

Praise: From Seed to Fruit

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. Acts 16:22-39
- B. What is the best time to praise God?
 - 1. In church services?
 - 2. When you are blessed?
 - 3. When you are joyful?
- C. When did the disciples praise God?

I. THE SEED OF PRAISE

- A. The soil in which the seed of praise is sown - Acts 16:22-24

- 1. The test of true praise

2. On November 22, 1873, Anna Spafford stood on the deck of the French liner S.S. Ville du Havre. As she stood there her four daughters clung desperately to her side. This was a tragic moment for them - the ship was sinking. History records that two hundred and twenty-six lives were lost in this tragedy. That number included Anna's four daughters. As they stood there on the sinking deck, Annie, the oldest, helped her mother support Tanetta, the youngest, who had her arms wrapped around her mother's neck. Bessie, the second youngest, clutched her mother's knees. Maggie, the second oldest, calmly stood beside her mother and said, "God will take care of us. Don't be afraid. The sea is His and He made it." And then the water engulfed them. Anna Spafford records that her last memory before losing consciousness was of her baby being torn from her arms by the force of the waters. A large ship's plank floated beneath Anna's unconscious body and propelled her up. But, her daughters were gone. Her first reaction to her loss was complete despair. Then she recalled the comment of a friend, "It's easy to be grateful and good when you have so much, but take care that you are not a fair-weather friend to God." Anna was rescued and nine days later she reached Cardiff, Wales. From there she cabled two fateful words to her husband in Chicago: "Saved alone." Horatio Spafford immediately boarded a ship to join his wife in Europe.

One night the captain called Mr. Spafford to his private cabin. "A careful reckoning has been made," he said, "and I believe we are now passing the place where the du Havre was wrecked. The water is three miles deep." Horatio Spafford went back to his cabin, his heart torn by a thousand sorrows. Yet, before that dark night had ended, near the place where his children had perished, he penned unforgettable words: "When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrow like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
'It is well, it is well with my soul.'"

- B. The season the seed was sown - Acts 16:25

- 1. True praise is sown at all times in our relationship with Christ
 - a. Psalm 16:8-11

- C. The seed sprouts and grows - Acts 16:26-29

- 1. True praise proves one is living above and in spite of his circumstances
 - a. Isa. 61:1-3

- b. Praising in the midst of trial shows our faith to ourselves and generates hope within us.
 - c. Praising God gets our focus off of the problem; when we focus on the trouble, we feel crushed by the weight of the world.
- 3. True praise prevents bitterness and vengeance afterward
 - a. Peter and John could have been bitter - Acts 5:40-42
- 4. True praise manifests gratitude to the Lord for all things
 - a. Phil. 4:10-12
 - b. The tougher the trials we bear, the more God has entrusted to us
 - c. 1Thes. 2:4; Prov. 17:3

II. THE FRUIT OF PRAISE

- A. True praise is a means of evangelism - Acts 16:30-34
- B. True praise impacts others around us. What do you suppose the other prisoners were thinking?
 - 1. Praising in circumstances where other men would curse reveals that you have something different, something others need and may be searching for
- C. The great fruit of true praise:
 - 1. They began as victims - Acts 16:22-23
 - 2. They ended as victors - Acts 16:37-39
 - 3. The trial that began with pain inflicted by others, was controlled by praise from the disciples, and ended with power from God