to the Lord via our good words and works. As Jesus said, *Let your light so shine before men, **that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*** (Matt 5:16) ...

Psalms 116

19 In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

While the Psalmist formerly (in prior verses) promised to offer thanksgiving sacrifices to the Lord (YHWH), *and* to ‘call upon’ His name (forever), *and* to pay his ‘vows’ (*publicly*), he’s now calling *all* those in Israel (along with *anyone else* who wanted to worship the Lord, YHWH) to *join him* in his *ferve*nt dedication to doing these things! Now, the ‘courts’ of the Lord’s house, this verse is referring to, is simply the area *around* (outside of) God’s Tabernacle (Temple), where the people would gather to worship the Lord, YHWH (2 Chron 4:9, 6:13; Jer 26:2; 19:14; Ezek 8:7, 10:5. And this was *different* than the ‘inner court’ that was actually a part of the Tabernacle (Temple) of the Lord, where the priests would prepare, clean and burn the sacrifices (1 Kings 6:36, 7:12; Ezek 8:16, 10:3). The following link takes you to a diagram that shows the *inner* court of the Temple [https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Exodus/338] and the *outer* court is *outside* of that. And, the ‘house’ (#1004) referred to here is simply the Temple of God (Ex 23:19; 1 Sam 1:7; 1 Kings 7:40, etc.), which was in the ‘midst’ of Jerusalem, at the time the Psalmist wrote this Psalm. That shows us this Psalm was written *after* David brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem (1 Sam 6:17).

So, after writing a beautiful Psalm to praise the Lord (YHWH) for His holy, and righteous, characteristics, and explaining how the Lord (YHWH) helped him out of all his troubles (physical and spiritual), and promising to praise, and serve, the Lord for the *rest of* his life, the Psalmist ends this beautiful Psalm by calling on *all* people to do the same, at the appropriate place they were to worship back then, i.e. at the outer courts of the Temple of the Lord (YHWH) in Jerusalem. But, of course, today we are supposed to worship the Lord (YHWH) *wherever* we are ‘*in spirit and in truth*’ (John 4:23-24). And this means we should not only study God’s Word (earnestly, diligently, sincerely, and with understanding) but strive to obey His Word (and Holy Spirit) and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ whenever the opportunities arise (Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:5-6). For, since Jesus Christ has already come to pay for our sins, He fulfilled those blood sacrifices ‘once and for all times’ (Eph 2:14; Col 2:15; Heb 10:10). So, we are *no longer* to

worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, because the only reason they did so back then was because they still had to offer blood sacrifices, which only the priests could do (2 Chron 2:5-6). And really, we don't even need to worship at any building [<https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/332>] because, God wants us to worship Him *wherever we are*, so long as we keep His Words (and Holy Spirit) *within us*.

In fact, Paul points out that, *when* we have the Holy Spirit within us, *we are* the 'Temple of the Lord' (1 Cor 3:16-18, 1 Cor 6:15-20, 2 Cor 6:14-18)! Therefore, we can (and should) 'praise the Lord' *wherever we are* and *whatever we are doing*, simply by letting 'the light' of God's Word (and Holy Spirit) *shine through* our good words and works (Mth 5:16). And this brings us to the point that the Psalmist ends this blessed Psalm with the phrase 'Praise Ye the Lord', which we are quite familiar with by now. For, we've seen this phrase *before* – not only in Psalms 111-113, but also back in Psalms 104, 105 and 106. Yet, the meaning of this phrase (praise ye the Lord) is *the same* here, as it was in the other Psalms. So, the word '**praise**' here still means to celebrate all that the Lord, YHVH, has done for us (#1984). And the word '**Lord**' is still **Yahh**, or **Yah** (#3050), which a contraction (i.e. shortened version) for God's sacred name **Yehovah**, #3068, but it means the same thing (*self-existent* and *eternal*). So, it's use speaks of **Yehovah as having BECOME our Salvation** (first occurrence Ex 15:2). Therefore, this ending phrase (Praise Ye the Lord) calls *all* people (everywhere) to 'praise the Lord' for His great *salvation*! Indeed, this truly is something we should *continue* to do, throughout the *rest of our life* (just as the Psalmist promised to do). Not merely by singing songs to Him but (more importantly) by sharing the *true* Gospel of Jesus Christ (not a perverted form of it) with all those we come in contact with, be it by our good words and works, planting seeds of truth and/or using our God given gifts effectively...

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

*12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us **put on the armour of light**.*

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

*14 But **put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Rom 13:11-14

Praise Ye the Lord – *Hallelujah!*

AMEN.