

GOD'S PAVILION
Part XVIII
Matthew 16:13-19

Introduction: There are three major influential, authoritative forces in the earth that restrain evil and keep society from disintegrating: governments, the church, and the Holy Spirit. To their chagrin, governments are capable of being influenced by evil, and, as a result, positive leadership is compromised. The church innately maintains the greatest potential for good as the result of her supernatural connection with the Holy Spirit. When the church is galvanized to and in tune with God's plan, nothing can interdict her impact on the world. Our Scripture reading today says that, "...*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it...*" It is such an exhilarating and exciting period in history to watch God setting up the end-time events. The exigency of the moment tells us that the appearing of the Lord is imminent. The church must tenaciously intensify her celebration of the triumph of Jesus our Lord in anticipation of the greater days that lie ahead.

- A. God's pavilion: it is time to celebrate. *2nd Corinthians 2:14.*
1. Our praise makes us a part of the celebration. We are not fighting the battle when we praise; we are praising God that the battle has *already* been won. *Psalms 106:47; Colossians 2:15.*
 2. Revelation comes through praise. *Psalms 49:4.* When the prophetic anointing came upon David, he often uttered "*dark sayings.*" The spirit of prophecy came upon David as he played his harp and sang. It was then that the "*dark sayings*" were opened to him.
 3. There is something about the act of praise that opens our heart to the reception of revelation from God. Praise prepares you to understand the subtle meanings of God's Word. It prepares you to receive the *rhema* Word of God, that is, the personal word from God to you.
 4. When Jesus was tempted of the devil on the mount of temptation, take note of His answer. *Matthew 4:4.* "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word [rhema] that proceeds from the mouth of God."
 5. Praise prepares us for miracles. When the devil comes against us, praise will always maneuver a way out for us. *Psalms 50:23.* The word salvation in the Old and New Testaments impacts body, soul, and spirit. *1st Thessalonians 5:23.* This is deliverance from satanic attacks. Plus, when we praise, it brings glory to God.
 6. When we offer praise to God, we should look for a demonstration of His salvation and deliverance. When we praise God, we prepare the way for Him to intervene.
 7. Jonah is an example. *Jonah 2:1-9.* After complaining for 7 verses, he finally remembers to praise God in *verses 8 and 9.* God delivered him.
 8. Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. *Acts 16:23-25.* After great persecution by the inhabitants of Philippi, and after being beaten, Paul and Silas were cast into prison. But at midnight, in the midst of their pain they began to sing and praise God. They could have complained and listed all the problems that they had faced. However, they chose to praise God in the midst of their storm. They did it so loud that the other prisoners heard them. Their audacity brought results. *Verse 26.*
 9. God responds to the sacrifice of praise that you give when going through difficult times. *Hebrews 13:15.* It is the abnormal thing to do because things are not going well. Apparently, God delights in your sacrifice of praise. God lives in your praise. *Psalms 22:3.* One translation says, "*Thou art enthroned upon the praise of Israel.*"
 10. God is always King, whether we praise Him or not. But when we praise Him we offer Him a throne to sit upon in our presence. This is why our praise is so necessary in order to bring the power of the presence of God in our church services. When we offer Him a throne through our praise, we can be assured that He will come and occupy that throne. If we don't praise, we are withholding a throne from the King of kings. Praise sanctifies the atmosphere.
 11. When we begin to extol the mighty deeds that He has done, to magnify His name and who He is, contamination leaves our mind. The strongholds of the enemy are neutralized by our praise unto God.

Conclusion: Everyone has a *basic instinctive* drive to access God's presence. The Scripture is very clear in telling us that praise is the avenue of access to God. David taught us in *Psalms 100:4* "...*to enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name.*"