

SINGING IN WORSHIP

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss what the Bible teaches about singing in our worship assembly.
2. Col. 3:15-17 v. 16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
3. I Cor. 14:15b "...I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
 - a. An important part of worship is singing
 - b. John 4:24 - God, spirit, truth
 - c. Sing with the spirit = attitude
 - d. Understanding
4. God has placed a great emphasis on singing
 - a. There was singing during the creation - Job. 38:4,7 "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding." V.7 "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"
 - b. We are commanded to sing in worship to God - Eph. 5:19 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"
 - c. Words Sing, Singer, and Singing appear more than 160 times in the Bible
 - d. Sing = means to produce musical tones by means of the voice, with musical inflections and modulations
5. As we sing let us not just think of ourselves as singing but as worshiping God in song.
6. Plan of lesson - What, how, who, why and errors practiced by some.

Discussion

I. WHAT ARE WE TO SING?

A. Psalms, Hymns and spiritual songs -

1. Eph. 5:19 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"
2. Col. 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
3. Psalms = Songs devoted to the praise of God, extolling his name, power, character and works.
4. Hymns = Songs of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication, teaching our dependence on God and his willingness to hear and bless.
5. Spiritual songs =
 - a. Songs intended to inspire and cultivate feelings of spiritual devotion and to bring the spirit of man into harmony with, and under the control of, the Spirit of God.
 - b. Secular songs are excluded in our worship to God. They are to be spiritual songs. Illustration - little boy in pre-school class wanted to sing "Elvira"
 - c. Acts 2:42 says that the early Christians "Continued steadfast in the apostles doctrine." This applies to singing and anything we do in worship.

B. We must sing the truth

1. It is as sinful to sing an error as it is to preach an error.
2. It is as sinful to sing false teaching as it is to preach false doctrine.

C. Singing is worship to God. So we sing songs of worship and praise and adoration.

II. HOW WE ARE TO SING

- A. "With the spirit and with the understanding" I Cor.14:15

- B. "Spirit"
 - 1. Attitude - sincere, we are not hypocritical
 - 2. We are thinking of what we are singing - not just calling some words and going through some motions
 - 3. Some think of it as a: "let's-get-it-over-with-as-soon-as-possible-pill."
 - 4. The person who worships God in spirit is not bored while singing. He is not a fretful clock watcher! He is not in a big hurry to get out of here.
 - 5. Singing with the "spirit" springs from the heart. There is emotion and feeling in what we are singing. Worshiping in the spirit means we enjoy worship.

- C. "Understanding"
 - 1. With words and language that can be understood
 - 2. Context - in time of spiritual gifts - if they did not speak or sing in a language understood by all it did not accomplish what God wanted.
 - 3. "Let all things be done decently and in order." I Cor. 14:40
 - 4. We need to think about the meaning of the words we are singing.

III. WHO IS TO SING?

A. All of us

1. Every saint should strive to worship God in song to the best of his ability.
2. Singing is an act of worship that God has commanded. To say we cannot do what God has commanded is to question the wisdom of God.
3. We are not to compare our efforts with others. We are to sing to the best of our ability.
 - a. The fact that you cannot give as much as another Christian does not exempt you from giving liberally.
 - b. Because you cannot sing as well as another does not excuse you from singing.
4. Eph. 5:19 "...in your heart to the Lord."
5. God has commanded us to sing.
 - a. That means each one of us. When people just sit through the song service and never attempt to sing they are not obeying God.
 - b. They are not "offering the fruit of our lips".
 - c. Can someone else worship for us? I think not. There is no Biblical authority for a choir. Congregational A Capella singing is the only kind of music divinely authorized by the Lord for Christian worship.

B. No one else can worship for us:

1. Taking the Lord's Supper is an individual act of worship. No other person can do it for you.
2. Singing is a part of worship that no one else can do for you.
3. You cannot worship by "proxy" - singing is an individual responsibility / privilege

IV. WHY DO WE SING?

A. Teaching power

1. Col. 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
2. Teaching - Singing is one means of getting the word of Christ in the heart of the hearers.
3. By speaking in songs we are to teach and admonish one another.
4. The thoughts contained in the words do the teaching and admonishing; the song is the vehicle by which the sentiments are conveyed to the heart of those who hear and understand. [G.A. p. 298]
5. Ill. Songs and jingles on T.V. teach us - we find ourselves singing the commercials. Singing sells.
6. Christianity is a system of teaching - Jn. 6:44-45
7. It helps us to memorize and learn.

B. Emotional power in singing

1. There is a certain relationship between our emotional state and singing and we should not neglect this.
 - a. Militaries the world over recognize the power of song.
 - b. Countries have national anthems.
 - c. Singing arouses great feelings of loyalty and patriotism in these contexts.
2. Singing should have the same effect upon the church as well.

3. Singing makes us want to do more for the cause for which Christ died
 - a. "What a friend we have in Jesus"
 - b. "Stand up, Stand up for Jesus"
 - c. Ill. An atheist speaker once addressed hundreds of people seeking to undermine faith in God and to overthrow the Bible. At the end of his infidelic speech an elderly gentleman in the back arose to sing "Stand up, Stand Up for Jesus." Others joined, and soon the song was sung enthusiastically and victoriously by nearly the whole assembly. One song defeated the atheistic voice against Jehovah and His Anointed.¹
4. Invitation songs have done much to persuade souls to obey the Gospel. Sometimes it is good to use two invitation songs.
 - a. Your behavior during the invitation song could have a negative effect.
 - b. Or it could have a positive effect.
 - c. Be sure you sing all songs with "spirit" and "understanding".

V. ERRORS THAT SOME HAVE INTRODUCED

- A. Three ways to make music:
 1. Voice - singing, Playing an Instrument - man made, combination of singing and playing
 2. God commanded "singing"
 - a. Eph. 5:19
 - b. Col. 3:16
 - c. Heb. 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

B. We must worship in truth

1. Jn. 4:24 - Truth = according to Divine Revelation
2. If we do not worship God in truth it will not be acceptable to him
3. There is no authority for "instrumental music"
4. Therefore it would be vain worship - "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Mt. 15:9

C. Scholars of all ages have spoken against the use of instrumental music in worship.

[See Tract]

D. We are authorized to "sing."

1. Singing is the conveyance of thoughts by means of words set to music. Singing is a form of teaching (Col. 3:16).
2. We are not commissioned to make mere musical sounds. One can no more be edified by a mere musical noise than he can by the words of a language which he does not understand.
3. And Paul dealt with this type of abuse in his initial letter to the church at Corinth.
4. The apostle declared that our music must be such as to invoke "understanding" on the part of those who are involved (1 Cor. 14:15). This implies words; not just sounds.²

E. What about Whistling, Humming, hand clapping, choirs, vocal bands?

1. Whistling is vocal, but whistling is not authorized.
2. Humming is vocal, but humming is not authorized.
3. Yodeling is vocal, but yodeling is not authorized.
4. There is no authority for choirs, vocal bands or any of these things.

5. Worship is not entertainment
6. Communication is to be done in our singing. We sing praise to God, we teach exhort and admonish each other. Col. 3:16
7. Singing using words that have meaning and communicate truth. These vocal sounds do not communicate a edifying message to the church.

Conclusion

1. Singing is a part of our worship to GOD.
 2. We are not trying to please men but God.
 3. Congregational singing is a powerful and wonderful means of worship.
 4. God bless you as you offer unto him the "fruit of your lips." -
Heb. 13:15
 5. Col. 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - A. Vertically - our songs praise God
 - B. Horizontally - our songs teach others
 - C. Inwardly - Our sings help us grow spiritually³
 6. When each one sings then we have congregational singing in our worship to God.
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Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Morning - Dec. 7, 2008
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End Notes

1. Annual Lesson commentary May 3, 1992 p. 209
2. Christian Courier The Divine Pattern of Acceptable Worship—Part 2 By WAYNE JACKSON November 25, 2000
3. Annual Lesson Commentary - May 3, 92 p. 212