

Praise the Lord!

By Eddy Simon



"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34). So many times I've written about the wonderful blessings God has poured out on us. I write, "Praise the Lord" for these wonderful blessings, and rightfully so. Certainly anyone who receives a wonderful blessing from the Lord is inspired to praise Him. This psalm however, implies something more. If we praise Him at all times then we inevitably find ourselves praising Him in the midst of difficulties. With this

in mind I feel inspired to write this time about praising Him in the midst of suffering and trials. In the true spirit of my theme I am writing this article in my room with the door open. This will subject me to (at the very least) constant interruption. For those of you who may not know I live in the homeless shelter with about 40 homeless guys. At least a dozen of them sleep on the floor in the hall because there isn't anywhere else to put them. Right now someone has a radio blasting in the hall playing, "Life in the Fast Lane." Tell me God doesn't have a sense of humor. I'm not sure how this experiment will work. If this article seems to be a series of intermittent thoughts only slightly connected to some common theme then please allow me to thank you in advance for indulging me.

Why should we praise the Lord for difficulties? Oops, excuse me, there's a young girl in the hall talking to the guys. I'll have to tell her and her entourage that they've made a mistake. The parade is outside; not up here. Now back to the article. Scripture says, "Count it all joy brethren when you meet with various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." Why is steadfastness important? It is important because the one who lacks it, "is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind." This one is subject to whatever outside force comes along; not just the wind of the sea but the wind of deceitful doctrine. This one is easily lost. Oops, excuse me, there are two guys about to fight over who owns the space on the floor that they both intended to sleep on. It turns out that while they were busy arguing, a drunk came up and lying down in the disputed spot is now immovably out cold. Wow – talk about winds tossing waves around the sea! Now, where was I? Oh, yes, it's like a guy who writes an article and keeps changing the subject and can't remember what he was writing about. Why should I put up with this?

Scripture says, "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us." Why doesn't hope disappoint us? We're talking about hope in God, of course. It doesn't disappoint us because it keeps us in pursuit of a deeper relationship with God. The more we pursue a deeper relationship with God the more He pours his Holy Spirit into our hearts. Oops, excuse me again. I was just interrupted by one of the guys here who is mentally ill. He said, "Can I ask you a question?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Like, did you ever think about like when you're climbing a mountain, but it's not really a mountain, so like you're climbing but you're not really climbing a mountain, but you are; what do you think about that? Right or wrong?" Before I could say anything he asked me another question, "Could I have a cigarette?" I said, "Sure." Then he said, "I'd like to hear your deeper thoughts about this, you know what I mean, because as a man you know I like to be with a woman who can really get into it...then again what is reality? Did you ever think about God?" I said, "Yes, we could talk about it sometime". He said, "Exactly!" Then he walked away.

Scripture says, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." So, we praise the Lord for suffering and trials because it produces strength and endurance and hope and this keeps us in pursuit of God. The more we pursue Him the more He gives us His Holy Spirit who helps us in our weakness. Scripture also teaches us that "To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." Well, I hope you liked my little experiment of an article written under duress. If you didn't that's GREAT because you can thank Him for the difficulty of having to read a lousy article and remember to...

"Bless the Lord at all times" and let His praises be always in your mouth! Praise the Lord!

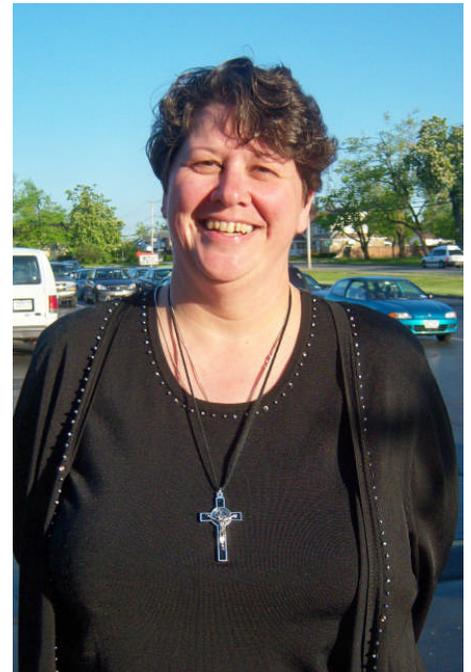
Word on the Streets...



St. Luke's Mission of Mercy continues to provide for the basic needs of our community through the generosity of our benefactors and those who donate items to give to the less fortunate. For many years St. Luke's has provided furniture such as couches, chairs, kitchen tables, beds, dressers, and so much more to those who have nothing. Many of our refugee families and those we place in homes have nothing to sit on, eat on, or sleep on. They rely on us to provide for their needs.

If you have furniture or appliances that you would like to donate to a needy family, bring them to St. Luke's or call 893-9080 for pick-up. We are running low on supplies after a flurry of home "set-ups" over the winter months and are in need of the basics, such as living room furniture, kitchen tables and appliances, bedroom furniture, and the like. Before you put it out to the curb or put a tag on it at your next garage sale, consider giving to a family in need!

What does a missionary Look Like?!?



Joanne Heimiller has been a missionary at St. Luke's a full year and made her second year of promises in April. She is a former regional manager of a national fabric retailer! Joanne works in the office, travels with the Voices of Mercy to sell CD's and sacramentals, and does A LOT of driving!