

INTRODUCTION

We've been talking about the Spirit-filled life and if you happen to be here for the first time, I believe in preaching and teaching the Bible verse after verse after verse, because I think that's the way you grow a strong, healthy church. Verse by verse Bible exposition is like vegetables to a diet. It will make you strong. Sometimes sermons are like popcorn or cotton candy, but when you study the Bible verse after verse after verse, it builds strong Christians and strong churches.

We've been talking about the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Last week we read Ephesians 5:18. It says, "Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." That's a command. Then, three verses follow, which give us what Greek scholars tell us are consequential participles—in other words, things you will be doing if you obey the first command. In verse 19 here's the first consequence:

Ephesians 5:19. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

How can you tell if you are filled with the Holy Spirit? According to verses 19-21, there will be a spirit of adoration in your life. You'll be singing praises. That's what we'll talk about today. But verse 20 says there will also be a spirit of appreciation in your life (that's next Sunday's topic) you will be giving thanks and living in the attitude of gratitude. Then verse 21 tells us you will have a spirit of accommodation. You will have a servant's spirit and you will submit (that's two weeks from today) but today let's talk about how the fullness of the Spirit leads to a heart and a mouth and a life full of praise.

Last year I was in Grapeland, Texas, leading a revival there at the First Baptist Church. Fritz and Shirley Smith were doing the music and we were staying out at Salmon Lake Park. It's a place where they have an annual Bluegrass Festival. We were the only three people staying there. The Smiths had their travel trailer and I was staying in a little one room cottage. I got up to go jogging the first morning and below the lake I saw a spillway with a huge water wheel that must have been twenty feet in diameter. It probably weighed several tons. To my surprise there was a farmer standing there with a crank turning that water wheel. He had on overalls and a straw hat and beside him was a woman dressed in a long skirt and an old bonnet on her head. I was running along and it took me a long time to get up there. I was thinking "That guy is really strong, because he's turning that water wheel that must weigh several tons" and he never got tired, he just kept turning the whole time. When I got closer, I realized it wasn't a man, it was a wooden dummy they had put some clothes on. His arms were hinged and tied to this crank and he was turning the water wheel, the water was turning the wheel and cranking him. He wasn't cranking it—it was cranking *him*. I thought to myself, "That's the difference between a Spirit-filled Christian and a carnal Christian." A carnal Christian is one who says, "I'm trying to live the Christian life. I'm trying to love unlovely people. I'm trying to forgive all those rotten people that do me dirty. I'm trying to live the victorious life and I'm going to do it if it kills me!" Actually, they end up with spiritual hernias. But Jesus said, "There shall flow out of you a river of living water." A Spirit-filled Christian is not cranking the Christian life—the Christian life

through the Holy Spirit is cranking that person. You’ll know the difference between trying to live the Christian life in your own strength and living it in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

I. THE DESIGN FOR OUR MUSIC

1. Psalms: Old Testament songs

If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, there will be a life full of music and praise according to verse 19. We’ll learn three things about this. Several years ago I preached on this passage when I was talking about worship and I want to share some of these thoughts with you and bring in some other thoughts. First of all, notice the design for our music. There is a biblical design for our music and we find it in verse 19, and I think we find it in that threefold order of worship singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. First, there are psalms; they are simply Old Testament songs. In your Bible there is a Book of Psalms. There are 150 psalms and the psalms were meant to be sung. That’s what the word “psalms” means, it literally means “a song sung accompanied by a stringed instrument.” I showed that to some of my Church of Christ friends who don’t believe in any instruments in the church and they agree that’s what the word *psalmo* means, “songs sung with accompaniment,” and some of them have opened their eyes that the New Testament does teach that it’s okay to sing psalms accompanied by an instrument. The Psalms were never meant to be read—they were meant to be sung. As much as we love to hear the 23rd Psalm read, it was intended to be sung. One thing you can know about when you are singing the psalms the words you are singing are always inspired, because the word of God is “inspired of God.” Whatever mood you are in there is a psalm for you to sing. If you are happy, there are happy psalms; if you are sad, there are sad psalms; if you are discouraged, there are psalms about being discouraged; if you are afraid, there are psalms about being afraid. Whatever mood you are in there is a psalm to fit it. Whatever you need, you will find in the Psalms.

I have an old King James Bible I have had since college and it’s just about falling apart, but I keep it because I use it sometimes for my personal devotion. I take my guitar and in the Psalms right there in the Bible I have written guitar chords. Through the years I have written little tunes to put to music some of the psalms that I just sing to the Lord as part of my personal devotion. What a blessing it is to sing the Psalms. Look with me at Psalm 150. You may be wondering why we worship the way we do sometimes. I think Psalm 150 concludes the whole songbook of Psalms by telling us how God enjoys being worshiped. It says, “Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.” Why do we have an orchestra? The Bible says, “Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet; praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing,” (I guess if you shift your weight, that’s dancing) “praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”

Brilliant! That may be Old Testament, but in Ephesians 5:19 the New Testament says we are to sing psalms. That’s why we try to follow the directions of the psalms. The New Testament says, “Sing psalms.” When you are singing psalms, you are right on target.

2. Hymns: Composed songs

Number two there are hymns. It says, “Sing hymns” and that word in Greek is *humnos*. We get our word “hymns” from it. It literally means “a composed song.” A hymn is a song of praise someone deliberately and carefully composed. The meter and timing are right; often the words rhyme and the music perfect. It may be written in four-part harmony to begin with. It is a composed song of praise to God. A lot of what we have in our hymnal are hymns, but there are some psalms in there and also some spiritual songs. There are currently over 500,000 copyrighted hymns. All some people want to do is sing hymns. Hymns are great, but that is only one out of three types of music God says we are to sing in the New Testament church. Imagine if we had a hymnal containing every hymn ever written—all 500,000 of them! Mike would stand up here and say, “Let’s continue to worship by opening your hymnal to number 313,212.” You would have to bring your hymnal to church in a wheelbarrow. Many of those 500,000 are wonderful but some of them are poor theology. The difference between hymns and psalms is psalms are inspired by God; hymns may be inspiring, but they are not on the same level as the word of God itself. Many of our psalms teach us good theology.

Here is a quick thumbnail lesson on music in the church. The early church sang psalms. In the upper room after the Lord’s Supper, the Bible says after they had sung a psalm, they went out into the garden. Paul and Silas sang in prison at Philippi. The early church sang psalms, hymns and spiritual songs according to the apostle Paul. But from about the year 300 until about the 16th century, there was very little music from the pews. That was what we call “the Dark Ages,” because few common people could read; only the monks and the priests could read the Bible. there weren’t very many copies of the Bible and they didn’t read it much, nor did they obey it very much. The music sung in the churches was sung by the professionals hired by the church and they sang in Latin. The people in the pews couldn’t understand the words anyway and they didn’t join in. They just thought, “This must be very special because I don’t understand it it’s mysterious.”

Around the 1500s the reformers began to print the Bible. Then the printing press was invented and suddenly a copy of the word of God got into the hands of the common people and they began to read it and said, “Music is not for the professionals to stand up there and give a Gregorian chant—music is for all of God’s people.” Martin Luther and others began to write beautiful hymns like, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” In the 1719 Isaac Watts wrote the hymn “Oh, God, Our Help in Ages Past.” In the 1772, slave trader John Newton wrote a beautiful song, “Amazing Grace How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.” Then the Wesleys began to spread their word all around England. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church was not welcome in the Anglican Church. They thought he was an outlaw. John Wesley’s brother, Charles, wrote over 6,000 hymns, but that music was hated by the traditional church. They called it “modernistic music.” It would even be called “rock music” today. Charles Wesley took tunes from some of the popular songs of the day and put Christian lyrics to them. For instance, every time you stand in church and sing out of your hymnal that beautiful song, “Blessed be the Name, Blessed be the Name” that is the tune of an old English drinking song. I don’t know what the words were maybe “Pass another ale” I don’t know, but that came from an old English drinking song so when Charles Wesley wrote those words, the Anglican Church was appalled. “None of that evil music in our churches!” But today we love it and we sing it. In the late 1900s, Ira Sankey, singer for evangelist Dwight L. Moody, wrote beautiful songs like, “Faith

is the Victory" and Fanny Crosby that blind hymn writer who wrote over 5,000 hymns herself wrote, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." Those beautiful songs that we love, hymns of each century, each generation and in the early part of our own century B.B. McKinney of Oklahoma wrote, "Have faith in God, Wherever he leads, I will go." These are hymns we all know and love. I believe if the Lord tarries we'll look back at Bill Gaither and he was one of the greatest hymn writers who ever lived, "Because he lives I can face tomorrow." Beautiful, beautiful hymns.

3. Spiritual songs: Simple songs of the heart

Hymns are wonderful but they are only one third of the design God has for us to sing. Number three, there are spiritual songs. The Greek phrase is *ode pneumatikos*, which literally means "odes of the spirit" and it may not even mean Holy Spirit, it may mean like from your heart. Spiritual songs are simple songs of the heart. What's the difference between a hymn and a spiritual song? Somebody sits down and intentionally writes out and composes a hymn, but a spiritual song is something that comes from the heart, it is very spontaneous. Awhile ago we sang, "Alleluia, alleluia." Somebody did not sit down and say, "I'm going to write a praise song" and they wrote "Alleluia" and did the notes. No. Somebody sat down at a piano and out of a heart that was in love with God just began to sing that. That's the category of a spiritual song.

We are to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Did you notice awhile ago in the second set of our congregational music we did exactly that? We sang a psalm, "Oh, Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth." That's Psalm 8:1. Then we sang a hymn, "There is within my heart a melody." Then we sang spiritual songs "Alleluia, Lord I love you." That's the design in God's word for us to worship him.

II. THE DIMENSION OF OUR MUSIC

1. All music from the heart is beautiful to God

Secondly, is the dimension of our music. What does singing involve? What does it encompass? Let me make two important statements and these are convictions of my heart, because I deeply believe it. Number one, all music from the heart is beautiful to God: psalms, hymns, spiritual songs. Ephesians 5:19 says, "Sing and make melody with your heart." Your heart is the instrument you use, not your vocal cords.

I don't know if Robert Goulet is a Christian or not. I have never seen any fruit in his life, but if Robert Goulet stood up here in front of all of you and sang, "How Great Thou Art," the sound would be beautiful. The tonality, the quality, the enunciation the notes would be far superior to anything I could do, but let's say he sang it and then I stepped up here and sang it in my voice. That's not very good, but you could tell I was singing it from my heart. If you were judging on pure musical ability, you would give him a 10 and give me about a 2 ½ or -2 or something like that, but in God's ears, his evaluation would be totally reversed. John MacArthur says, "The Spirit's music is not hindered by monotone, nor is it enhanced by a musical degree or a magnificent voice. Spiritual joy will shine through a song sung with a raspy off-pitch voice of a saint rejoicing in the Lord. But the joy of the Lord will be absent from a song sung with skill

with a voice that rejoices only in self. Whether we sing alone in our home or car, sing with a few friends around a piano, or sing in a congregation of thousands, we should do it from a spirit-filled heart that seeks no glory but God’s. God looks beyond the voice, beyond the vocal chords, into the heart.” (*Ephesians Commentary*, p. 259)

When I was at the jail Thursday night for the Luis Palau service, Ray Mahaffey sang a couple of songs and you all know Ray can hit those notes and he sang that song and I clapped my hands and cried, “Holy!” And he sang another song and went up in the ionosphere, he got so high. I don’t even think there are notes written that high. He just belted those high notes out so clearly and when he finished, those inmates spontaneously erupted in applause and just began to holler and shout it was so great. Ray did a very appropriate thing I think every Spirit-filled singer will do as they were applauding him, he immediately began applauding himself—he was passing on any appreciation he received to the Lord. He was saying, “It’s not my ability, it’s my love of Jesus and it’s Jesus who empowers me.” All music that is sung from the heart is beautiful. Some of you are saying, “God doesn’t like my music.” Yes he does if it is from the heart. You say, “I can’t sing like Sandi Patty. That’s okay God loves to hear you sing if you are singing from the heart.

Growing up, I can remember my mother was an awful singer. She’s what I call a “prisoner singer,” always behind a few bars and can’t find the right key. I’d stand beside her in our little church and every Sunday we sang the Doxology and she never could get it right. She only had two notes a high note and a low note and they never were in the right place. What she sang just came out really bad. As I got a little older, I began to be a little self-conscious and embarrassed, because I noticed it didn’t sound too good. I remember pulling on her dress and saying, “Ssh, ssh! Mama! Be quiet.” We’d go home and I’d say, “Mama please don’t sing so loud. You’re embarrassing me.” I can honestly remember the hurt look in her eyes when I said that the first time. She is in heaven right now and I have learned a whole lot since then. I have learned how wrong I was and how precious that music was to the ears of God. She wasn’t singing for me anyway. She wasn’t singing for the sake of that person in front of her. She was singing it to God. I would give an awful lot of money right now if I could stand beside her one more time and hear her sing in that terrible monotone voice. I’d say, “Go for it, mom! That is so beautiful to God.”

2. Music from the heart must be expressed

All music that comes from the heart is beautiful to God. That’s leads us to the second statement about the dimension of our music and it is this that music from the heart must be expressed! You can’t go along with a song in your heart without it coming out. A bell is not a bell until you ring it. A song is not a song until you sing it. Look at what Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.” Notice it is the fruit not of the heart, but of the lips that confess his name. So we ought to be singing, expressing our praise.

I’m praying for God to give me power to deal with this. I’ll confess I have a bad attitude about people who claim to be Christians who never sing. I just have a hard time understanding it. I know what some of you are thinking. “I just can’t sing.” Oh, yes you can. “Oh, no I can’t.” I say, “Oh, yes you can.” What you may mean is, “I can’t sing *well*.” That’s not the point. It’s not how

beautiful your voice sounds, it's whether or not you are singing from the heart. That's what matters. The Bible says, "Singing making melody with your heart to the Lord." You say you can't sing. Change that. Just start saying, "I won't sing," because you can sing. I believe you just don't have the right motivation. What if somebody came to you and brought you a contract, signed, sealed and delivered, legal and notarized—the whole deal—that simply said, "If you will sing one verse of Mary Had a Little Lamb, you will receive one million dollars tax free." You take it to your lawyer and he checks it out and says, "It's all fair. It's a contract. They've signed it and they've got the money. It's available. All you have to do is sing one verse of Mary Had a Little Lamb. Here there's the contract." I know what some of you are going to say. Right? "Too bad I can't sing. Here's the contract back." No. You're going to say, "Where do I sign?" It may be all off-key or monotone, but you are singing it and you get the money. It's all a matter of motivation. You are not singing for the sake of that person beside you; you are sending to the Lord.

Have you ever heard of David Ring? He's an evangelist who has cerebral palsy and he is a friend of mine. He has quite a testimony, because much of his life they thought he was mentally retarded, just because he had cerebral palsy. He has a hard time walking, talking, and a really hard time singing, but I've stood beside him in worship services and I remember one particular time we were singing "To God be the Glory," and I'm not making fun of him at all, but it didn't sound like real words. By the time I heard him sing, I had learned a lot from my mother and I stood there beside him thinking, "That is so very beautiful to God!" Here's a guy with cerebral palsy and he sings. One of the first things he's going to do is stand up here in front of all of us on that Sunday and say, "I have cerebral palsy. What's your excuse?" It'll make you start thinking. He sings praises to the Lord. I know Mike feels the same way. We look out here Sunday after Sunday and see some people singing and really getting into it and others just standing there watching.

Have you ever heard of the Italian opera singer, Giovanni Battista Rubini? It is said he was singing an Italian opera and hit a note so high and with such force that he broke his collarbone. On Sunday mornings I look out and see some who are not in danger of breaking anything. You're not even breaking the silence. I believe if you have music in your heart, it will come out your lips. So stop being self-conscious about what somebody around you will think. Sing to the Lord. That's the dimension of our music. It's from the heart not the vocal cords.

III. THE DIRECTION OF OUR MUSIC

1. The direction of our music is to each other for encouragement

Number three is the direction of our music. To whom do we sing? Look at verse 19. It says, "Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs." So, number one the direction of our music is to each other for encouragement. You can't take what it says literally when it says speak to each other with psalms and hymns. That doesn't mean when you come to church, you always have to converse musically, like when you see somebody in the parking lot and you sing, "Good morning how are you?" No that's not what it means. It literally means as you sing to the Lord. Singing to the Lord has an impact on other people and it encourages them. Look at what the Bible says in Psalms 40:3. "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God."

Notice the direction is to God but notice the result, "Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord." An amazing thing happens! Unchurched people can come to a worship service and watch Christians participating in praise and worship and do you know what it causes them to do? It causes them to fear the Lord and trust in the Lord. They look around and say, "Boy these people must think God is real. Not only do they think God is real, but they love him they sing to him." It says, "As we sing a hymn of praise to God, many shall fear the Lord and put their trust in him." It not only has an impact to encourage those who are lost, but did you know our worship and praise to God encourages Christians? I think about all the beautiful hymns of testimony. The primary direction of our music is not to each other. That is the consequence of it.

2. The direction of our music is to the Lord for exaltation

The primary direction of our music, number two, is to the Lord for exaltation. Look at verse 19 one more time. "Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." Psalm 34:3 says, "Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together." When we sing praises as a congregation, it is as if the name of Jesus surfs on the top. It gets higher and higher. As we lift up our praises we are exalting God in our praise and when we do that, it is to him.

When we sang "Lord, I love you," did you really sing it to the Lord or did you just sing the words? Or did you just stand there? I don't know about you, but I just want to share something with you. When I enter into that kind of worship here in this worship service, I really try to forget that anybody else is here. I don't want to know who is here and who is not here. I look right there at that microphone. Do you see that microphone hanging down in the center? I focus on that and I imagine the Lord Jesus is seated on a throne in all his glory listening to this worship. Isn't that what Jesus said? "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst." I try to make myself focus in on that image and I sing to him, "Lord, I love you." And I forget about you. I don't care how it sounds to you. I don't care whether you like what I am singing or not. I try to focus in upon him. Do you sing to the Lord?

The wrong model of worship is this: This is the platform; these are the performers; we are the prompters and you are the audience. That is wrong. The true model for worship is we are ALL performers but we performing to an audience of one. The choir is the prompter, but you are not the spectators—you are the choir singing to the Lord. The other day somebody asked me how many people we had in the choir here. I was getting ready for this sermon and I said, "Oh, about 2,500 most Sundays." We're singing to an audience of one. We sing to the Lord. If you really want to enter into a great corporate worship experience, don't get so hung up on what the person beside you is doing, how well they sing or how well they *don't* sing. Don't get upset if they clap their hands or don't clap their hands. Just concentrate on singing to the Lord. If everybody does that, God is exalted! God loves it. He loves to be praised. Praise can really set you free and deliver you from bondage. You don't come with that intent, but as you praise the Lord, you are set free.

CONCLUSION

Do you remember old Paul and Silas sitting in jail in Philippians 16? They had their hands bound in chains; their feet in stocks. The only kind of stocks and bonds Paul knew about were those in a

prison. They were waiting to be executed the next day. So what did Paul and Silas do? The same guy who said, “Sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” practiced what he preached. He and Silas began to sing praises to the Lord. “This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.” Don’t you know those other prisoners were looking at them saying, “Man, there’s something different about those guys.” Not only did it encourage others like we are talking about, but it exalted God. God loves to be praised. Can’t you just hear Paul and Silas begin to sing, “This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it,” and God got excited up in heaven and started patting his foot along with the music. The Bible says the earth is the footstool of the Lord so God just started patting his foot a little bit harder. Because the Bible says there was an earthquake and Boom! The chains fell off their hands. Boom! The stocks fell off their feet. Boom! The jail door opened up. That’s the power of praise—it sets you free. So what is the model for our worship and what is a sign that you are filled with the Holy Spirit? You’ll be singing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs to the Lord.

OUTLINE

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2. Music from the heart must be expressed

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. *Hebrews 13:15*

III. THE DIRECTION OF OUR MUSIC

1. To each other for encouragement

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. *Psalms 40:3*

2. To the Lord for exaltation

Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together. *Psalms 34:3*



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes