

## The Weapons of Our Warfare Part 5

### PRAISE – THE SOUND OF BREAKTHROUGH

**PRAISE** is a DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD with power to SILENCE the enemy (Psalm 8:1-2, 149:6).

- \* We don't just start our services with praise songs because that's the FORMULA, but because praise has been ordained as a POWERFUL SPIRITUAL WEAPON.

When you hear the word praise, what do you most naturally associate it with – emotion, music, obedience or warfare? Why?

#### 1. Praise changes the SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE: Brings light into darkness

- \* When people start to PRAISE, they take their eyes OFF themselves & place them ON God, they open a door to the PRESENCE & POWER of God & the atmosphere changes.

Can you recall a moment – personally or corporately – where praise clearly changed the atmosphere? What shifted?

#### 4 Quick Theological Facts

- i) The Devil KNOWS the POWER of praise ... which is why he'll do ANYTHING to STOP you praising.

Why do you think the enemy works so hard to distract or discourage believers from praising God?

- ii) Praise is a SACRIFICE (Heb 13:15) ... We don't praise because we FEEL like it, but because it's a powerful spiritual WEAPON.

Why is praise a sacrifice? What makes praise costly at times? How does your flesh tend to pull against praise?

- iii) Praise is the key to the PRESENCE of God & ABSENCE of the devil, both in your life & your church (Psalm 8:2, 100:4, 22:3) ... the devil's PRIDE simply cannot stomach praise, but when you praise God you OPEN the DOOR wide to the Lord's influence.
- iv) We are designed to OPERATE in a praise ENVIRONMENT (Psalm 34:1, 113:3, 1 Thess 5:18) ... What DOMINATES your MOUTH will eventually DOMINATE the ROOM.

'What dominates your mouth will eventually dominate the room.' Discuss! Why does this make praise so important? What are the corresponding dangers of grumbling & complaining?

#### 2. Praise changes the HUMAN HEART: Opens our eyes to the One who is so much greater

- \* The enemy's agenda is clear, CHIPPING AWAY at your psyche, mostly through 'SUGGESTIVE THOUGHT,' sowing seeds of DOUBT & playing on FEARS (John 10:10, Prov 4:23).
- \* When your heart becomes MISALIGNED, you go to CHURCH for a REALIGNMENT: to remind yourself that HE IS A GREAT BIG GOD (1 John 4:4, 1 Cor 15:57, Matt 28:18, 2 Cor 1:20, 12:9, Rom 8:38-39).

The enemy often works through suggestive thoughts. What kinds of thoughts most commonly try to chip away at your faith?

How does praise help realign your heart when fear or doubt creep in?

#### 3. Praise changes OUTCOMES: Gets the two-edged sword a-swinging

- \* e.g. Acts 16:16-34, 2 Chron 20:21-22
- \* If the WORD is your SWORD, PRAISE is the way you SWING it.

In Acts 16 & 2 Chronicles 20, praise came before deliverance. Why is that order so significant?

The statement says, 'If the Word is your sword, praise is the way you swing it.' What does that look like in prayer or spiritual battle?

Are there any situations you're facing right now that necessitate praise going first? What song do your group reckon you should start singing?!

#### The CORPORATE SETTING

When you BREAK THROUGH in praise FIRST, everything is EASIER.

Our services are supposed to be a JOURNEY

- \* Starts with PRAISE (our invitation to God)
- \* then WORSHIP (His invitation to us)
- \* followed by the WORD (hearts ripe & ready)
- \* leading into RESPONSE (as we act on God's Word & allow the Holy Spirit to minister to our hearts).

Why do you think God designed corporate gatherings to begin with praise?

How does praise prepare our hearts to receive the Word more fruitfully?

What might change in our church if everyone came prepared to break through in praise, rather than waiting to be led there?

**TAKEAWAY:** If you want victory in your life, don't wait for the atmosphere to change; change it. Don't wait for your heart to feel right; realign it. Don't wait for the battle to end; let praise go first & pre-empt the result.

Which one of these jumps out at you & what are you going to do about it?