

Hebrews 13:15-16 (NIV)

15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.

16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

58-13-05-The Sacrifice of Sharing

communion, communication, sharing, testimony, worship

Heb 13:15-16

Jesus delights in times of worship where believers share their hearts.

INTRODUCTION:

–Christian faith is balanced between *individual concerns* and *group concerns*. We begin with *personal faith*, but God wants us to participate in *congregational faith*. Jesus calls each lost sheep *personally* to follow Him, but *how* we follow is *in a flock*. He gives *personal attention* to each believer but has *a special presence* to give to His flock– **Mat 18:20**, “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

–One way that Jesus *manifests Himself when we meet together* is by our mutual sharing. He not only indwells each member of His Body, the Church, but wants to speak through each of us– **Heb 13:15-16**, *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.* **HOM.idea.**

I. Part of Our Mutual Sharing is Offering Praises to God

A. Christians are described in Scripture as “a kingdom of priests,” and part of our priestly ministry “*through Jesus*,” our High Priest, is to “*offer to God a sacrifice of praise*.”

1. When OT priests sacrificed “a burnt offering,” it was called “a **pleasing** aroma ... to the LORD by fire.” (It was a *tangible form of worship*, both an *attitude* of heart and an *active participation*.)
2. Jesus fulfilled the OT sacrifices for *sin*, but we fulfill what were called “peace” or “freewill offerings” by our “*sacrifice of praise*.”

B. What makes our *praise* a form of *participatory worship*?

1. First, it’s a *declaration of faith*: “*the fruit of lips that confess his name*”
 - a. Confessing Jesus is *how we got into the Christian faith*– **Rom 10:9**, That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
 - b. But it’s also an going verification of our faith– **Mat 10:32-33** (NKJV), “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” (Jesus did not say this as a *frightening threat* but as a *practical self-test* for us to know if our faith is *authentic* or *superficial*.)

- c. As our *faith-relationship* with Christ grows, our *perception* of His activity in our lives also grows. (By turning this perception into “*the fruit of lips that confess his name*” we can make a verbal “*sacrifice of praise*” during our worship time together.)

TRANS: Participating in OT worship with sacrifices required effort. The cost of making a sacrifice of praise in NT worship also means effort. Spontaneous praise is always *welcome* and *acceptable*, but a deeper and richer form of testimony involves learning some new habits or spiritual disciplines that assist us in this next point...

II. Gathering Blessings to Share with Other Believers

- A. We *do* please God by sharing what comes to mind during a church service, but God actively blesses our lives all day, 7 days a week. (All week long, we need to be mindful of His blessings, looking for them in life’s ordinary activities and routines.)
- B. To maintain this awareness of God’s blessings in our lives, we need to watch for them in *various ways* and in *various forms*:
1. One good place to gather blessings is *in a daily quiet time*, where we meditate on God’s Word for daily guidance— Psa 119:105, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.)
 2. Another great blessing is to sense His voice in listening prayer. (We send thoughts to God, but being attentive to those *He sends us* may mean learning a new habit of inner stillness in prayer.)
 3. *All creation praises the Creator*; recalling this when we’re out in nature can open our hearts to see and hear those praises.
 4. A daily devotional reading shows us how others have collected and shared their blessings. (It might encourage us to write out our own thoughts, so we can bring and read them at church.)

TRANS: We can’t always trust our memories to retain what we should share. Some keep prayer lists. Maybe we ought to keep *praise* lists. [Memo pads are helpful. I use a *notebook app* on my smart phone. If I get a thought I know I should share, I try to write it down before it slips away. I’ve had *quotes* and *poems* come to me on waking from sleep, and I just grab the closest bit of scrap paper to write them down.] Record your blessings from the previous week, not just to remember them yourself, but to share them at church. This is so important, because...

III. What Delights God is the Multiplication of His Blessings

- A. *Generosity* is the focus of v.16. *And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased*. (This means giving from your abundance to the needy. But since v.15 is about sharing verbally, “*to share with others*” in v.16 includes verbal sharing.)
1. When God has done something *good* for us that lifts our spirits, we can multiply that blessing’s impact by sharing it with others.
 2. Paul prays this for believers in Rome— Rom 15:13, May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (The blessings we praise God for give us “*joy and peace*,” but by sharing them with others—whose hope may need a lift—the Holy Spirit causes our hopefulness to overflow to them, multiplying our blessing!)
- B. This kind of *sharing* is the heart of what the Bible calls *koinonia* [*fellowship*]. (Jesus delights in it, because that’s one way He continues to speak through His followers.)
1. When He was here on earth, His passionate desire was *to make His Father known*, as it was prophesied of Him in Psa 22:22, I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.
 2. His enemies tried to silence His voice, but now *His voice has been multiplied* in the mouths of those He indwells.

CONCLUSION:

—I believe Jesus likes to be present when we gather in His name. But I think **He delights even more in our times of worship, when we share our praises for God’s blessings in our lives**. He gets to be involved in this mutual sharing, just as it says in v.15, “*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.*” —Always remember that *it makes God happy* to hear us share with our church family what He’s shown us or how He’s blessed us, because it multiplies those blessings and it strengthens our bond of fellowship— v.16, *And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*