

God's Good Work!



By Hannah Tekle

Many Israeli congregations are located in unsavory industrial areas. Compared to the polished expansive church campuses in some countries and often-elegant synagogue buildings in Israel, these run-down neighborhoods, with their outwardly utilitarian buildings, definitely leave something to be desired.

Tents of Mercy is housed in a cinderblock structure facing a parking lot shared by a meat factory, a factory for aluminum siding, and a fruit and vegetable warehouse. This makes for interesting curbside “appeal” alongside the entrance to our spiritual home. We often wish we had outside accommodations especially for the kids and youth – a playground, a basketball court or a picnic area for congregational lunches.

Despite our drab surroundings, we have gradually transformed the interior into a serviceable and welcoming space. We are so grateful for the roomy warehouse turned ministry center that allows us to reach out successfully to the surrounding community with humanitarian aid and congregational events. In fact, it recently occurred to me that spiritual communities being housed in industrial areas is a perfect metaphor for the real work that is happening in peoples’ hearts and minds – a spiritual factory of sorts:

“Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:4)

“He who has begun a good work in you will accomplish it until the day of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.” (Philippians 1:6)

Kids' Camp: Praise the LORD, O My Soul!

Perhaps because we have no attractive outdoor leisure space, our annual summer activities are particularly precious to us – the week long kids’ camp and our congregational picnic/water outing. They give us the opportunity to fellowship in different surroundings, away from industrial complexes and small apartments.

This summer we are more aware than ever of the need for recreation. A year of never-ending war, tragedy and insecurity has left us tired and drained. We still try and live life as normally as possible, making plans for personal and ministry activities, yet all the while there is the knowledge that a ground war could open up on the northern front as well. So even as we prepared for our annual summer camp, we weren't actually certain it would happen.

BUT – we did it! 85 kids from over 10 different congregations, 25 volunteers, 18 counsellors, 4 staff members, and 1 glorious Heavenly Father came together for 6 anointed days. In His great mercy, that week in July became an eternally marked moment in time – when kids, youth and adults alike, paused to focus on God's goodness and faithfulness.

Our camp theme was inspired by the life of David the shepherd king. David modeled a life of praise – through loneliness and obscurity, through delayed promise, through war, through friendship and betrayal, through persecution and attack, through success and stardom, through grief and devastation, through sin and repentance.

We are so thankful for the unexpected gift of a successful week of camp in the midst of war – a week of summer fun, of bonding, of learning from the scriptures, and most of all, praising the Lord together in this season of crisis just like our beloved King David.

During camp we sang the Hebrew version* of “Praise” by Elevation Worship – so fitting for this season!

Praise

*Blessed be the Lord, blessed be His Holy Name.
Praise I will sing Him, on the mountain or in the valley.
Praise I will sing Him, whether it's easy or hard.
Praise I will sing Him, alone or together.
Praise is like water, drowning every fear.*

*As long as my soul is within me,
Bless the Lord oh my soul and His Holy Name.
Blessed be the Lord, blessed be His Holy Name.*

*Praise I will sing Him, if I feel good or feel bad.
Praise I will sing Him because You are in control.
Praise is a weapon and not just words.
Praise we will sing and strongholds will fall.*

*I will not be quiet, my God you are alive,
How can I not proclaim your name?*

“Praise the LORD, O my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.” (Psalm 146:1-2)

*SOLU, a local Israeli praise group, translated the song into Hebrew and their recording can be found on YouTube under **Praise (Elevation Worship) Hebrew**.



