

mar 31

it's amazing what praising can do

"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." psa 150

so ends the psalms of the bible, proclaimed by believers and atheist alike, to contain some of the most beautiful prose ever. talk about hearing whispers of God, these contributors had intensified hearing. not only are the psalms full of warnings, judgement and prophecies, they are filled with some of the most beautiful and worshipful words ever penned. this is the intimacy Jesus desires with each of us. no, it shouldn't just happen once or twice a week, often under an obligatory sense of duty even then. praising the Lord means we do our best to give Him all the adoration and approval He is worthy of. we do it continually. if not in words then in our actions. every living being has the purpose of giving God praise.

we bring praise to the Lord when we choose to glorify Him, thank Him, adore Him, honor Him, and obey Him, to name a few. praise is a genuine response to the singular goodness of God. He alone is worthy of all our worship. praise should not be motivated by a

hypocritical desire to look more "spiritual"; instead, true praise is motivated by seeing and experiencing God's goodness to us and others and by learning the ways of the Lord.

why do we praise God? first of all, He is our Creator. we praise Him for His salvation, provision, protection, love, faithfulness, kindness, and goodness, just to name a few. praise is not suggestive. praise does as much for us as it does for Him. God inhabits the praises of His people. it is mandatory and it is pleasing to our Lord.

if you ever want to get His attention, praise Him for all you're worth. i was praising Him just this morning for waking me up again; for giving me one more day to share His goodness and beauty with someone. there are all the a multitude of "little" things we so casually take for granted.

psalm 34 begins with "i will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." continually; and yes, there are times that means it must be made sacrificially; as an offering to God, a sweet smelling aroma, an aroma of love. we have to remind ourselves of the faithfulness of God in the moments when it feels darkest. when we offer the sacrifice of praise to God out of obedience, soon enough we will start to believe it again as well. we do not deny our pain or trauma; rather, by praising the Lord, we are choosing to remember that He is there with us in the midst of it.

i think of the story about footprints in the sand. i

think it would be good to repeat it here. although fiction in nature, man believe it to be scriptural, based on deuteronomy 1:31

-----

one night i dreamed a dream. i was walking along the beach with my Lord. across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. for each scene, i noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me and one to my Lord.

when the last scene of my life shot before me i looked back at the footprints in the sand. there was only one set of footprints. i realized that this was at the lowest and saddest times of my life. this always bothered me and i questioned the Lord about my dilemma.

"Lord, You told me when i decided to follow You, You would walk and talk with me all the way. but i'm aware that during the most troublesome times of my life there is only one set of footprints. i just don't understand why, when i need You most, You leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and testings. when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

-----

never, never ever, never never ever ever will He leave us. it is only us who leave. our faith in God does not preclude us from experiencing hardship and sadness. the reality is that we all go through ups and downs in our lives. even as iron sharpens iron, trials bring an intimacy; an open wound of our heart through which Jesus might more easily enter. He is all and He is

enough. sometimes God walks beside us, and other times He must carry us. notwithstanding, He will never abandon us. "yea, though i walk through the valley of the shadow of death, i will fear no evil; for You are with me; your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." psa 23:4

we have the assurance of God's faithfulness. what God has done before He can do again. "let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." heb 10:23 our God is always worthy of all praise. yes, and it's amazing what praising can do.