

Praise

# Today's lesson

- ❖ Beginning the lesson with some hymns and praise
- ❖ Spending a couple of minutes in self examination – write on a piece of paper
  - ❖ 1) how you think your prayer life is going
  - ❖ 2) how much time you spend daily/weekly/ever praising God
- ❖ Discussion on what is praise
- ❖ Praising God in the liturgy
- ❖ Praising in everyday life
- ❖ Some practical tips – let us make some changes!!

hymns

Self – examination

**What is praise?**  
Let us first turn to the  
Psalms for some  
examples of praise

❖ Psalm 66: 1-4

“Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious. Say to God, “How awesome are your works! Through the greatness of Your power your enemies shall submit themselves to You. All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; They shall sing praises to Your name.”

❖ Psalm 95:1-7

“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; The heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for 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 sheep of His hand.”

❖ Psalm 149:1-6

“Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in the glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand”



## ❖ Psalm 150

“Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary;  
Praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him  
for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His  
excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound  
of the trumpet; praise him with the lute and  
harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;  
Praise him with stringed instruments and flutes!  
Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with  
clashing cymbals! Let everything that has  
breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.”

Matthew 22:36

- ❖ Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul – we are told that this is the first commandment. If we are full of love for our beautiful Lord, we should be able to passionately adore Him through pure praise and focused worship. This is so pleasing to our Lord.

# Praise in the Church & Liturgy

- ❖ Through hymn singing and through the praises of tasbeha – we mimic what the angels and the heavenly hosts are doing to praise the Lord, so that we may try and create heaven here on earth.
  - ❖ The church on earth was created to praise our Lord
  - ❖ Since the time of the apostles – the believers came together to gather as one soul, to rejoice and to raise hymns of praise to the Lord
    - ❖ Acts 2:46-47

- ❖ We can think of it as cooperation between heaven, and with us here on Earth. In Heaven all that the angels and heavenly hosts do is praise and sing praises to the Lord, on Earth we try and recreate that. Anba Mettaous from *The Spirituality of the Praise According to the Rite of the Coptic Orthodox Church* says:

“Praise is the work of angels who are always standing before the Throne of Grace praising God without tire or boredom, because it is their utmost pleasure, fullness and joy to praise their Creator. Praise in the Church is the highest level of prayers and talking to God. It is actual participation with the heavenly hosts in praising God the Creator.” (p.6)

- ❖ In praising God we are preparing ourselves for Heaven, when we stand before His throne and also sing alongside the heavenly hosts and angels

From ST John's vision of heaven:

“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures, and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying: To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever” (Revelations 5:11-13).

# Preparing for Communion

- When we have the Eucharist, we should too be joining in such praises. When we are trying to prepare ourselves for the Eucharist, we need to be preparing ourselves in the same way that the angels do – after all, what we are experiencing is exactly the same: experiencing the presence and the fullness of Christ through Holy Communion.
- Because Holy Communion is the “visible image of the Heavenly celebration and the heavenly service.” Because we are experiencing such holiness here on earth, the church has created these hymns and praises so that we may remember that we are experiencing not only a taste of heaven, but are in direct communion with the Lord. This is indeed worthy of praise.
- Surely, if we have Communion after praising God from the night before – from the whole week – remembering and meditating on God’s glory every minute you can, then we surely will experience Holy Communion differently than just coming on Sunday unprepared.

Praise in everyday life

# Praise as a sacrifice

- ❖ Praise is like the Old Testament of a sacrifice.
- ❖ When we praise God – we are presenting ourselves up as a living sacrifice. As Anba Mettaous says:

“I wish we would know how precious we are, with the honour of being God’s children, so that we might praise Him with the intimacy of sonship and love of children to their Father.”

*Analogy:*

Just as Jesus was our living sacrifice because it was His Father’s will. So it is the will of God to offer our body as living sacrifices. Just as Jesus stuck by the will of God at Gethsemane so should we also remember that we are praising God out of similar submission to His glory.

In this way we can always remember why we are praising God and how praise should be continuous.



# Praise enables us to enter in the presence of God

- ❖ “If a soul reaches the state of rest in prayers and praises, meditation on the first word in a prayer or praise can easily lead to God. This is not gained at an early stage in spirituality, but comes by continuous prayers and praise in joy, preferred them rather than any other vain concerns the repetition of prayers is useless if the mind is too busy with worldly matters. The soul will never find rest in God unless the mind is far from the temptations and opes of the world. on the other hand, caring for prayers and praises without happiness and real communication with God creates self-righteousness, and that is a sin resulting from repeating the rites, as a means of making the person happy, but not God.”

Anba Mettaous

# Praise enables repentance

- ❖ When we are continually practicing praise and wanting to please the Lord in all that we do, we will be working to be in the present of the Lord.
- ❖ Through continuous praise and presence, we begin to build ourselves up with a sensitive conscious, a nature that only wants to please and love God.
- ❖ This will push us to realizing how great and beautiful our Lord is, and how little we are – yet He still loves us and takes delight in us. This will enable us to repent and confess.

# Sometimes it is easy sometimes it is hard

Praise seems to be something that you should do when you're happy, when you're joyful, when you're feeling on top of the world.

The biggest challenge though, and the biggest testament for our love for God, is to continue praising Him through difficult circumstances. When life seems hard, when things go wrong and when we are stressed and sick of study, praise is not only the most uplifting thing, but remembering that why we are here, why we are created is to praise and worship Lord, then all our troubles will go away.

Praise will lead the way to peace.

# Praise is a change of heart, a change of a way of life.

- ❖ Most of all praise is showing God that we love Him. We are responding to His love, showing God that above all things, above all worldly way to spend our time, we are turning to Him and singing praises to Him, and seeing the wonder in Him.
- ❖ *Read Simply Amazing Blog by Abouna Anthony Messeh (word document or link)*
  - ❖ <http://franthony.com/2013/07/simply-amazing/>

How can we live a life of  
praise? – Practical Tips

- ❖ Incorporate the praises into your nightly prayer. Perhaps try gazing on a beautiful image of Christ on His throne. Contemplate and meditate on His beauty.
- ❖ Pray the psalms – David’s psalms are full of beautiful praises. The agpeya and hourly prayers specifically incorporate these praises. Especially the Thanksgiving praise allows us to begin with praise – to remember all that we are thankful for. Based on this praise thankfulness we can then beg the Lord for mercy
- ❖ Try and listen to tasbeha regularly. Really meditate on the words and the praises. Try at least to listen to tasbeha or attend the night before you have communion. The church holds tasbeha Thursday nights and Saturday nights. You can also find tasbeha hymns on youtube, or download them on [tasbeha.org.au](http://tasbeha.org.au)
- ❖ Preparing ourself for the liturgy and communion constantly – always trying to praise God in everything that you do. If we only try and praise God at specific times and we aren’t constantly making effort to praise God all week, to praise God in all you do, then it will be hard to enjoy and experience presence of God if we are just praising every now and then.
- ❖ Make sure you sing loudly in the Mass!

