

Sunday, December 28, 2025 am, Jonathan Thornhill

Why do we Sing?

I. Five Acts of Worship on the First Day of the Week

- a. Teaching/Preaching – 1 Cor. 4:17
- b. Singing – Eph 5:19
- c. Prayer – Acts 12:5
- d. Collection of the Saints – 1 Cor 16:1-2
- e. Lord's Supper – Acts 20:7

Most of the above are passive in nature, with one person performing the act, while everyone else participates through listening. With congregational singing, everyone is involved and participating at the same time.

II. Four Types of Worship

- a. True Worship, The Only Worship acceptable to God, referred to by Jesus – John 4:20-24
- b. Vain Worship, worship following traditions of men rather than commands of God, not done from the heart– Matt 15:8-9
- c. Will/Self-Imposed Worship, similar to vain worship, doing what we will, and what we think is appropriate, but not taught by God – Lev 10:1-3, Nadab and Abihu
- d. Ignorant Worship, worshipping without knowing why – Acts 17:22-23
-What is the purpose of this lesson?
To explore the music God wants in the worship of the church, to know that is indeed True and Spiritual

III. The Music in True Worship

- a. The only music commanded in the NT was “vocal”
 - Jesus and his Disciples – Matt 26:30, Mark 14:26
 - Paul and Silas – Acts 16:25
 - Other references
 1. 1 Cor 14:15 – I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding
 2. Eph 5:19 – Singing and making melody in your heart
 3. Hebrews 2:12 – I will sing praise to you
- b. Music in the NT emphasized the “Spiritual”
 - Eph 5:19
 1. “Making melody” In the OT, this was referenced to the playing of instruments

2. In the NT, the making melody is to be done “in the heart”, not with mechanical instruments
 3. Note the contrast between the heart and mechanical instruments
 4. Since this music is freed “to the Lord”, we must regard Him as Holy, and offer him exactly what he specifies, lest our worship turn self-imposed (Nadab and Abihu)
- Col 3:16
 1. This passage parallels Eph. 5:19
 2. Notice the emphasis is on spiritual: “In your hearts to the Lord”
- c. Contrast between OT and NT music
- OT Music
 1. Performed by a professional choir
 2. Accompanied with mechanical instruments
 3. Emphasis: How it sounds to the human ear(the physical side)
 - NT Music
 1. Sung by all in the congregation (“Speaking to one another in psalms. . .”)
 2. Melody made in the heart, not the harp
 3. Emphasis: How it affects the soul (The spiritual side of man)

Music in NT worship, therefore, is to be SPIRITUAL in emphasis:

- Sung by all
- With emphasis not on how we sound, but that we are making true melody in our hearts to the Lord!

IV. Justification for Instrumental Music in Worship

- a. “It has always been that way”
 - History reveals the use of instruments introduced in NT worship centuries after the church began in Acts
 - Mostly limited to the last two centuries
 - It is a tradition of man, and qualifies as Vain worship – Matt 15:9
- b. “I don’t see anything wrong with it”
 - Then you are worshiping in ignorance – Acts 17:22-23
 - You are ignorant of the kind of worship God commands
- c. “I like it in my worship”
 - This argument makes it Will/Self-Imposed worship -Col 2:20-23
 - You become like Nahab and Abihu
 - Offering what you like, but is profane in nature, for God did not command it

d. "It is found in the Old Testament"

- So were several other ordinances and practices done away with the foundation of the New Law, eg. Burnt offerings – Heb 9:10
- The fact that God may have commanded it in the past does not mean that He approves its use now (especially when He has revealed what He DOES want)
- Consider the sin of Moses
 1. God first told him to STRIKE the rock for water - Exo 17:5-6
 2. Later, God at another time told him to SPEAK to the rock - Num 20:7-8
 3. But Moses struck the rock as before, and in so doing sinned and lost his right to enter the promised land - Num 20:9-12
- His sin? He did not treat God holy by doing ONLY what God had commanded at the PRESENT time!
 1. God may have commanded instrumental music in the past, but he now commands differently
- The time has come where God expects his people to worship differently - John 4:23-24

V. How can we improve our Worship in Song?

a. What The Congregation can do?

- Sing with understanding – 1 Cor. 14:15
 1. Know what you are singing, the words express praise and serve to edify and lift up
 2. The melody is enhanced when we know what we are singing
- Sing with their heart – Eph 5:19, Col 3:16
 1. Make melody with our hearts, and sing with grace in our hearts
 2. Don't be afraid to let the words of the song influence our emotions
 - a. LET YOURSELF BE EMOTIONAL!!!
- Sing with the voice – Psalm 51:14-15, Col 3:16
 1. The Psalmist wrote of praising God aloud with his lips, tongue and mouth
 2. We are to teach and admonish one another, how can we if we can't hear each other?
- Sing with presence
 1. Practice makes perfect, sing with others whenever there is opportunity
 2. Sight close with those who like to sing, more than likely, you'll start to sing louder as well
- Just sing and participate

1. As a song leader, it can be discouraging when I see others not participating in the song service. Make an effort, we are here to worship and lift each other up, but you cannot do that if you do not sing.
- Follow your song leader

b. What can the Song Leader do?

- Lead with enthusiasm
 1. The song leader sets the tone for worship, and enthusiasm is contagious
- Know what you are singing
 1. Make sure your songs don't contain error. If you're worried a line might be interpreted differently, comment on it and offer your viewpoint before we sing.
 2. Just because it is in the songbook does not mean it is sufficient for worship
 - a. Examples include My Country Tis of Thee, The Star Spangled Banner, America The Beautiful, The Battle Hymn Of The Republic, Kum Ba Yah
 - b. We are here to worship God, not pledge patriotism to a nation of the world
- 3. Context Matters
 - a. What is the message your song is conveying?
 - b. Let the message indicate tempo and speed
 - i. Songs of praise, triumph , Heaven and salvation tend to be quick-spirited, upbeat and joyous and should be sung as such.
 - ii. Songs of grief, songs concerning the death of Christ tend towards slower and heavier.
 - iii. Exceptions to the rule exist
- 4. Initiate new songs when appropriate
 - a. New songs are a fantastic tool to help each other grow and learn in the faith.
 - b. As a congregation, be open minded towards new songs
- 5. If comfortable, use a pitch pipe
 - a. Most hymns are designed to be sung within a specific range, and a few steps off in either direction can be uncomfortable for many, and some find themselves struggling with comfort instead of focusing on the words

- You don't need to be an accomplished singer, but thought should be put into their worship.

Conclusion

Let's not make the same mistakes as did Nadab and Abihu, Moses and Aaron, forfeiting our inheritance in the Promised Land offered to Christians (i.e., Heaven)

As we approach God in worship, let us treat Him as Holy by worshipping as He has commanded:
"in spirit and in truth"

In regards to our music ...

Let it be singing with melody in our hearts to the Lord

And not with melody made with mechanical instruments

In doing so, we KNOW we are on safe ground, and that our worship is well pleasing to Him!