

## Encounter: Week 6

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Towdah: Psalm 50:23 (ESV)

- Today we are finishing up our series called, “Encounter,” where we have been breaking down the various Hebrew words for praise.
- We had: **HALAL- To Shine, to Celebrate, to Be Foolish**
  - There are going to be times where our praise is going to make us feel or look foolish, but that should never keep us from giving God the praise He deserves.
- **YADAH- To revere or worship with extended hands. To hold out the hands. To throw a stone or arrow.**
  - This is intentional, directional praise, Aiming our Praise to God
- SHABACH— “To Praise Publicly, To Laud, To Address in a Loud Tone.”

- Our definition was: **SHABACH: To Passionately Praise in Public**
- BARAK: TO PRAISE, TO BLESS GOD (AS AN ACT OF ADORATION), TO KNEEL, TO SALUTE
- **BARAK: Giving God Your Deepest Love, and Utmost Respect**
- We had Caleb Blanton come and teach us about praise and the word **ZAMAR: To make music, to celebrate in song with musical instruments**
- And then last week, we didn’t break this down in the sermon portion of the service, but Jalisa and Hailey led us in practicing **TEHILLAH: A Song of Praise. A New Song. A Spontaneous Song.**
  - All of these are commands in scripture. These are the reasons why we sing songs in church. It’s why we gather together as a community of believers to praise Him together. This is why we stand during the songs, why we posture ourselves, why you

see hands raised during songs, why we have “Amen’s” and “Hallelujah’s”

- Because God deserves our consistent, passionate, public, praise.
- And today we are going to conclude this series with one last Hebrew word for praise and that is the word.
- **TOWDAH: an extension of the hand, confession, sacrifice of Praise, Thanksgiving**
  - This word gives another important aspect to our praise this word is used 32 times throughout the O.T. and 18 of those times it is translated as “Thanksgiving.”
  - Which tells me that Gratitude and Praise are intrinsically linked together
  - If our Praise does not lead us to a place of gratefulness, we’re probably not worshipping we’re probably just going through the motions.

- When we gather together on Sunday mornings, if we do not leave this place more Thankful for who our God is and what He’s done for us, we have not properly had church.
- We see the word Towdah used in Psalm 50:23, when God says:
  - ***“The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies Me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!”***  
**-Psalm 50:23 (ESV)**
  - PRAY
    - I’m not sure if you’ve noticed this or not, but humans beings aren’t normally born as very thankful individuals.
    - You don’t see a new born coming out of the womb, saying “Oh thank you so much for getting me out of there!!”
    - No! They’re screaming and wailing and they’re mad at you for taking them from the

only warm and cozy home they've ever known!

- They're like the Israelites wanting to go back to Egypt!
  - Gratitude is not a natural thing to us human beings, it has to be taught, and sometimes it can be a difficult lesson to teach.
- Rachel's father had a difficult time teaching this lesson to his daughter. Rachel will be the first to tell you that as a child, she could be a bit of a handful. And there was one point when she was in 5th or 6th grade, she was going through a stint where she was being very ungrateful.
- And her dad would tell her, "If you don't start being grateful for what you have, we'll just send you to the children's home and you can live there."
- And of course, Rachel would think, "Yea right..." A every so often, her dad would remind her, "I have a buddy that works there, one phone call and your off to the children's home"

- And Rachel wasn't paying him any mind in the matter. Until one day, she was being particularly ungrateful. Her dad got fed up, and said, "That's it! Pack a bag!" Said he was calling his buddy at the children's home and she was going to live there.
  - He took her to her room, made her pack a bag, and they made it all the way to the front door before Rachel broke and said, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'll be grateful, I'll be thankful, I promise!"
- Gratitude and Thanksgiving aren't things that we are not naturally prone to, and normally there needs to be something broken within us before we begin to appreciate the things that we have
- I think these are the reasons why the word Towdah is considered a sacrifice of praise
- Psalm 50:23 says, **"The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies Me..."**  
**-Psalm 50:23 (ESV)**

- The language of this intrigues me, because the language seems so strong
- I don't know about you, but I normally don't put praise and thanksgiving and gratitude in the same category as sacrifice.
  - That word sacrifice in the original language literally means: "To slaughter, to kill, to slay."
  - Which is to say, that in order for us to offer the praise and thanksgiving that God deserves, something within us needs to be slaughtered
- It makes me think of verses in the New Testament, such as Jesus saying, ***"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*** -***Luke 9:23 (ESV)***
- Or Paul saying, ***"We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin."*** -***Romans 6:6 (ESV)***
- And again in Galatians, ***"And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."*** -***Galatians 5:24-25 (ESV)***
  - Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 15, "I die daily"
- So my question is, what are some practical things that we are sacrificing in ourselves whenever we truly Praise God.
- Because I don't believe it would be theologically correct to say that we need to be sacrificing certain things in order to Praise God, or before we Praise God, because that would lead us to a place to be thinking that we could do something to earn our way to God, in which we can't
  - We are granted access to God and His presence solely through His grace alone and His love for us

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- But I do believe that whenever we are truly praising God, there are things within our flesh that are being sacrificed, as we set ourselves and our agendas aside and focus on Him and His Greatness
- So here are a couple of practical things that I believe we sacrifice in ourselves when we offer our praise to God.
- First, **WHEN WE PRAISE WE SACRIFICE OUR EGO**
  - We have a natural tendency to think very highly of ourselves
  - We are very prone to think that we know what's best for ourselves
  - Even we as Christians can have a tendency to think we can be good enough on our own and that God is super impressed with us
- We think that we got God up in Heaven gettin out of His Throne, like, "WHOA! You

see this?! He just prayed for 10 whole minutes! Are you kidding me? Never in all of eternity have I ...Moses! Elijah! Come check this out! Now reading 2 WHOLE CHAPTERS of the bible! My GOODNESS this is impressive..."

- Not to say that God is not proud of you, because He is...but the only thing that impresses God is His Son. That's why it's impossible to please God without faith because it's impossible to please God without Jesus.
- And when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, our lives are then hidden in Christ, so now when the Father see's us all He sees is the righteousness of His Son. And that is what He is most pleased and impressed with.
- Apart from Jesus we are nothing and have nothing. And whenever we come before a Holy-Righteous- Perfect God, to

praise Him, ALL we should be is overwhelmed with gratitude that He would provide a way for someone as lowly as me to be welcomed into His presence.

- It reminds me of the parable that Jesus once told in Luke 18:

- ***[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell***

***you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.***

***For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”- Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)***

- Whenever we humble ourselves before Almighty God, there is no room for our ego
  - Whenever we posture ourselves before the Real God, not just our idea of God, we are quickly humbled before His holiness
  - And any thoughts of us complaining about what we think we deserve completely vanish because:
- WHEN WE PRAISE WE SACRIFICE OUR ENTITLEMENT**
- I cannot tell you how many times, I have caught myself complaining to God about what I think He should be doing because I’ve been doing this, and I’ve been doing that... so I deserve this and I deserve that

- And then I have a moment kind of like Job did, in Job 38-40 when God asks him, **(v.4-5)** ***“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line?... (v.12) “Have you ever commanded the morning to appear and caused the dawn to rise in the east?... (v16-18) “Have you explored the springs from which the seas come? Have you explored their depths? Do you know where the gates of death are located? Have you seen the gates of utter gloom? Do you realize the extent of the earth? Tell me about it if you know!” -Job 38 (NLT)***
- I love this one, ***“Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?” Job 38:36 (ESV)***
  - Essentially, who gave you the ability to be even questioning Me in the first place?
- If you ever find yourselves really frustrated with God not giving you what you think you deserve, we would all be wise just to take the time read Job 38 and 39, and then God finishes up this monologue in chapter 40 when He says, ***“Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God’s critic, but do you have the answers?” - Job 4:2 (NLT)***
- And I guarantee you we would come out of it very humbled and responding similar to Job when he said, ***“I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand.” -Job 40:4 (NLT)***
  - I said it before there are two words that seem to almost define the current generation in our country...and many Christians as well. To be frank, these words are ENTITLEMENT and VICTIMIZATION
- Never before in any of our lifetimes have people been more entitled and love to victimize themselves more.

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- You know why this is? It's because we've never been so individualistic...we make everything about me.
  - We do it so much with church
  - I've seen this so often with people even asking about our church and what we're about, because more often than not the people asking are more worried about whether or not we fit in with their preferences
    - I'm not talking about the big theological issues that are important, and if off, could be detrimental to the Gospel being spread in and through the church...I'm not talking about that
    - Because usually I don't even get those questions....I get, "what's the worship style like?" Because I prefer more traditional, or I prefer much more contemporary
    - What's the vibe?
- I think we need less Christians seeking their preferences and more Christians seeking where they can serve
  - Whether that is in our church body or somewhere else
- *Because I don't know about you, but I would rather have a small group of servants than a room full of critics.*
- Because the church body should be a community of believers that constantly remind each other how much we have to be thankful for and how great God is
- But it's so easy to become entitled in our culture because we have it so easy
- So instead of being grateful for that we become critical
  - You think the believers gathering together in Israel right now are nit-picking worship styles?



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- You think the underground church in China is worrying about systems and business agendas in their church?
- I don't think so. But even when it puts their very lively hoods on the line, they still crave to gather together and praise their God in the midst of their afflictions
- They are so desperate for God they have no time for entitlement
- What if we spent more time Praising God and Giving Thanks for the religious freedoms that we enjoy rather than feeding our entitlement and our egos?
- The more we give thanks for what we've been given, what we've been saved from, the less time we have for complaining and nit-picking personal preferences.
- And Christians need each other and the church family to keep our hearts in checks whenever it comes to this issue
- Because I promise you, 9.9 times out of 10, the ones who deal with entitlement and victimization the most are those who isolate themselves.
- I can testify that I have never felt more sorry for myself and been so caught up in my frustrations and opinions than I did COVID quarantine.
  - Why? Because I wasn't spending anytime around other people and caring about them! I was more isolated than I had ever been before in my life!
- Now, most of the time people don't think that they've isolated themselves, they're active on social media, they have their family, they may see people around...but they're not actively involved in anyone else's life.
- They're not seeing the reality of what other people are going through and appreciating the pain that other people are experiencing...so instead they just glorify they're own

- This is exactly why the bible command us to be involved in each others lives
- Paul says in Romans, ***“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.” -Romans 12:9-13 (ESV)***
  - Why is Paul adamant about this? Because whenever we are genuine in love, competing to honor each other, whenever we focus on serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, being constant in prayer, and taking care of the needs of others, seeking ways to be hospitable...we kill the entitlement in ourselves and become genuinely grateful individuals
  - And much more pleasant people to be around
- Paul also says down in verse 16, ***“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.” -Romans 12:16 (ESV)***
  - Paul says we should never see ourselves as higher or better than anyone else. We’re merely sinners saved by grace, the same as anyone else. Experiencing the grace and mercy that we never deserved ourselves. And we should Never think you have it figured out.
- That’s why for our 3rd point:
- **WHEN WE PRAISE WE SACRIFICE OUR EXPECTATIONS**
  - I’m reminded of a story I’ve heard before about the man who got shipwrecked all by himself in the middle of the ocean. He begins to pray harder than he ever has before in his

life, begging God to save him. After a little while, a boat comes by and they call out to him and try to throw him a life preserver, but he says, “No no, go on! God will save me!” Then a little while later a helicopter comes flying by, spots him, they try to let down the rope ladder to him, but he refuses their help, saying adamantly, “I don’t need you! God will save me!” Not long after that a small plane comes by, it lands on the water and they tell him to get on, and once again he refuses. “God will save me,” he says. Then eventually he drowns. He gets to heaven and asks God, “Hey! How come you didn’t save me like I asked??” God says, “I tried! I sent you a boat, a helicopter, and a plane, and you didn’t get on any one of them!”

- You know, your expectations can be the death of you.
  - How many times do we miss out on what God is blessing us with because we’re focused on our preconceived notions of what those blessing should look like?

- So many people want to have a negotiation with God before they commit to Him
  - We’ll say, “Ok God, I’ll give my life to you, if you do this for me!”
  - But the reality is, we have no negotiating power with God
  - We have nothing that we can bring to the table that will make Him any more Perfect and Holy than He already is! There is nothing we could ever do that could add any value to Him
  - But in His love, grace, and mercy He offers us everything when we have nothing to give.
- And that truth should cause us to Give thanks and praise, and just pursue Him for who He is
- Because He has offered us salvation, death to life in Christ! He sent His Son, His only Son Whom He loved, and allowed Him to be sacrificed on the Cross so our sins could be covered in His blood and be welcomed into the family of God

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- We think we deserve something more?? We don't deserve that!
  - Many Christians get messed up theologically when we focus more on what God will do, or what we think He will do, or should do, more than what He's already done.
  - And when we take the time to Praise Him and Give thanks for what He's already done for us, we will throw our expectations out the window and just appreciate Him and trust that He knows best and is working all things out for our Good and His Glory.
  - Our praise and thanksgiving helps us put this vapor of a life into perspective.
    - CS Lewis was once asked what the best way to deal with pain was and he responded that it was a matter of perspective: He said if you have two groups of people staying in a building. And one group thinks that they're in a hotel, well they might be miserable thinking that their situation isn't up to their standards. However, if the other group thinks that they
- You know most of the misery in our lives comes from us viewing this life and the world as the end-all-be-all
  - But the reality is, that this life is nothing but a holding cell. This world is not our home, this life is but a vapor in the context of eternity.
  - The only expectation I need to the expectation of Heaven
  - The confident Hope when the struggle and the pain of this life is over, there is a Home waiting for me in Glory, where sorrow will be no more, and I get to dwell in the House of the Lord forever
    - All thanks to Jesus Christ and His work on my behalf.
  - If that is my main hope and my main exception then I will be better equipped to maintain a posture of praise and gratitude no matter what this life holds.
- are in a prison, well then they might find their situation rather comfortable.

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- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, ***“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” -1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)***
- Do you want to be in the will of God? Paul tells us very clearly, GIVE THANKS in ALL circumstances...and you will be firmly planted in the will of God
  - Did you get a raise or a promotion? GIVE THANKS that God blessed you with that new opportunity and do it for His Glory
  - You have a child on the way? GIVE THANKS that God has blessed you with the opportunity to raise a child made in His Image for His Glory
  - Did you get a new car? GIVE THANKS that God is providing for your needs!
  - Did you lose a loved one? GIVE THANKS that there is a life after this one that is so much greater than this one
- Are you having financial troubles? GIVE THANKS that God is your provider and will never leave you or forsake you!
- Are you experiencing heartache? GIVE THANKS that you have a God that is near to the broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit
- Are you overwhelmed by the state of this world and the evil within it? GIVE THANKS that Jesus is coming back, and will set up and new heaven and new earth
  - We are to GIVE THANKS in all circumstances, and when we do, we stay within the will of God because we glorify Him above all
- One of the things that I love the most about the word Towdah, lets look at the definition again:  
**Towdah: an extension of the hand, confession, sacrifice of Praise, Thanksgiving**

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- I love that is that extending of the hands is associated with Thanksgiving
  - Because it almost gives us a physical picture of Giving Thanks.
  - It is an intentional act on our part to dig deep, find that gratitude and hand it over to God
- I spent the past week with Rachel and her family and whether we were in the hospital, out at her cousins golf tournament, or just out and about, I was reminded just how much stuff women can have in their purses at one time
- Literally just about anything you need, you just asks and someone's got it in their purse.
  - Rachel calls it their Mary Poppin's bags
- It's like these purses contain a snack bar, pharmacy, electronics department, got a clothing section, you need a spare tire you might find one in there
- But whatever you ask for, they dig around in those purses long enough, they'll find it, pull it out, and hand it to you
  - And for some reason this is what came to mind whenever I was thinking about what it's like to give thanks sometimes.
- Because so often we have so many emotions, frustrations, fears, thoughts, and conflicting feelings swirling around in us based on varying life circumstances
  - But the bible tells us that we're still supposed to sift through all of that and find some thanks deep down with us, bring that up to the top and give that over to God.
- **GIVING THANKS IS AN ACTION NOT AN ATTITUDE**
  - We all have probably heard over and over again in our childhoods, to have an attitude of gratitude
  - But sometimes I'm not feeling an attitude of gratitude

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- Sometimes I'm feeling frustrated
- Sometimes I'm feeling sad
- Sometimes I'm feeling anxious
- Sometimes I'm feeling like I'm in over my head, everything is going wrong, and I'm just not feeling grateful
- But you don't have to feel grateful to Give Thanks
  - We give thanks in spite of what we're feeling
- We have to dig deep, throughout all of the mess, and find that gratitude and give Him that sacrifice of praise
- Because if we don't, what's the alternative?
- We will be constantly defeated, wallowing in self-pity, entitlement, and victimization.
  - We will allow our afflictions to destroy us, rather than being reminded of the Hope that we have
- And this is such a difficult thing to live out.
- This is why this requires a sermon, because it's so contrary to how we feel most of the time.
- Especially when times get dark and the pain piles on.
- I got to see this lived out over the past week and a half. And thank you all so much for your prayers, and love, and support for Rachel and our family as her Paw Paw passed.
- He was going through some treatment that we knew was going to be tough, but no one, not even the doctors expected it to be life threatening. But during the treatment he caught a very rare form on pneumonia, and because of the treatment he had been getting his immune system was so depleted that there was nothing that the doctors could do to treat it.
- It was very unexpected and it didn't only shake the family, but also the entire community in which he lived.

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- It was very evident at the funeral, whenever about 450 people showed up to honor his memory at 2pm on a Tuesday.
- And when I got the call the day before he passed that he wasn't going to make it, I started praying so hard.
- Later I would learn that during his treatment when the doctors would ask him what he was fighting for during his treatment, he would say, "I have a great grandson, named Fletcher."
  - And in my prayers I was specifically praying, "Lord, not like this! This is one of the strongest men that anyone's ever known! Let him live long enough for Fletcher to remember him! Let him live long enough to take Fletcher fishing and take him hunting!"
  - Because I'm not going to do those things! I'm an inside dog, I'm not a fisher or a hunter, but I know Fletcher's gonna have that in his blood because he gets it from his momma's side and I don't know if I

trust her brother enough just yet to take Fletcher out by himself to do those things!

- But the Lord didn't grant those requests
- And that Thursday morning, as he was off of the respirators, just waiting for the end, before I had to leave the hospital to go pick up Fletcher, I went over to Nana, to hug her and try to encourage her one more time
- And she grabbed my hand and said, "I'm just so grateful for the family and life that we built together. I'm so grateful for the time that we had together." And at one point she said, "I'm so grateful that he got to meet Fletcher."
  - Here I am focusing on the time he won't get with Fletcher, and Nana is digging deep and giving thanks that he had any time with him at all
  - There's power in that kind of praise
- Now don't get me wrong, its a rollercoaster for her. She has her moments of asking "Why?" "She has her moments of asking What now?"



- She did not want to go back to the home she had shared for almost 6 decades without him.
- She feels the brokenness and the heart break, but throughout that she still digs deep and finds ways to give thanks through it
  - And the morning after waking up in her house for the first time without her person that had been beside her for 58 years.
    - We saw her that morning with a little pep in her step she hadn't had in weeks and she said, "God gave me a gift this morning. The first thing he told me when I woke this morning was, 'Don't focus so much on your loss, and focus more on his gain.'"
    - And that's something she's going to have to dig deep and remind herself of as the rollercoaster goes on for the foreseeable future, but she has hope to cling to and thanks to give through it all
  - Tell me, what thanks do you need to give today?

- Because if we can't be consistent in giving thanks now, it will be so much harder to do so whenever those dark, heavy seasons come.
- I'll tell you, where we need to start first and foremost is giving thanks for the cross. Giving thanks for the lengths that Jesus went to in order that we could have hope beyond this broken life.
- That's one of the reasons that we have been given communion. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians ***"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the***

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***cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." -1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ESV)***