

Challenge

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PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

Psalm 96

I think sometimes when we see God do all sorts of wonderful things how easy it is forget to praise the Lord. Here in Psalm 96 the writer gives us a wonderful introduction to how we should praise God whether it be in good times or indeed bad times.

We see the proclamation to praise God in verses 1-6. We see here the invitation to praise God in a number of ways.

First it is to sing to the Lord. Of course music is one of those wonderfully subjective areas of the Christian church that causes no end of heartache. Whilst it can cause heartache it can also bring wonderful joy and be a great means of expressing our thanks and praise to God for all that He has done. Notice in these opening verses that the quality of singing is not mentioned. In Psalm 95 is says to shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation in the first verse. I think I do equate my singing to a little bit more like the shout type of thing rather than a quality voice. None the less the Lord loves to hear His people sing His praises.

Then in verse 2 we can sing the Lord's praises in proclaiming the good news of His salvation. I am sure that most of us have never seen that our witness to the Lord's working in our life is another way of declaring His praises. Of course this is the reason we produce the Challenge newspaper as it sings the praises of the Lord in changed lives. Then we can declare His praises by shouting about His Glory and the wonders of His creation to all of the nations and the peoples. The word Glory is a word that really speaks of the sum total of all that God is, and that people can see that in Christians that are living the Christian life the way it should be. We can also declare His praises by drawing people's attention to the wonders of God's creation and how He has put everything together and that each day is a day that God has faithfully maintained His creation.

There is also the reason for praise in verses 4-6. They are listed for us quite easily and they are:—

- (a) We can praise the Lord because He is great. He is great in all of His dealings with us; He is great in all of His creation and through His creation.
 - (b) The Lord is to be praised by our reverence of Him in verse 4. This is all about knowing what it means to fear the Lord, to stand in awe of His holiness, His majesty, His power and His authority.
 - (c) The Lord is to be praised because He is the one true God. I am so grateful that we don't have to work out which God is the true God because the bible speaks of Jehovah the one true living God who is the creator and sustainer of the whole universe.
 - (d) We can praise the Lord because He is the one and only living God as we see in verse 5. The reason of course is that many people spend most of their lives worshipping dead idols or idols of man's own creation. We can rejoice because we worship a living God who reaches out to us in wonderful grace and compassion and love and speaks into our lives in ways that are hard to really express in words.
 - (e) The Lord is to be praised because He is the creator God. I know we live in an age where evolution and other explanations of this universe are brought to the forefront of the media etc. But the bible tells us clearly that God is the creator of the whole universe. This not only speaks of his wonderful creativity but also of His amazing sustaining power.
 - (f) The Lord is to be praised as He is honoured for His strength, beauty and His wonderful majesty.
- Then secondly we see the exhortation to worship in verses 7-13. In this opening section of this second point the worship from gentle nations in verses 7-10. So firstly we are to give or ascribe to the Lord strength. We realise that in the Christian life our strength and power and authority is in a person as He lives His life in us and through us moment by moment. Then secondly we are to give or subscribe to the Lord the glory due to His name. That is that we ascribe to the Lord the full gamut of His character as we see it portrayed in the scriptures. Often I have seen and heard people refer to the Lord in some rather demeaning terms such as the Old Man upstairs and the like. Whilst I appreciate that people are trying to make "God" more acceptable or accessible I think they take away from the Glory of His character by doing this.*

Thirdly we are to ascribe to the Lord an offering of praise and of our possessions. Often this is one of the real tests of whether we really want to worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth. Giving to the Lord these days is always a difficulty as statistics bear testimony of. As we live in a world that is increasingly taken up with materialism, giving to the Lord has plummeted remarkably. Then the second thought here in this exhortation to worship is that we are to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness verse 9. We need to see first of all that we recognise and understand who it is that we are worshipping. He is the God who controls all things, He is absolutely sovereign, He is absolutely providential in all that He does.

(Please turn over)

Then lastly in this exhortation to worship we see worshipping the Lord in the beauty of His creation verses 11-13. Again and again I take the opportunity to rejoice in God's creation as I travel to work and take time to examine the flowers and view the birds and the wildlife around me. Sadly for some people rejoicing in the Lord is not a habit but is even less of a habit in terms of rejoicing in His wonderful creation. Also we see in verses 11-13 that God is coming again and we need to worship the Lord in the expectation of His sovereign return. We need to also take on board the fact that God is coming to judge the earth and therefore those who do not know the Lord as their personal Lord and Saviour are going to be faced with an awful judgement. We need to gain a new vision and heart for evangelism. This is not something that we can just whip up as it were but it is something that comes as we learn what it is to praise the Lord in song, in prayer, in action and in attitude and as we do then somehow or other God begins to change us from the inside out. When He does it changes the whole reason for our existence, the whole reason for why we want to serve God. This is summed up in this well known verse from Galatians 2:20 which says "*I am crucified with Christ it is no longer I that lives but Christ that lives in me and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me*".

May you know and experience the reality of that verse in your day to day walk with the Lord.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge

Praise

1. Continue to Praise the Lord for the ongoing support and encouragement we are getting from a wide range of people and churches. We can't thank the Lord enough for His faithful support of the work through His people.
2. Praise the Lord for the upcoming opportunities for the newspaper to go into the United States. Our first edition of the paper will be into Las Vegas. We have a church that is looking to distribute 20,000 paper four times a year and we are praying for great results.
3. Praise the Lord also for the great response to the paper in South America. We have now done two editions for Argentina and both of them have been met with a great deal of encouragement. Sadly we are only printing 10,000 at a time so we are really praying for a dramatic expansion of the paper into Argentina. We also praise the Lord for the opportunity to go into Uruguay initially with a test print run and hopefully on a regular basis in the new year.
4. We praise God for the ongoing work in Africa where we are seeing great things happening.
5. Praise God for His ongoing faithfulness and blessing of the work here in Australia. Whilst growth has been slow we thank the Lord that every month we see 55-60,000 papers go out across this nation.

Prayer

1. Please pray as we endeavour to get out about six different editions of the paper. November will be a very busy month and if it all comes together we might see close to half a million newspapers being printed in total for Christmas.
2. Pray for the negotiations that go on with the various countries in which we are looking to work in, in the near future. We do need real wisdom as to how we go about these negotiations and indeed we want to make sure that once we start the production of the paper we can continue to do so.
3. Pray for the ongoing growth and support of the work of Challenge both here and overseas. We had enough funding to do three editions for Argentina but after this third edition we will not have the funds to continue so we are really asking the Lord's people to pray with us as to obtaining God's provision.
4. Pray for the various partner organisations that we work with. They are Multi Ministries in South and Central Africa headed up by Harold Peasley and his team, Peace Makers Fellowship International in Kenya headed up by Paul Dondoh, Word of Life Ministries in Argentina headed up in Cordoba by Will Herndon, Challenge Weekly in New Zealand headed up by John Massam and Garth George and last but not least please pray for our United States representative Doug Cornelius and his wife Mary as they do a fantastic job in the promotion and development work in the state of Ohio.
5. Pray for our Christmas Australian edition for December/January. We are praying and asking the Lord for encouraging orders for this paper from the churches and blessing as a result of the distribution of it. We are praying that we will be printing somewhere around the 80-90,000 mark.
6. Pray with us for the appointment of a new editor for Challenge. We have been praying much about this in recent months as we seek a replacement for Carl Carmody to free him up to continue his promotion and development work of the paper in Australia and overseas.

Special Request: We are still collecting books to send to African Pastors.

If you have any good quality books on Christian Living, Commentaries, Biographies, etc., that you are no longer using, please contact us here at Challenge.

Challenge Literature Fellowship

PO Box 978, Cloverdale 6985 — Phone (08) 9453 3311 — Fax (08) 9453 3006

Webpage: www.cif.org.au — Email: challenge@cif.org.au