

## **“In Unified Praise and Thanksgiving”**

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you don't say that you wrote the sermon, haha.

**Text: 2 Chronicles 5** (focus: vv. 11-14)

*Parallel Account: 1 Kings 8*

*Parallel Example: Acts 1-2 (Pentecost)*

### **Intro Prayer**

- Father, focus our hearts and attentions on worship
- Father, soften our hearts (cf. Psalm 95:7b-11)
- Father, unite us as a congregation to worship You (2 Chronicles 5:11-13a)
- Father, thank You for for Your Word and the Promise that the Word will do the work that it needs to do (Isaiah 55:10-11)
- In Jesus' Name, Amen.

*Addressed:*

- *How should we worship God?*
- *In part, where should we worship God?*
- *Inductively, what is worship?*

### **Background**

- The preparation of the Temple has lasted quite a while at this point. From David to Solomon, this section is finally getting to the climax of the finalization of the Temple.
- In the chapter, the Ark of the Covenant is placed in the Temple with the intent of it being the final resting place for the Ark.
- The Ark of the Covenant is also symbolic of the Presence of God. When the Ark of the Covenant was taken away earlier in the time of the priest Eli, Eli fainted and died (cf. 1 Samuel 4:18).
- The LORD definitely shows His approval of the Israelites' work and intentions in 2 Chronicles 5:11-14.

**Proposition:** We should worship God in unified praise and thanksgiving (cf. 5:13).

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Chronicles 5:1-14 (full text below)

1 Thus all the work that Solomon did for the house of the LORD was finished. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, and stored the silver, the gold, and all the vessels in the treasuries of the house of God.

2 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.

3 And all the men of Israel assembled before the king at the feast that is in the seventh month.

4 And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark.

5 And they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the Levitical priests brought them up.

6 And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

7 Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim.

8 The cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles.

9 And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.

10 There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

11 And when the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, without regard to their divisions,

12 and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters;

13 and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever," the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,

14 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

**Focus:** Verses 11-14.

## **I. Come to God in Unified Praise and Thanksgiving (11-13a, cf. Psalm 95)**

### **Note the following sources of unity:**

#### **A. The unity of the priests (3, 11)**

1. Psalm 133:1 – It's a major blessing to have unity.

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

2. They all gathered in the Holy Place together, and after the praise, they came out of the Holy Place together (3, 11)

#### **B. The unity of the singers (12)**

1. All arrayed in fine linen (12)

2. All stood east of the altar to worship the LORD (12)

#### **C. The unity of the instrumentalists (13a, contrast: Psalm 95)**

1. Proper unity – in Praise and Thanksgiving (13a)

2. (Illustration) Not improper unity (cf. Psalm 95).

-- Psalm 95 gives us a clear example that we can be unified in the wrong way. The Israelites in the wilderness were united against God, even though His promise would come true. Their complaints may have been as one, but they were not on the correct side. We should be as the instrumentalists here – praising God in joy and as one body.

#### **D. The unity of the proclamation of praise (13a)**

1. 'God is Good' (13a)
2. 'God's love is steadfast, enduring forever' (13a)
  - a. God is loving and faithful to even us as sinners (13a)
  - b. This attribute (and thus, He Himself) is eternal (13a)
    - Example: God is characterized by one pole of the moral spectrum – Good. His attributes of Goodness and Mercy last forever, because He lasts forever.
  - c. God is worthy of our worship because of who He is!

## II. God will respond in a Miraculous Way (13b-14)

- A. The house of the LORD (Temple) was filled with a cloud (13b-14)
  1. Cloud Imagery in Scripture
    - a. Cloud by day, pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22)
      - In this instance, the cloud is a guiding factor, just as a Shepherd. God (viz. Jesus) is indeed a Good Shepherd, and He leads and guides us if we follow Him (cf. John 10:10-11).
    - b. The Son of Man coming from a cloud (Daniel 7:13)
      - Jesus, the Son of Man, Son of God.
    - c. Jesus being taken up into a cloud (Acts 1:9)
      - Here, Jesus' Presence on earth was removed, though the Holy Spirit would come soon.
  2. Here – the Glory of the LORD (14)
    - Overwhelming and thick – described as a cloud (very likely in a literal way). This would be an amazing sight!
- B. The cloud was so overwhelming that the priests were not able to stand to minister (14)
  1. "When God's people set themselves apart for him to express heartfelt worship and praise, God will surely respond with some sign of his presence" (Selman, Martin J. *2 Chronicles*. Tyndale Commentary, 320).
  2. This was clearly a miraculous sign of His Glory and Presence (cf. 14)
    - Illustration: Imagine being there. Could you possibly think about anything else other than the wonder of the Person of God at that point?

**Parallel Example:** We see the practice of unified praise and thanksgiving in conjunction with other events in Scripture. To give a New Testament example, I would like to point out several observations from the miraculous work of the LORD during Pentecost that Jesus promised beforehand:

-- Acts 1:4-8 retells the promise:

4 And while staying with them he **ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father**, which, he said, "**you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.**"

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

8 **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

- A. The people were unified (having all things in common, 1:12-13, 2:1)
1. They expected Jesus' promise to come true (1:4-11, see above text) – pray expectantly! Pray faithfully! Ask, Seek, Knock (Matthew 7:7-8)! The Lord is good in providing answers to the prayers of the righteous!
  2. They were present in the same location, here: Jerusalem (1:12-13)
  3. They were unified, devoting themselves to prayer (1:14)  
-- Note that later in Acts, the prayer of a group of Apostles causes the earth to quake (cf. Acts 4)!
- B. God worked miraculously (2:2ff.)
1. The Holy Spirit came, and the disciples preached the Gospel in the languages of many (2:2ff.)  
-- This was a miraculous sign, and it shows several things. First, God is in control and is infinitely intelligent, seeing how many dialects and languages existed at the time. Second, God is personal. The Holy Spirit through the people in the Upper Room that day spoke personally in the 'heart languages' of everyone around the area. Third, it shows an artistic touch by God. This is a foil to the Tower of Babel event in Genesis 11! Instead of people being separated to different parts of the world, being given different languages, the disciples were now together, and all languages were being spoken to by God!
  2. Many believed (3000) and were baptized (2:38, 41)  
-- The people had a real sense of unity as a result of entering into the community of believers. Here is the aftermath of their baptism (text below):

#### **Acts 2:42-47**

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

-- The unity just led to more unity in the next generation of believers.

-- Illustration: Albert Bandura's Bobo doll experiment/Social Learning Theory (1961) – children who saw adults violently abusing dolls tended to do the same to the dolls than children who did not see adults

violently abusing dolls. Violence breeds violence, and we can learn those ways. Likewise, we can learn ways of peace and unity in the Body of Christ through previous and current generations. We see an example of that here in Acts 2.

- Application:**
1. Let us be unified in a proper way (13a).
    - Do not be unified as the Israelites were in the wilderness. They were unified in a wrong way – blaspheming against God, hardening their hearts. Here in 2 Chronicles 5, we see a beautiful example of unity in praise and thanksgiving among the Israelites. Let your hearts be softened to the amazing Lord of all creation! Repent of your sins and turn to Him!
  2. Let us praise the LORD with thanksgiving (cf. 13a).
    - Are you down or under the weight of grief? Take some time this week to thank God for His blessings in your life. He is a God who blesses us, trains us up through suffering and discipline, and seeks to draw us closer to Him. He is worthy of all of our praise.
  3. Let us expect God's presence among us (Chapter 5).
    - Seek a fresh touch of God in your life, and keep in tune with the Spirit's work. Read Scripture, pray faithfully, stay centered on Jesus. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Keep going forward, and desire more of Him this week. Hunger and cry out for the living God!
  4. Let us praise the LORD more as a result (see: Chapter 6-7).
    - Let us continually be sanctified, growing in holiness, ever-working to avoid sin and unrighteousness. However, know that we do sin and that we have a wonderful Lord who is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us of all our unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).
  5. Today, as Pentecost has brought the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit, let us seek to be enveloped in God's Presence, brought in by His Holy Spirit, and focused on the work of Jesus the Son (cf. Acts 1-2). Let's also share this with others!
    - Let us thank the Holy Spirit for the privilege of Him granting us the blessing of His being in our presence, and let us seek the Lord's will in day-to-day matters to please Him. We have a Savior who gave His life for us. Let's give and devote our lives to Him, pouring out our hearts before Him in red-hot service, all to His glory.

So take some time to repent of any sins that you still have on your plate, and know that our Lord Jesus is forgiving. He came to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). Take some time to thank Him for His complete forgiveness, and be cleansed through His Shed Blood! Let's seek unity among ourselves, and let's unite in bringing God the glory He deserves, now and forever.

Now may we bless the LORD at all times, may His praise continually be in our mouths (cf. Psalm 34:1)! God bless you, and have a blessed week.