

Worship of the Church – Singing Col. 3:16-17

Thesis: To help us understand the importance of singing in our worship.

Introduction:

- A. Some would ask why it is important to discuss such a topic as the singing in the church.
 - 1. Next year, there is a group of “church of Christ” members (preachers and elders included) that plan to apologize to the Independent Christian churches because of the division that took place in 1906.
 - 2. The reason for that division was because some wanted instrumental music and others did not.
 - 3. Because this is the 100th anniversary of that separation, some are wanting to reunite with them; and they plan to do so by apologizing for “our” mistake in not accepting the instrument in worship.

- B. The purpose of this lesson is not about singing with instrumental music; but rather we will focus on our command to sing.
 - 1. Throughout this lesson, we will be looking back at the Old Testament and notice some of the similarities between our singing and theirs.
 - 2. The reason for this is the fact that there are only 12 passages in the New Testament that refer to singing.

- C. The questions we want to answer today are these:
 - 1. Does it matter how we worship?
 - 2. Can we faithfully worship God with instrumental music?
 - 3. What does God say about the matter?

I. Our singing is to be filled with the word of Christ (3:16).

- A. The reason our singing is to be filled with the word of Christ is because His word is valuable.
 - 1. The words of Christ are eternal life.
 - a. **Jn. 6:68** - But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”
 - b. **Jn. 8:51** - Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.
 - 2. Even those who heard the teachings of Jesus knew that His words were valuable.
 - a. **Mt. 7:28-29** - And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, {29} for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

- b. **Jn. 7:46** (when the elders and Pharisees were trying to figure out who Jesus was) - **The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!”**

B. We are also told that the word of Christ should dwell in us “in all wisdom.”

1. That is, we must read and study His word and rightly divide that word.
 - a. Wisdom is the application of the knowledge that we gain from having “the word of Christ dwell in” us.
 - b. **Rom. 10:17** - **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**
 - c. **II Tim. 2:15** - **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**
2. To have this wisdom in our songs, we must understand the songs that we sing.
 - a. The song leaders must know that the songs are scriptural; they must know what the song says.
 - b. It is not enough for a song leader to pick out the songs during the service; he must be prepared and understand the songs that are being sung.
 - c. **I Cor. 14:15** - **What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.**

C. When we are filled with the words of Christ, they are displayed in our singing.

II. Paul also tells us of the “how” and “why” of our singing (3:16).

A. Our singing is to be done to “one another.”

1. One of the problems in worship (both ours and at other places) is the fact that everyone does not fulfill God’s command to sing.
 - a. God has made it very clear that He wants us to sing.
 - b. **Eph. 5:19** - **“Speaking to one another...”**
2. Singing is an active command.
 - a. Our singing must be congregational.
 - b. Choirs and choruses are necessarily excluded by this command.
3. While many in the church would not allow a piano or choir in the worship service, they also do not sing; making our singing not “congregational.”
 - a. The very ones that would stand solidly against a piano or a chorus in worship are sometimes the ones that refuse to lift their voices in song to the Father.
 - b. At best, this is not fulfilling the command of God.
 - c. At worst, this is hypocritical.
4. Note some excuses as to why people do not sing.
 - a. *“I can’t sing well.”*
 - 1) Remember, God says to sing **“to one another.”**

- 2) God says to make a joyful noise (Ps. 100:1).
 - b. *“I want to hear others sing.”*
 - 1) Again, the command is not to listen, but to sing.
5. For those that are capable, and do not sing, to him it is sin!
- a. **Js. 4:17** - *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*
 - b. It is impossible to sing to *“one another”* if the other is not singing.

B. Our singing is to teach and admonish one another.

- 1. We teach one another.
 - a. This was a part of the reason for singing in the Old Testament.
 - 1) **Ex. 15:1-19**
 - a) After Israel crosses the Red Sea, Moses and the children of Israel sing a song to God.
 - b) It was a song to praise God, but it was also a song to remind and teach Israel about what God had done for them.
 - 2) **I Sam. 18:6-7**
 - a) David and Saul have just returned home from the slaughter of the Philistine’s when the women began to sing a song about David.
 - b) **I Sam. 18:7** - *“Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”*
 - c) This song was used later and it taught others of what David had done.
 - i. **I Sam. 21:10-11** – Achish, the king of Gath, knew of David because of this song.
 - ii. **I Sam. 29:1-5** – The Philistines reject the help of David in fighting Israel because they had learned of what David had done through this song.
 - b. **Notice some songs and what they teach us.**
 - 1) *“Trust and Obey”* – obedience to God.
 - 2) *“The Old Rugged Cross”* – death of Jesus.
 - 3) *“Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All”* – heaven
- 2. We admonish one another.
 - a. This was also a part of the reason for singing in the Old Testament.
 - 1) **Deut. 31:19-22**
 - a) Moses teaches Israel a song that warns them about following other gods.
 - b) This warning was put into a song so that Israel could easily remember it.
 - 2) **Deut. 31:30-32:43**
 - a) Moses teaches Israel a song that warns them about not following the commands of God.

b) **Deut. 32:45-47** – Moses tells the people that the purpose of this song is to warn them of what God will do to them if they are unfaithful to Him.

b. Notice some songs that we sing that give us a warning.

- 1) Many of these songs also have a great deal of teaching in them.
- 2) “Work For the Night Is Coming” – warns of death and the end of time.
- 3) “Without Him” – warns that without Christ, we are nothing.
- 4) “Where Could I Go?” – warns that no one can help except Christ.

C. We teach and admonish one another in three types of songs.

1. There are three types of songs that we sing.
 - a. Psalms – From the book of Psalms, a poem of devotion.
 - b. Hymns – A song of praise addressed to God.
 - c. Spiritual Songs – Songs of any kind, provided they are spiritual.
2. The main point of these songs is that they are all to be spiritual in nature.

III. Our singing will only be acceptable to God if it is directed to God (3:16).

A. Our singing must be done “to the Lord”.

1. We sing “with grace in our hearts to the Lord.”
 - a. **Eph. 5:19** - singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.
 - b. While our singing teaches and admonishes others, it is not directed towards men.
2. God is the focus of our singing.
 - a. There are over 100 references throughout the Bible that are either examples or commands to sing to the Lord
 - b. **Ps. 66:1-2** - Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! {2} Sing out the honor of His name; make His praise glorious.
 - c. **Ps. 95:1-2** - Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. {2} Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

B. Our songs are to be filled with praise to the Lord.

1. One of the most well-known Psalms is **Ps. 100**.
2. It is filled with praise to the Lord.
3. **Ps. 100:1-5** - Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! {2} Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing. {3} Know that the LORD, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. {4} Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. {5} For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

Conclusion:

- A. The reason we sing the way that we do is because this is what God has commanded (3:17).
 - 1. The reason we do not use instruments or choruses is because God did not command them.
 - 2. He commanded us to sing to “one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”

- B. If our singing is not done according to the word of God, it is not accepted by Him.