



Food For Thought:

Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone be the Glory

“I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.”

Psalm 13:6 (NIV)

Last week, while vacuuming the Church, I caught myself singing along with songs on my iPhone. It was a bit odd, since I usually just listen to make the time pass faster. But this week, I was singing to songs that I had recorded that we have used during Sunday services, Praise and Worship segments and those that I have heard on the radio. At one point, I took a break and sat down to rest. I closed my eyes, and I could almost hear the blended voices of the choir, Jill and Bonnie singing solo's, the Easter Cantata's, The Men of Judah's baritone offerings, the tiny voices of the children's choir, and even excerpts from our dinner shows. There has been a lot of music sung in our sanctuary over the last decade.

Music, I think, and I am sure that Pastor Thom, our music minister will back me up on this, is a universal connector between people and probably one of the connectors between heaven and earth. PT, as he is known, has a way of selecting music that can lift a congregation up so high that they have to look down to see the top of the church. It is one of the reasons that I came to C3. I love the way he formulates the music portion of the service. Although I love to sing, my wife will attest that some of the songs I don't sing that well. But I do stand by the words written in Psalms and in Isaiah about "Singing unto the Lord..." So, sing I do. I usually tell people that "I can't carry a tune in a bucket," but that doesn't stop me or several others that sit near me who suffer from that same problem that I do, from giving it a go. The Bible doesn't say, "Sing to the Lord with a beautiful voice." It says, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." Although listening to some areas of our church this past Sunday, I do wonder what He considers "joyful."

Music is so important to worship nowadays that we dedicate almost a third of our time to singing. It is so important that there is now a music category for songs that can be used to worship God. They are called "Praise and Worship" songs and they can be found in every corner of the music industry. I guess that God was trying to tell us something when he inspired Paul to write in Ephesians to "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord." Maybe that is why the word sing, or singing, occurs 148 times in the Bible.

You might be surprised to learn that some of the old hymnal songs were written by some very famous people. Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel who lived about 250 years ago and are arguably considered by many people to be two of the greatest composers who ever lived, have several songs in Christian hymnals. Interestingly, whenever they wrote music, they always wrote the letters "S.D.G." at the bottom to signify that their work was produced for the sake of praising God. S.D.G turns out to be an abbreviation for the Latin words Soli Deo Gloria" - which translates to "To God alone be the glory". You see, Bach and Handel both realized that their music was a gift from God and that they had a responsibility to use their gifts not just for mankind, but also to the glory of God.

Years back, there was a young deaf girl in our congregation who tried to sing. Although there were some who considered her singing to be distracting, troublesome, and even annoying. If you took a moment and looked beyond the surface of what was happening, it would make you cry. Here was a young woman who could not hear the beat, the music, or others singing the words, trying with all her heart to make a joyful noise unto her Lord and Savior. Her sounds, which weren't actual words, came straight from the pure love of God in her heart. She wanted to sing just like us, but it always came out a little bit different. If you had ever heard her, you knew in your heart that God was truly pleased with her offering just as I hope He appreciates whatever sounds you and I offer up in praise.

So, that Friday, as I was singing along with my songs, I realized that singing brings me peace, even in the most stressful of times. I've learned through the years that it is hard to be sad when you are singing. Singing, especially songs of praise, has such a unique way of bringing your heart, soul, mind, and body together so you can focus entirely and completely on God. As Pastor Thom says, "God loves it, and the devil hates it when you sing for the glory of God."

Lately, I have notice that are many requests on the prayer chain for people battling illnesses. I read about people in the grips of this disease or that illness – some winning, some might lose. I pray for both although I do wonder if the ones who didn't make it are in heaven right now singing and dancing before our Lord and Savior.

Sometimes to help me keep things in perspective, I take a step back and try to look at things in a different way. Instead of concentrating on how awful a particular disease is or how bad the pain hurts, I think about how one day I too will be standing before the Lord with a new body singing and dancing without pain, and without suffering.

It is usually about right here that the Mercy Me song, "I Can Only Imagine," pops into my head and I start singing or humming along. I can only imagine what that would be like. Would they be "surrounded by His glory?" Maybe they are "standing in His Presence" or maybe "to their knees they will fall." Maybe they're "singing Hallelujah" or maybe they're not "able to sing at all."

I think that if Mercy Me really has it right, especially about the singing part, some of us need a lot more practice. Those individuals who have already gone before us already know, but we can only imagine. Guess that is why Pastor Thom has us singing - practice, practice, practice. But oh, what songs God will give us to sing when we get to Glory!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Just some Food for Thought