

Mary's Prayer Of Praise

March 13, 2011

PSL: Prayer As A Second Language- Part 1

Introduction:

Explain new system for messages, leadership development, and life transformation:

- We want to offer your **continued learning opportunities** (recommended book for each series)
- We want to challenge you with **practical steps of application**: Key practices that will help you live out what we're learning together...key growth steps for your development as a disciple.
- We want to **encourage you to discuss what you are learning with others**. We will provide Series Round Tables where we will share what we are learning, what we are practicing, and discover stories of how God is working in our midst. In the future, we will create small group environments where you can discuss the teaching and your applications with others.

Vision: *A community of mature Christ-followers equipped with and using the tools they need to live the life you've always wanted- in love with Jesus and effective in mission. What if 20 or 30 of us were praying effectively. What if we were learning through daily time in God's word. What if we were on mission and seeing lives changed because God is working through us to reach others. What if we were using our gifts to bring glory to God and encourage others?*

For this series:

- We're studying prayer because if you want to know God, love God, and be on task with God's work in the world- we have to know how to pray, we have to be practicing prayer, and we have to be filling up on God's power through prayer to the point that we are close with Jesus and ready to work as God leads.
- The resources we're encouraging you to dive into is Beth Moore's "**Praying God's Word: Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds**". I have read part of this book this week and been impacted by it. We're going to pass a sign up sheet... they're \$10 a copy and I can have one for you next week. If you'll read it, but can't afford it, put your name down and we'll get you one. This book will help you take the words of God from the Bible and pray them to defeat challenges you face everyday in life.
- PSL Series Round Table:

Introduction to PSL: Making Prayer Like A Second Language

Luke 1:46-55 (New Living Translation)
The Magnificat: Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶ *Mary responded,*
“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.
⁴⁷ *How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!*
⁴⁸ *For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,*
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.
⁴⁹ *For the Mighty One is holy,*
and he has done great things for me.
⁵⁰ *He shows mercy from generation to generation*
to all who fear him.
⁵¹ *His mighty arm has done tremendous things!*
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.
⁵² *He has brought down princes from their thrones*
and exalted the humble.
⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things*
and sent the rich away with empty hands.
⁵⁴ *He has helped his servant Israel*
and remembered to be merciful.
⁵⁵ *For he made this promise to our ancestors,*
to Abraham and his children forever.”

1. Mary Praised God With Her Soul. Luke 1:46-47

*Oh, how my **soul** praises the Lord. How my **spirit** rejoices in God my savior.*

I love how Mary describes where her praise emanates from. This isn't just simple lip service to praising God. This isn't just showing up to church and singing a few songs half-heartedly in between yawns. This is from the deepest core of her being...from her inmost center...from the core of her heart...*she praised the Lord.*

In Matthew 15, Jesus was sparring verbally with the religious leaders of His day, the Pharisees. He was challenging them because they said one thing...they acted piously...and then they did another. Listen to his condemnation of them because their lives did not match their words...

Matthew 15: 7-9a.

⁷ *You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,*

⁸ *‘These people **honor me with their lips,***
but their hearts are far from me.

⁹ *Their worship is a farce,*
for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’^[a]”

Mary's "soul" magnified the Lord... Her "spirit" rejoiced in God... this is more than words... *her very being was centered in worship*. In the Bible, soul refers to the seat of our emotions. It is where our deepest feelings are felt. Our spirit is that eternal part of us where God resides. For Mary, her heart, her emotions, her will, were enveloped around God. Her heart was connected to God...and she lived her life in such a way to match her heart. Pleasing God...loving Him was what she was about.

How do you get to that point with God? How do you gain that type of intimacy with your Savior? I want to know the answer to that...because I want to get there. I want you to get there. I want us to live there...intimately connected with Jesus... no distraction, no priority, no relationship, no hang-up, no dream that interrupts that.

Psalm 53:2:

² God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God.

God is looking down...watching you and me...peering into the corners of our hearts...drilling down to the core of our souls...and *He is looking to see if anyone is truly wise...if anyone seeks God.*

How do you get to that point with God? How do you gain that type of intimacy with your Savior?

- **I think it is a discipline.** You wake up every morning and you train your soul to praise the Lord. You train your spirit to rejoice in God. This is a daily habit... it might need to be a moment by moment ritual. *Jesus, today...this moment... I praise you. I take joy in you. My circumstances...my feelings...what I can see...these don't dictate the attitude of my soul. These don't dictate my happiness...my joy. You do! Your goodness, your perfect plan, your love for me, your strength... I praise you today... I take joy in you today. We have to train ourselves.*
- **I think it is an attitude.** This kind of discipline of praise flows out of a humble heart...a heart that recognizes where we stand in relationship to God. We'll talk more about that in a moment as we follow Mary's example.
- **I think it flows out of a knowledge of God.** How do you get that? You find Him in His Word. You listen to His voice as you read the Bible. You study the person of Jesus. The Bible (Colossians 1:15) says that Jesus is *the Christ is the visible image of the invisible God*. If you want to know God- study Jesus. Learn His ways. Look at His life. You will see God. As we know God more deeply...we will understand His person, His promises, His ways, and what He wants from us.

Here's why you should be interested in this! See...*this kind of relationship with God is what is best for us!* Here is where satisfaction in life is found. Here is where joy- not dependent upon circumstances- is found. It is in knowing God...being connected to Him...being filled with Him...It is living out Psalm 34:8...*Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him!*

Joy in God is a solution for depression. For feeling sorry for myself. For sadness. It brings hope. It fills my heart with gladness and gratitude. It lifts me out of myself and helps me to see the bigger picture of God's love and power and perfect plan.

Illustration:

Fellow driver... For her birthday, she made a thanksgiving list. It is her tradition every year on her birthday to write down all the things she is thankful for. Even though she is going through a divorce, living on her own for the first time in her life... she is taking joy in God's goodness and God's provision.

*I struggle from time to time with mild depression. Could be sleep deprivation... could be physical or chemical make up...to some degree it is my personality and all that contributes to who you are from growing up, etc. Sometimes I see life and there are some things that aren't the way I want them to be and I get frustrated. But, I tell you what, in those times where I get up early...I wake up (shower/coffee)...I find God in His Word (some Psalms)...I get on my knees... I cry out to God and praise Him from the depths of my being...**my soul is then at rest...my day is in perspective...joy wells up in my heart.***

Application:

2. Mary Praised God With Humility

All that Mary said in her prayer of praise started with how she saw herself in relationship to God. Vs. 48: *For He took notice of His lowly servant girl...* This simple phrase is pregnant with meaning from Mary's heart.

She saw God has having "noticed" her. She didn't expect anything from God. She saw God's choosing of her to bear His Son and do His work as a privilege. She knew God was not obligated to her...God chose to use her out of His grace and mercy... He graciously gave her the privilege of being a part of His plan of redemption.

I think many times we expect a lot from God. *We feel we have rights...rights to a problem free life. Rights to satisfaction. Rights to safety. Rights to security. Rights to significance...* **Why?** I'm a sinner...I'm the created one (not the Creator). Mary knew her position in relation to God.

David reflected these thoughts by saying...**Psalm 8:1,3-4**

¹ *O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!*

Your glory is higher than the heavens.

³ *When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set in place—*

⁴ *what are mere mortals that you should think about them,
human beings that you should care for them?^[a]*

Mary describes herself as *His lowly servant girl*. She was **HIS**. Because of how she saw God...He was her master. He was her leader. Her life was completely given over to Him. Mary demonstrated this in her response to the angel Gabriel when he came to tell her that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus. Gabriel explained how she, though she was a virgin (counter to nature...counter to understanding), would bear a child because the Holy Spirit would impregnate her. Listen to her response: **Luke 1:38**: *"I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true."*

Mary recognized God as God. She understood her role as God's child. Her humility... (**her recognition of her role in response to God's greatness**)...led her to obedience. And...her humble obedience set the stage for genuine worship. Mary's humility set the stage for real worship... and it set her up to be used for great works of God.

Mary's humility led her to bow her knee and worship God. *It also prompted her to see God as her source of strength*. Listen to what she prays about the humble later in her prayer of praise:

- ⁴⁹ *For the Mighty One is holy,
and **he** has done great things for **me** (a lowly servant girl).*
- ⁵¹ *His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.
⁵² He has brought down princes from their thrones
and **exalted the humble**.*

See, to Mary...it wasn't strength or wealth or will-power that got things done for God. She saw God as her source of strength... it was God who lifted up the humble.

See, so often our society says: *God helps those who.... (help me finish it) help themselves*. That's not really true. *What God is interested in is those people who recognize that they can't help themselves to the point of real greatness for God's kingdom*. What is necessary to advance God's causes...to achieve real significance by making a difference that will be felt for eternity...is **God's power**. Mary recognized God's role as empowerer...

By Mary's prayer, we can see that God is more interested in the helpless than He is those who think they are strong. God is more interested in the poor than those who flaunt or find soul-satisfaction in their wealth. *God has exalted the humble*.

Maybe you feel weak today. Maybe you feel run-down. Maybe you feel helpless...***Get ready for a miracle. Mary is an example of God using the humble for great things.***

Illustration:

Application:

Let's get down to brass tacks here:

- If I start my day without acknowledging God... *am I not really saying, "Lord, I don't need you today!"* What greater form of pride...
- If I'm too busy to spend time with God during the day...*am I not really saying, "Lord, this other stuff...my work...my kids...my chores... are more important than you!"* What greater form of idolatry.
- If I can't engage my Bible or a prayer time because it seems boring (or in reality- though I would never say spending time with God is boring- there are other things in life that are more stimulating--- which I'm showing to be true by the fact that I'd rather read, exercise, work, watch TV than spend time with God)... *am I not really saying, "Lord, the things of this life are more interesting than you!"* What greater form of worldliness.

See, for Mary, her humility led her to recognize God in His greatness, His power, His perfection...and she longed to worship...and because she knew God... and recognized her need for His greatness...she was humble... and God exalted her to a task of great significance—mothering God's Son on earth.

I want to truly worship God from the depths of my heart. I want to be used of God. Perhaps it simply starts with humility.

3. Mary Praised God With Knowledge of God's Attributes

Matthew 22:29: ***Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God.***

Contrast Mary with Pharisees/Sadducees. Look at her knowledge of God.

- Vs. 47: *my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*
- Vs. 49: *the Mighty One...*
- Vs. 49: *is holy*
- Vs.49: *He has done great things for me*
- Vs. 50: *He shows mercy*
- Vs. 51: *His mighty arm*

Look at her understanding of God's ways:

- ⁴⁸ *For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,*
- ⁴⁹ *For the Mighty One is holy,
and he has done great things for me.*
- ⁵⁰ *He shows mercy from generation to generation
to all who fear him.*
- ⁵¹ *His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.*
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and sent the rich away with empty hands.*
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and remembered to be merciful.*
- ⁵⁵ *For he made this promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children forever.”*

Mary knew the One whom she worshipped well. She knew God's person. She knew God's ways. She knew the Old Testament Scriptures. Her knowledge of God informed her praise. Her understanding of God's ways led her to proclaim God's greatness.

2 Peter 3:17-18

¹⁷ *I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends. Be on guard so that you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. ¹⁸ Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.*

Proverbs 9:10

¹⁰ *Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom.
Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.*

Excellent Article: <http://www.bible-knowledge.com/seek/>. One of my favorite quotes: ***If there is one, major secret I have learned from the Lord on getting Him to release more of His knowledge to you – is that you have to be willing to go into some type of seeking mode with Him to get it. God will not spoon-feed you forever.***

Resources:

- <http://www.youversion.com/>
- <http://www.bibleplan.org/>

Application:

- Read God's Word
- Talk to someone else about what you are learning

4. Mary Praised God With Knowledge of God's Promises

⁵⁴ *He has helped his servant Israel
and remembered to be merciful.*

⁵⁵ *For he made this promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children forever.”*

- Mary's knowledge of OT Scripture helped her see God's hand at work and gave her a grid for her praise...
- Mary saw God's hand at work in the big-picture (vs. 54-55)

Challenge:

- **Read Psalms... look for God's attributes and promises. Write them down. Pray them back to God.**
- **Share what you are learning and how you are praising with someone else.**
- **Let's make praising God a regular part of our spiritual disciplines. Adoring Him out of your soul is what God wants from you...and it is the best medicine for your heart.**