



CrossRoads Notes:

Title: Expressions of Worship

Theme: Connecting with God in the Song Service

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16)

Introduction: *It should be noted that the entire church service is to be considered as a time were Christians can worship the Lord in spirit and truth.*
(Psalms 147:1)

Steve Camp wrote, “Music is a powerful tool from the Lord Jesus to His church intended for worship, praise, encouragement, edification, evangelism, teaching, admonishing and exhorting God’s people to holiness. Its chief aim is always to glorify God and worship Him.”

Proposition: *I would propose to you that God wants you to worship Him in spirit and truth.*

Interrogative Sentence: *Just what does the Bible say about “Expressions of Worship” in the song service? What can we or rather how are we to express our love while singing praises to God?*

Transitional Sentence: *The New Testament does not give any pattern for conducting a specific corporate worship service in the Lord’s churches.* It does not tell how long the services are to be, how many psalms, hymns or spiritual songs are to be sung and it does not tell us how long to stand or sit down. The New Testament does not tell us the styles, types of music or what instruments can be used. The child of God who looks attentively into the Word of God and then meditates on how to implement His instructions is the Christian who will overcome the conjecture of men and sing praises to God, which ushers in the presence of the Lord into his heart and life.

Transitional Sentence: *There are truths that are worth grasping in God’s Word in regards to expressions of worship.* (Ephesians 5:19) Psalms (*psalmos*) are sacred songs sung to musical instruments and they may be referred to as a chant. (Spiros Zodiatiates) Psalms of praise consist of short sentences expressing praise for the Lord’s character or actions. Many a modern day choruses fit into this category and they should be sung by all no matter what age and sung with one purpose and that is to please the Lord Jesus. There are various types of psalms that can be sung unto the Lord in the song service such as psalms of praise (Psalms 8; 29; 33; 104; 111; 113), psalms of thanksgiving (Psalms 30; 66; 116; 138), psalms of lament (Psalms 12; 44; 74; 79) or psalms of wisdom (Psalms 1; 37; 49; 119).

Matthew Henry writes; “By psalms, he may have meant to sing the songs written by David or such other composers, they are to be sung with musical instruments.”

“Hymns” (*hymnos*). Some say a hymn is an anthem. The words in a hymn are to be a direct address of praise and glory to God. Augustine writes, “A Hymn has three characteristics: It must be sung; it must be praise, it must be to God.” Abboth Smith describes a hymn as a “festal song in praise of gods and heroes.”

Illustrations: “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.” “Let every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball, to Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all.” Another great hymn is “I Love to Tell the Story” with this stanza, “I love to tell the story, for some have never heard, the message of salvation, from God’s own holy Word.”

JBH wrote: “There is something about a fine old hymn. That stirs the heart of a man. That can reach the goal of his inmost soul, such as no preaching can. It is more than a tune of the song he sings. And more than the poet’s rhyme. It’s the Spirit of God working through them. That gives them power sublime. So we thank thee Lord, for the grand old hymns. May we use them again and again, as we seek to save from the grave, the souls of our fellow man.”

Dr. Ralph Earle writes on Ephesians 5:19, “It may not be out of the way to observe here that hymns should be regularly used in the Sunday morning service.”

“Spiritual songs.” According to Alpha - Omega Ministries, the Greek word for spiritual songs (*Penumatikas*) in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 is the very moving of the Holy Spirit, not the worship leader. Thayer’s Greek - English Lexicon tells us this is “...divinely inspired, and so redolent of the Holy Spirit.” The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament tells us that it is “...those composed in the Holy Spirit...” Practical Words Studies tells this Greek word is used referring to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source.

Illustration: Tod Williams of Times Square Church and John Oldfield

God’s people have every reason to rejoice and sing and make music in their hearts unto the Lord, singing with their voice from the heart with various forms, styles and mixture of music.

Transitional Sentence: We are to speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. And we are to be expressive in our worship unto the Lord.

The guide that the Holy Spirit is going to use to instruct the Body of Christ in regards to expression of worship is the Word of God. All forms of worship are to find its place within the guidelines of the written Word. According to the Word of God we can be and should be expressive in our worship to the Lord, however, not through theatrics that draw attention to one’s self.

Did you know you can dance before the Lord?
(Psalms 149:3)

Matthew Henry wrote: "Dance includes moving of the feet."

King David knew how to have expressive worship.
(2 Samuel 6:12-16)

It is important to note that the Ark of the Covenant denoted the presence of God and a type of Christ. (Thru the Bible; The Pulpit Commentary; Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Illustration: Norton football games

There is a warning for us in 2 Samuel 6:20-23
(2 Samuel 6:20-23)

Illustration: At the crossing of the Red Sea
(Exodus 15:20-23)

Matthew Henry: "We should be afraid of censuring the devotions of others though it may not agree with our sentiments. Who are we to despise those whom God has accepted... Let us never be driven from our duty by the fear of approach, let us not be ashamed to own it." To bring clarity, let us not be too reserved in our expressions of worship, when it is to be done unto the Lord.

Baptist Theologian Dr. Jay Vernon McGee writes, "Personally, I would like to see more rejoicing as David did in praising God today... God does not like it my friend, when he sees long faces, we are to enter his presence with joy." May I add with Biblical expressions of joy?

Transitional Sentence: *When the time is right and when it adds to the song service, there should be some dancing before the Lord and the Bible also says we can bow down or kneel down to the Lord.*

(Psalms 95:6)
(Matthew 2:10-11)

Especially while expressing one's self during the song service is the posture of kneeling down not out of place or should be peculiar.

Transitional Sentence: *Christians should be the happiest and most expressive people around. When Holy Spirit led, they can dance, bow, clap and shout.*

(Psalms 47:1-2)

The most natural and most enthusiastic expression of exultation should be used in view of the victories that Jesus Christ won upon the Cross of Calvary and in His resurrection. Our joy in the Lord may be demonstrative and I can assure you that God is not going to censure it.

Illustration: Green Bay Packers, "Thousands gather at the cathedral of Lambo Field."

There are three brief definitions in the Winston Dictionary on worship that deserve our consideration here. 1.) The act of paying reverence, adoration or homage to God. 2.) Excessive admiration. 3.) To perform religious services. The New International Dictionary of the Bible tells us this about worship. It is "The honor, reverence and homage paid to superior beings or powers, whether men, angels or God. The English word means "worthship," w-o-r-t-h-s-h-i-p and it denotes the worthiness of the individual receiving the honor. ...Worship in the New Testament consisted of preaching, reading of Scripture, almsgiving, prophesyings and tongues and singing."

We have a faithful God who called us to Christ through the Holy Spirit, it is Christ who paid the highest price that can be paid for the redemption of sinful man, and it is the Holy Spirit who seals and sanctifies us for the glory of Christ. Because of Christ living in us through the power of the Holy Spirit, we may choose to have victory over the sins that once held us in bondage and kept us out of fellowship with the Lord. Jesus Christ is worthy of our standing, the clapping of our hands and giving shouts of triumph. For without Him we cannot live a triumphant life.

In Closing: *There is a popular expression today that says, "It is not about me, but you Jesus."* That is truth and those who have Holy Spirit enlightenment no longer speak about the song service with words like, "This is what I like or what we want." No, their singing and worship style is birthed forth from God's Word. Nothing else satisfies and brings unity in the song service.

What then is the essence of the song service? It is the celebration of and to the Lord Jesus Christ. When we sing songs for His glory, we exalt God and Christ. Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is only pleasing to God as we sing them in spirit and truth. The song service is not to be done haphazardly or poorly; it is not even to be done merely as a performance.

We celebrate the Lord when we look into His Word, enjoy and participate according to His prescribed ways, thus, throwing off legalism, traditionalism and avoiding faddisms. When visitors walk in our church what do they sense in and during the song service? Is it life, freedom and Holy Spirit led? Is there work that still needs to be done in our song services and more precisely, are we willing to allow the Lord to do His work?

Let us pray!