

Reference: VARIOUS

Church: GRACE

Date: WEEK 9

Public Worship - Singing

Purpose: To show the place of singing in public worship and the manner of singing that is appropriate

1. Introduction

Continuing series on worship

What have we seen so far?

What place do the 10 commandments have?

What important principles did we see next?

Then looked at preaching

What did we look at last week?

Was prayer a part of the life of the early church?

What kind of prayer? What content?

This week - singing

2. Shall we sing?

Much evidence of place of song in OT worship

Psalms were hymns of praise but other songs were also used

e.g. Moses (Exodus 15), Deborah & Barak (Judges 5)

1 Corinthians 14:15 What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

2.1. Commands to sing

Psalm 66:1 Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; **2** Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious. **3** Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You. **4** "All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name."Selah.

Psalm 81:1 Sing for joy to God our strength; Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob. **2** Raise a song, strike the timbrel, The sweet sounding lyre with the harp. **3** Blow the trumpet at the new moon, At the full moon, on our feast day.

Psalm 95:1 O come, let us sing for joy 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.

Psalm 98:4 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; Break forth and sing for joy and sing praises. **5** Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, With the

lyre and the sound of melody. **6** With trumpets and the sound of the horn Shout joyfully before the King, the LORD.

Psalm 100:1 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. **2** Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. **3** Know that the LORD Himself 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 His gates with thanksgiving *And* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. **5** For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting *And* His faithfulness to all generations.

Ephesians 5:18-19 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

2.2. Examples of singing

Matthew 26:29-30 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." **30** **After singing a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Acts 16:25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

Heavenly worship clearly contains singing:

Revelation 5:8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **9** **And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. **10** "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."**

Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. **2** And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard *was like the sound of* harpists playing on their harps. **3** **And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.**

Shall we not sing now, given that we will in heaven?

3. What shall we sing?

3.1. The Content of our singing

Praise – most singing in the Bible contains this

Most injunctions are for us to sing praises

Teaching and admonition - Biblical truth

We are to worship in the Truth

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Matthew Henry: To teach and admonish one another. This would contribute very much to our furtherance in all grace; for we sharpen ourselves by quickening others, and improve our knowledge by communicating it for their edification. We must *admonish one another in psalms and hymns*. Observe, Singing of psalms is a gospel ordinance: *psalmois kai hymnois kai oudais*—the Psalms of David, and spiritual hymns and odes, collected out of the scripture, and suited to special occasions, instead of their lewd and profane songs in their idolatrous worship. Religious poesy seems countenanced by these expressions and is capable of great edification. But, when we sing psalms, we make no melody unless we sing with grace in our hearts, unless we are suitably affected with what we sing and go along in it with true devotion and understanding. Singing of psalms is a teaching ordinance as well as a praising ordinance; and we are not only to quicken and encourage ourselves, but to *teach and admonish one another*, mutually excite our affections, and convey instructions.

3.2. Shall we sing only Psalms?

2 passages indicate a variety of material was used:

Ephesians 5:18-19 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Words: “psalms” (psalm), “hymnos” (hymn) and “ode” (song)

3.2.1. Psalms

- 1) a striking, twanging
 - 1a) of a striking the chords of a musical instrument
 - 1b) of a pious song, a psalm

3.2.2. Hymnos

- 1) a song in tithe praise of gods, heroes, conquerors
 - 2) a sacred song, hymn – related to celebration

3.2.3. Ode

- 1) a song, lay, ode

Ode is the generic term; psalms and hymnos are specific, the former designating a song which took its general character from the OT Psalms, although not restricted to them, the latter a song of praise. While the leading idea of psalms is a musical accompaniment, and that of hymnos praise to God, ode is the general word for a song, whether accompanied or not, whether of praise or on any other subject. Thus it is quite possible for the same song to be at once described by all three of these words.

Here, “Spiritual odes”

Strongly implies different categories of songs to be used in the church.

3.3. Sing a new song

No less than 5 psalms mention singing a new song

This concept is then repeated in Isaiah

It is actually done twice in Revelation (see later)

How could this be consistent with only singing psalms?

3.4. Examples of new songs in the NT

There are many passages in NT which are probably extracts of songs used in the church

Ephesians 5:13-14

13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

14 For this reason it says,
“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”

Philippians 2:5-11 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Timothy 3:16

16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:
He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.

2 Timothy 2:11-13

11 It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

Revelation 5:7-10 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they *sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Revelation 14:2-3 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. 3 And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

Revelation 15:3-4

3 And they *sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

“Great and marvelous are Your works,

O Lord God, the Almighty;

Righteous and true are Your ways,

King of the nations!

4 “Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For You alone are holy;

For all the nations will come and worship before You,

For Your righteous acts have been revealed.”

3.5. We now have a fuller revelation of the Gospel for which to praise our God.

4. How shall we sing?

4.1. Cheerfully (at least some of the time!)

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

4.2. Thankfully

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

4.3. John Wesley’s “Rules for Methodist Singers”:

1. *Learn the Tunes*
2. *Sing them as printed*
3. *Sing all. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find it a blessing*
4. *Sing lustily and with a good courage*
5. *Sing modestly. Do not bawl*
6. *Sing in time. Do not run before or stay behind*
7. *Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually.*

Also remember our principles:

Awe, reverence, respect, fear, honor

God the sole focus

Reflecting His character

People should know something about our God by watching us sing

Are we animated or not?

Are we joyful/cheerful or not? Thankful or not?

People notice when the singing is done with heart

What will people conclude about God if we drone?

5. How shall we not sing?

To impress men

Thoughtlessly

As a dirge – Selwyn Morgan stopped the organist and admonished the congregation, then recommenced the hymn!

With the heart but not the mind – carried away by the tune

We should not sing error – even if it has a great melody!

We should not sing the truth uncomprehendingly:

"My name from the palms of his hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impressed on his heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace:

Yes, I to the end shall endure.

As sure as the earnest is given;*

More happy, but not more secure,

The glorified spirits in heaven."

*What does this line mean?

6. How is Singing worship?

Ascribing to God His worth

Giving Him the glory due to His name

Praising, honoring Him for who He is

7. Conclusions

Praise God for the gift of singing!

Let us seek to sing to Him from the heart

With all the heart and mind, soul and strength

Let's be a congregation where visitors say

"See how they love their God!"

"There is life and power and joy here!"