

Be Lifted Up

Every Sunday morning before each service our worship, media and lighting teams meet to pray over the morning service. One Sunday morning my pastor was interceding for the people who would attend and praying over everyone who would be serving and ministering. She began to pray that God be lifted up in us and through us. As I prayed in agreement with her, I heard the Holy Spirit say very clearly, “You have to bow down, before I can be lifted up.”

I was immediately reminded of a song that we used to sing when I was a little girl. The song was based around the scripture John 12:32, where Jesus says “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*”

In this scripture, Jesus is specifically referencing his coming death on the cross. “Lift up” and “exalt” literally means to take something that is low and raise it higher. However, “lifting up” or “exalting” is also often used to describe praise and thanksgiving. How is this possible? If the name of Jesus is above every name (Philippians 2:9-10), how can we lift the name of Jesus higher? God is called “El Elyon” or “Most High” throughout the Bible and is repeatedly referenced as being above all things. If this is the case, how can He be exalted to a higher place when he is already supreme over all things?

For something to be lifted higher, it is first positioned lower. There is a measurable increase in distance between the starting point and the end point. Praise and thanksgiving when applied to people, raises them in the esteem of others. It can bring power, position and fame. It can lift a person to a higher level. Praise and thanksgiving for people has value as a tool to manipulate the position of the person being praised.

Praise and thanksgiving to God is different. It does not add to God's worth. He is already worthy of all praise and priceless beyond measure. It does not increase His power; He is all-powerful. Instead, His position is fixed. He is seated above all things. The measurable increase in distance that occurs is between our position as and His position. (John 3:30) Praise and thanksgiving to God is not a tool to manipulate His position, it's a result of us changing our own position. We humble ourselves, recognizing and acknowledging our place far below Him. We decrease our own importance and power in favor of His. His position is not exalted in relation to all things as a whole, but His position on a personal level, in relation to our own life, is raised up.

In order for God to be lifted up in us and through us, we must first surrender to Him. Our will. Our actions. Our thoughts. Our hearts. Everything about us, every area of



our lives, must be surrendered to Him in order for Him to be seated in His rightful place in relation to us. Jesus described it as “denying yourself, taking up your cross daily and follow Him.” (Luke 9:23) If we are saved - believing Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died and rose again, the Messiah who is seated at the right hand of the Father and our soon coming King - it is *mandatory* for us to surrender completely to Christ and through Him to our Father, God. Holding back even a fraction of ourselves or our lives from Him is not acceptable.

Let's look back at John 12:32. “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*” There are 3 key points that are significant.

There is a choice.

Jesus used the word “if.” “If” is a word of possibilities. It implies that there are options other than the one stated. I will be lifted up from the earth or I will not be lifted up from the earth. Yes, Jesus was speaking of His death and resurrection but He was also speaking about the possibilities when we apply the Word to our lives on a personal level. It comes down to our choices. We either choose to continually yield to God, repenting when we make mistakes, and daily surrendering to Him or we choose not to. This is an ongoing process. The choice for Jesus to be lifted up is one that we are continually making. (1 Corinthians 15:31) For Him to be lifted up, we have to sacrifice ourselves to Him. Holding back from Him prevents Him from being lifted up in us. God left the choice in our hands. Only by choosing to bow down, choosing to yield to Him and acknowledging where we stand in relation to Him, is His position in our lives increased.

There is a result.

The scripture says that if we make this choice and lift Him up, there is a result from that choice. The result is that all men will be drawn to Him. All men being drawn unto Him is contingent upon Him being lifted up.

John 14:6 says that Jesus is the only way to come to God. In John 6:44 Jesus says that “*no one can come to Me unless the Father draws them.*” When God is lifted up in us, He draws the hearts of those who witness it. The only way for all men to be drawn to God is for Him to be lifted up. He must be lifted up - on an individual level, but it important for it to be in each and every one of us. It is imperative.

Yielding yourself to God is important for your own life and relationship with God, but there is more at stake than us simply making a choice for ourselves. There is more riding on your sacrifice to God than just yourself. Your surrender to God can determine the hearts of those around you being drawn to Him. Your surrender to God has the



potential to be a catalyst for the salvation of others.

The consequence when we hold back from God is that He is not lifted up in us. The people around us will not be drawn by His light and life through us. Fortunately, we aren't usually a person's sole source of seeing the light of Christ. The grace in being a many membered body of believers is that there are those that will continue to draw others to God, even when we may fall short. However, by not choosing to die to self, we are impeding the work of the Spirit of God.

Our choice either allows or denies the Spirit of God an opportunity to work in someone else. It is much easier to see light in a dark room when there are multiple sources. A dozen candles shine a lot brighter than just one. If there is just one candle, much more is left in darkness and the light is harder to see. The more candles there are, the easier it is to see the light. It's the same with our lives as followers of Jesus. His light is more plainly seen when it is shining brightly from more than one location. It's harder to deny Him when evidence of Him is all around you, drawing you to the Father. We have a responsibility, not only to ourselves, but to people we care about and even people we may not even know, to choose the path of Jesus every single day.

Are you believing for God to save someone you know and love? Be faithful to the Lord. Surrender yourself completely. Repent when you fall short. Your life is an example and sermon. Your spirit is a witness of God's goodness to people around you. Your obedience to God is an opportunity for salvation through Jesus.

There is a reward.

Jesus said that all men would be drawn unto Him. This means more than just compelling the hearts of men to turn to Him. The definition of "drawn" is to move or guide something in a specified direction. When Jesus is lifted up, He will draw all men – this includes you - unto Him. When you humble yourself before God, the Word says that He will elevate you. (James 4:10)

In this scripture, Jesus was also telling us that when we humble ourselves to Him, He will draw us to Him. He will take us from our position of humility and elevate us to His position as Son. Our reward for our obedience is not only seeing others turning to Christ, but experiencing the fullness of a relationship with God as His child. Our daily sacrifice and humble attitude of servitude results in a correlating response from Christ, to lift us to His level. Jesus taught us that in order to walk in the full benefits and blessing of what He brings, we make a daily choice to come fully under His Lordship. Only under His Lordship do we experience His righteousness, His life, His authority, and His nature is manifested in us.



When Jesus is lifted up, He in turn lifts us up. There is no higher position than His, seated at the right hand of the Father and He raises us to share in it with Him. The righteousness and honor and worthiness belong to Him alone, but He allows us to share in His glory. When we die to ourselves, our rights, feelings, desires and preferences are dead to us, and His plans and purposes take precedence. He begins to live His life through us and transforms us into what we have been called to be. The children of God.

I encourage you to lift up the name of Jesus. Make Him known in every area of your life. Choose wisely and follow the path that He has set for you. The Bible is full of promises He has given to those who follow Him. Promises not only for you, but for those you love and those who haven't yet accepted Him as their Savior. Lift Him up so that others might come to know Him and accept Him as Lord. Lift Him up and watch how He will raise you up. His blessings and benefits are more than you can contain and He is able to do more than you can ask or imagine. He will prove Himself to you and you will experience the awesome power and majesty of the Most High God. It all starts when you choose to bow down.