



# Singing with the Understanding (2)

1 Corinthians 14:15

It is imperative that when we sing,  
we do so with understanding

**1 Corinthians 14:15**

**Ephesians 5:19**

**Colossians 3:16**

Singing is an act of worship that is  
more than sounding good and  
musical talents – it is about praising  
God and edifying one another

Singing is an avenue through which we teach – therefore, when we sing:

- 1) It must be true to God's word
- 2) We need to understand the message

3 weeks ago, we presented a lesson where we examined some of the words in our songs that need clarification. Tonight, I want to address words and phrasing in some of our songs that determine if they scriptural to sing.

**NOTE:** Addressing our songs is challenging because we are often dealing with subjective wording – no matter what is said, some are likely to disagree with my conclusions.

The question is: Can we engage in discussions with open minds, Christian love and due respect?



# Is It Scriptural

- Our FIRST priority in selecting songs – are they true to God’s word?
  - If a song has an unscriptural message, then we are teaching error
  - **1 Corinthians 14:6-8** – warns about being clear with the words we choose. If a song has an unclear message, we may be IMPLYING error IF that is not clarified (NOTE: A song leader CAN clarify meaning).



As we sing consider:

- **SECOND**, we must realize that songs are not inspired. They are written by men and women and sometimes they might contain erroneous doctrines or vague wording that needs to be clarified.



As we sing consider:



- Third, we need to realize that songs are a form of poetry and often use poetic devices - rhyme, for cadence and flow, etc. That is why word order may be changed, or more obscure or multi-defined words are used
- IF we consider this, then some songs might be acceptable if everyone understands the intended meaning.



As we sing consider:

- **FOURTH**, in singing sometimes words and phrases can have multiple meanings.

The challenge is when one meaning is scriptural while the other meaning is not.



As we sing consider:

- Concerning multiple meanings, consider, #174 – Christ Arose Chorus, “He arose a victor from the dark domain, and He lives forever with His saints to reign.”
- In our previous book, the words were changed to “death He overcame”



#174 – Christ Arose

- Likely, the change was made with concerns about premillennialism which teaches a 1000-year reign of Christ on earth.
- However, there is a sense in which we will reign with Him – consider **1 Thessalonians 4:17, Revelation 22:5, 2 Timothy 2:11-13**
- With these verses, the phrase is scriptural



#174 – Christ Arose

- Sometimes, one sees a song as objectionable, while others do not (based on interpretation)
- In such, we need to consider one another – **cf. 1 Corinthians 10:23-24, 29-31, 8:9-13**
- **James 3:17** if possible, are we willing to yield?  
**Cf. Romans 14:1-3.** NOTE: BOTH sides are to show respect for the other!



Attitudes as we consider songs

- NOTE to leaders: Know your audience. If someone has concerns about a particular song, we need to consider that
- Remember the golden rule – **Matthew 7:12**, how would you want to be treated if the roles were reversed?  
Sometimes, depending on the audience, clarification might need to be made OR perhaps you can change a single word that removes concerns.



Attitudes as we consider songs

- **We recall His broken body**
- First, the point of that phrase and verse is that we are thinking about the sufferings Jesus endured while on the cross.
- Some are concerned because scripture is clear that the bones of Jesus were not broken - **John 19:33-36**, quotes **Psalm 34:20** which states, *He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken*



#163 – In Remembrance

- **We recall His broken body**
- BUT, is there another way to consider the phrase “broken body”?
- I do believe that in other ways, His body was broken:
  - His skin was pierced - **John 19:37**, quotes **Zechariah 12:10, cf. Psalm 22:16-17**
  - He was beaten in a way that mangled His flesh (**Matthew 27:26-28**). Skin torn (broken)
  - He was mentally “broken” – **Matthew 27:46, cf. Psalm 22:1**
  - Jesus DIED from His injuries



#163 – In Remembrance



- **We recall His broken body**
- BUT, is there another way to consider the phrase “broken body”?
- **Isaiah 53:5** notes that He was wounded for our transgressions. His body was broken in ways, but His bones were NOT!  
That is what I think of when I sing this song.



#163 – In Remembrance

- **We recall His broken body**
- **HOWEVER**, there are a couple of observations to be made here:
- An “easy fix” to this, change the word “broken” to “wounded” and it accords with **Isaiah 53:5**.
- One more observation in a moment!



#163 – In Remembrance

- **Vs. 3 – Believe, Obey, the work is done. Be saved O tonight.**
- Some have expressed concerns because while we believe and obey (the gospel) that is not our final step. In fact, it is only the beginning.



#315 – O Why Not Tonight

- **Vs. 3 – Believe, Obey, the work is done. Be saved O tonight.**
- However, the reason we can “believe and obey” is because Jesus has **FINISHED** His work making salvation possible – **John 17:4, 19:30**  
So, in an equally valid sense, the work of making salvation **POSSIBLE** is done! All that remains is for us to accept it.
- Alternative: Sing, “the work’s begun”



#315 – O Why Not Tonight

- A song that can be understood 2 different ways
- Some have expressed concern because to come to Jesus we must be willing to change (repentance)  
That is a very true statement – **Acts 2:38** or **8:22, 1 John 1:9**  
**2 Corinthians 7:9-11** – a great description of repentance.  
- You CANNOT come to Him expecting to maintain a sinful lifestyle



#330 – Just As I Am

- A song that can be understood 2 different ways
- However, there is another way we can come, “Just as I am”.

We are all sinners – **Romans 3:23**

The invitation of our Lord is available to all of us – **Matthew 11:28-30.**

Your past sins do not matter:

**Galatians 3:27-28, Romans 10:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11** - all demonstrate this.



#330 – Just As I Am

- **Dressed in His righteousness alone**
- Here is another expression that can be viewed in 2 different ways
- Some see this as “imputed righteousness” (God does not see our sins, but instead the righteousness of Christ is imputed (transferred or passed on to us). That is an unscriptural teaching.  
It removes our responsibility to obey God and remain faithful, e.g., “Once saved, always saved”



#378 – The Solid Rock

- **Dressed in His righteousness alone**
- But there is another sense in which we can say it is His righteousness (alone) that gives us hope!
- If it were not for the righteousness of Jesus, His sacrifice would not have been accepted. Thus, in the same way that “grace” is the prime factor in our salvation (**cf. Ephesians 2:8-9**), so it is the righteousness of Jesus that makes our ability to be saved possible. In that sense, it is “His righteousness alone”



#378 – The Solid Rock



- **Dressed in His righteousness alone**
- Consider: **Romans 10:1-4**, ... *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*
- **Philippians 3:9**, *and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith*
- This is what I think of in that expression



#378 – The Solid Rock

- The wording of this addressing cherishing the cross that Jesus died on.

Should we cherish that emblem or should we cherish Jesus who died on the cross?

Clearly, it is Jesus' death that saves us – **Romans 3:23-26, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19**



#578 – The Old Rugged Cross

- **HOWEVER**, as I see this song, the point is not about idolizing the cross, but appreciating what happened on that cross.

I am reminded that Jesus was tortured because of our sins. God's acceptance of His sacrifice makes me grateful, because without that cross, where would we be?



**#578 – The Old Rugged Cross**

- Concerning the cross  
**Galatians 6:14**, *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*
- Some 11 times in the epistles (Romans – Hebrews), the cross is mentioned as a reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus.
- **Philippians 2:8** notes that Jesus obeyed to the point of death, even the death of the cross (**Colossians 1:20**)



#578 – The Old Rugged Cross

- A concern I have is how some have made the cross into an icon.
  - Some worship the cross (or symbols of it) with Jewelry, statues, paintings, etc. – either a “crucifix” or the cross, **cf. Exodus 20:4-5**
  - Some see it as having special power
  - Some use it to draw attention to themselves
  - **1 Peter 3:3**
  - Some wear it without considering whether or not it is a cause of stumbling – **1 Corinthians 8:9**
- **1 Corinthians 10:14** – flee idolatry

#578 – The Old Rugged Cross

- Someone inquired about vs. 3, “Let me sing some song that will make me free”  
How does a song make me free?
- I think of what singing can do. I can prick the heart as it teaches, it can give comfort as we sorrow, etc. **Colossians 3:16**, as we sing we are teaching one another. Could the message of a song cause one to respond?  
The result of singing could be the point!



#622 – In the service of my King

- We could address other songs and phrases, but time is up for today. Understand again, that songs in our books are not inspired, and thus subject to man's frailties – that is why we must examine songs before we sing them.



Concluding thoughts:

- But what if someone cannot consciously sing a song?

Since this is an act of worship that involves EVERYONE is COMMANDED to participate in (**cf. Colossians 3:16**), we MUST consider that as we decide what to sing. Do NOT force someone to act against their conscience!

**Cf. Romans 14:15**

- Are we willing to yield for their sake?  
Consider **1 Corinthians 8:13**




Concluding thoughts:



- As we respect others, my concern is when one wants to eliminate EVERY song they determine should not be sung, whether there is an alternative understanding or solution or not.
- If someone looked and thought long enough, they could likely find cause with MOST of the songs we sing leaving us with very few songs to sing.
- **Hebrews 10:24** – let us consider one another, even as we sing!



Concluding thoughts:



Are we striving to sing  
“with the spirit and with  
the understanding?”

The background features a repeating pattern of faint, light-colored musical notes (quarter notes) on a light blue and white gradient. The notes are arranged in a grid-like fashion, creating a subtle, textured effect. The overall color palette is cool and serene, with the text standing out in a dark, bold font.

**Let us pray!**