

To Him be praise - Sunday October 6th 2013.

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—⁶ and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:4-6).

Beloved in the Lord,

Our text today gives us three reasons to praise and worship God continually:

- 1.He has loved us
- 2.He has released us
- 3.He has placed us in His service.

We will explore each of these briefly.

Firstly, He has loved us. This truth is repeated all throughout Scripture. God is love and He loves us. This is most clearly stated in Jesus own words.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” (John 3:16-17)

I believe that this is a truth that we can never hear too often. For God so loved the world. God so loved you and me. He is love and He loves you and He loves me. Yes He loves you! He loves you with an everlasting love. God says: ***“I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.” (Jeremiah 31:3)***

God is telling us that His love for us is everlasting. It does not change. God is immutable and His love does not waver, it does not change. God’s Word never changes. Here is reason to shout Hallelujah. Praise God, His love does not, cannot and will not change. His love is everlasting. Please allow this truth to sink deeply into your heart and mind. God is saying to you and to me: “I love you with an everlasting love!”

Herein is cause to praise God, to glorify His Holy name, to rejoice in Him always, no matter what. He loves us. There is nothing we can do to change His love. So then the first reason to praise God is that He loves us.

The second reason is closely tied in with the first: He has released us. Let us look once more at our text:

“To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—⁶ and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Jesus by His death on the cross, with His shed blood has released us from our sin. Sin holds people in prison, it keeps us in bondage. Sin is a cruel slave master and it's wages is death. Sin is something that we are not able to defeat or overcome with our own power. We cannot cleanse ourselves from sin.

If I remember rightly in Shakespeare's "Macbeth"; Lady Macbeth tries in vain to wash the blood off her hands. We can try all we want, but we can never rid ourselves of the stain of sin apart from Jesus. We can never remove the filth of sin on our own. The stain of sin can only be cleansed with one solvent, if I can put it that way, and that is the Holy and precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only Jesus blood can wash away sin.

Because God loves each one of us so very much, He sent His Son Jesus to shed His blood for us, so that believing on Him, we may be clean and pure. We read this beautiful Word in Isaiah 1:18-19: ***“Come now, and let us reason together,”***

Says the Lord,

“Though your sins are as scarlet,

They will be as white as snow;

Though they are red like crimson,

They will be like wool.

¹⁹ “If you consent and obey,

You will eat the best of the land;

Only God can do that. It is only through Jesus precious blood that we can be cleansed from our sin. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. There is no other way to be released from sin. He releases us, He sets us free. He does it without us earning it. We deserve punishment, instead He gives us grace and mercy. He took our punishment upon Himself. He died in our stead, in our place. He paid our sin debt in full with His own precious blood. All we need to do is come to Him to be set free. He sets us free because He loves us. His love, His mercy knows no bounds in this life. If we truly come to Him in repentance, trusting in Him, He will not reject us, He will pardon, cleanse, relieve. Hallelujah!

We read in Hebrews 12:1ff: ***“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”***

Only when our focus is fairly and squarely on Jesus, can we be rid of the sin and the encumbrances that so easily entangle us. He is the answer to all our needs.

Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians: ***“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)***

We need to ensure that we do not go back into slavery once we have been set free. It is for freedom that Christ set us free. This is only possible if as I mentioned earlier we keep our eyes on Jesus.

He sets us free, He keeps us free if we abide in Him, if we abide in His Word.

Jesus said: “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

The key is abiding in Jesus. we need to renew our relationship with Him each and every day. We need to submit our lives to Him every day. We need to read His Word every day. We need to meditate upon His Word every day. We need to pray and praise Him every day. This is true living. This is true freedom. When you abide in Jesus you are free to live and free to die. Praise God.

So then the second reason to praise God continually is because He has released us, set us free.

The third and final reason is that He has placed us in His service.

Out of His great love for us, Jesus has set us free from sin, not so that we as Michael Youssef often says “so that we can sit on our blessed assurance and do nothing”. No way. He has set us free in His love so that we may serve Him. As we saw last Sunday we are to be salt and light.

Our text tells us: ***“He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father”***. Some translations render this as “kings and priests”. In the Bible both kings and priests were anointed with oil for service. They were consecrated, set apart to serve by having a flask of oil poured on their head. Oil is a powerful symbol of the Holy Spirit. When we are in Christ, when we abide in Him, God The Holy Spirit abides within our hearts and He anoints us for service. Our service should not be in our own strength and wisdom, but God’s. After His resurrection Jesus said to His disciples: ***“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)***

It is God The Holy Spirit, who empowers us to be witnesses for Christ. He appoints us to a great position, namely kings and priests in God’s service.

We read in 1.Peter 2:9: ***“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;”***

God has chosen us in love to be His servants, to rule and reign with Him. Too many Christians are weak, timid, cowardly, inward looking. We are to reign with Christ. We are His Kings and priests. He is the one who has all power. His name is above every name. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He stated: ***“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)***

How much power and authority does Jesus have? All power, All authority. Praise God. He promises us His ever abiding presence. What are we afraid of? What stops us from fulfilling our mission? He said: “Go therefore and make disciples...”

Please understand that He has loved us with an everlasting love. He has released us from all sin and it’s power, from death itself. He has raised us up to be kings and priests.

Let’s go, let’s serve Him, do His work.

May we honour Him with all our life.

May we always praise Him and adore Him. To Him be all glory, honour and praise.

Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.