

Mission 3- worship/singing
Col. 3:16

1. Preamble:
 - a. Explain sermon series
 - b. Show info graphic with mission statement and chart
 - c. Each component is driven by the gospel for the glory of God...
 - d. This morning is part 3a... Gospel centered worship.
 - e. Define worship...
 - i. Bible scholars will tell you that the word worship means a lot more than singing. We worship god with our lives, not just our voices. We completely agree...
 - ii. But when our mission statement refers to worship it refers to our corporate worship on Sunday morning.
 - iii. But corporate worship is more than singing. It also includes preaching...
 1. This week- worship through singing.
 2. Next week- worship through preaching.
2. Scripture reading:
 - a. Col. 3:12-17 (16)
3. Prayer for illumination: please join me in prayer:
4. Sermon introduction:
 - a. A few years ago, I visited a friend's church.
 - i. It is a solid church...
 - ii. During the Lord's supper we sang a song...
 - b. Let me read you the lyrics and chorus....
 - i. Are you hurting and broken within?
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?
Jesus is calling
Have you come to the end of yourself
Do you thirst for a drink from the well?
Jesus is calling
 - ii. Chorus- O come to the altar
The Father's arms are open wide
Forgiveness was bought with
The precious blood of Jesus Christ.
 - c. Should protestants sing this song???
 - i. I don't think so...
 - ii. Why? Historically protestants have been passionately opposed to alters in their worship services...
 - iii. RCC have alters, protestant churches have tables.

- iv. Things are sacrificed on alters, Roman Catholics teach that Jesus is re-sacrificed or re-presented every week during communion. But Protestants teach that Jesus was sacrificed once and for all on the cross.
 - v. Protestant churches don't have communion alters they have communion tables...
 - vi. Etc...
- d. FCF: this brings us the question... what determines what we sing in our churches?
- i. Should we sing..
 - ii. Whatever sounds cool?
 - iii. Whatever draws a crowd?
 - iv. Whatever the worship leader wants?
 - v. Whatever does not lead to division or strife?
 - vi. Whatever effects the emotions?
- e. Prop: **I want to persuade you from Col 3:16 that corporate worship must be gospel centered...**
- i. Why this text? This verse is one of the very few verses in the Bible that describes what happened when the saints gathered for corporate worship.
 - ii. It is in the middle of a paragraph describing what it looks like to live out the implications of the gospel.
 - iii. Verses 12 and 17 being the bookends.
 - iv. This verse describes three important aspects of gospel centered worship-
 1. *The content of gospel centered worship.*
 2. *The purpose of gospel centered worship.*
 3. *The attitude of gospel centered worship.*

1. The content of gospel centered worship!

- a. *What is the content of gospel centered worship? The Gospel...*
- b. According to Paul, we should sing primarily about the good news of Jesus Christ!
- c. **Colossians 3:16 (ESV) — 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**
- d. I want to focus on the first phrase...
 - i. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"
 - ii. What is "the word of Christ"?
 - iii. "The word of Christ" means something very specific.

- iv. The phrase “word of God” is used often in the NT, but the phrases “word of Christ” and “word of the Lord” are rare. It is used six times (here, Heb. 6:1; 1 Thess. 1:8; 4:15; 2 Thess. 3:1; 1 Tim. 6:3 (plural)).
 - v. This phrase refers to the words about Christ (objective genitive) or the word that centers on Christ, in other words, it refers to the gospel.
 - vi. This is why some translations say-
 - 1. “Let the message about Christ dwell in you richly” (NLT)
 - 2. “Let the message about the Messiah dwell in you richly”(HCSB)
 - vii. Paul beautifully unpacks this word about Christ in Col. 1:15-20.
- e. What is Paul’s point?
- i. Paul is exhorting the church in Colossae to make sure that the message about Christ drives their corporate worship.
 - ii. Paul tells them that gospel, the word about Christ, must dwell in them *richly!*
 - iii. In other words, this message about Christ must be the primary topic of their preaching and singing.
- f. Application
- i. Won’t this get boring or old after a while? No!!!
 - ii. We can sing about-
 - 1. Christ’s virgin birth.
 - 2. Christ’s humanity
 - 3. Christ’s deity
 - 4. Christ’s righteousness
 - 5. Christ’s sinless life
 - 6. Christ substitutionary death
 - 7. Christ’s mercy
 - 8. Christ resurrection
 - 9. Christ’s present ascension
 - 10. Christ’s present reign
 - 11. Christ’s kingdom
 - 12. Christ’s return
 - 13. Christ’s help for those suffering
 - 14. Christ’s association with the trinity
 - 15. Christ’s work of pouring out the Spirit.
 - 16. Christ’ propitiatory sacrifice
 - iii. Do you remember the “In Christ Alone” Controversy?
 - 1. A few years ago, a mainline denomination included the hymn “in Christ alone” in their latest hymnal, but they changed the words.

2. The original says-
 - a. “til on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied”
 - b. It was changed to... “til on the cross as Jesus died, the love of God was magnified.”
 - c. People are ashamed to talk about Christ bearing the wrath of his heavenly father.
 - d. This should grieve us!
 3. We want to celebrate propitiation... this is part of the “word of Christ” that should dwell in us richly.
- iv. Songs that accurately represent Jesus Christ are the best fuel for worship.
1. Do you remember the first time you heard the song in Christ alone???
 2. Gaithersburg apartment... played it again and again and again and wept!!!
 3. God works through our brains, he does not bypass our brains, content matters, good content fuels passionate worship.
 4. These is why we sing some songs that are wordy!!!
- v. Our first questions about a new song should not be...
1. Do I like the melody?
 2. Does it move me?
 3. Is it catchy?
 4. Instead we must ask, does it cause the word of Christ, the gospel, to dwell in this community richly?
 5. In other words, what is this song saying about Jesus?
 6. Does it even mention him? Not just in passing!
 7. If we can take a song and substitute Jesus name with our wife’s name, and the song works for our wife, we should get rid of it.
8. It is not saying anything unique about Jesus.
 9. Mention planning center’s list of the top 25 songs...
- vi. Should we only sing about Jesus?
1. No...
 2. But I believe that Paul is teaching that we should sing mostly about Jesus.
 3. I love being robustly trinitarian. We should sing more songs about the trinity.
 4. But Jesus said, that he reveals the father to us.
 5. He also said, “if you have seen me, you have seen the father.”
 6. On the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) Jesus said the entire OT was about him.
 7. And we must not forget that one of the Holy Spirit’s primary jobs us to points us to Jesus.
- vii. Yes, there is a time for lament, confession, and sorrow (I’m glad that we are adding songs of lament to our cannon) but living on this side of the cross we know how everything ends.
1. Jesus wins.
 2. And when he returns, he will usher in the new creation.
 3. This is cause for great celebration and joy.

viii. After someone has visited our church for a few weeks they often ask, “why do you sing so many songs about Jesus and the cross?”

1. Is there something greater to sing about???

2. If you don’t like singing about Jesus, you will not like Heaven... According to the book of Revelation the songs we will sing in heaven are mostly about Jesus.

3. **Revelation 5:9–14 (ESV)** — **9** And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, **10** and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” **11** Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, **12** saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” **13** And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” **14** And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

ix. What is accomplished when we sing about Jesus??? This brings us to the next point...

g. *First, the content of gospel centered worship.*

2. The purpose of gospel centered worship.

a. What is the purpose of gospel centered worship? The answer may surprise you... Edification!

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

c. Meaning-

i. As word of Christ dwells richly in the saints, they teach and admonish one another through the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

ii. No one really knows what the phrase “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” refers to. There are many opinions in scholarly literature. What everyone agrees on is that Paul is a fan of singing a diversity of songs about Jesus.

iii. The fact that we teach each other “through” singing is the key...

iv. In other words, Paul is saying... “teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, *through or by means* of sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

d. Explanation-

i. Most commentators believe that the word “singing” modifies the words “teaching and admonishing” for several reasons.

1. Two are very complex grammatical reasons that I will not go into... don't worry!
2. The third reason, and the most compelling, is the parallel passage in Eph. 5:18-19.
3. **Ephesians 5:18–19 (ESV) — 18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

e. Summary...

- i. When the Holy Spirit fills the saints, they teach and admonish one another through gospel-soaked songs. The result is the sanctification or edification of the saints.
- ii. This was the practice in ancient Israel.

1. **Deuteronomy 27:11–13 (ESV) — 11** That day Moses charged the people, saying, **12** “When you have crossed over the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. **13** And these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

f. Application

- i. One of the primary reasons we sing together is to edify others with words about Christ, or the gospel.

1. What a contrast to how most people view worship these days...
2. For many people, corporate worship is a very individual thing, which should not surprise us since our culture is radically and fiercely individualistic.
3. The lights are down low...
4. The volume is turned up...
5. You can't hear anyone else singing.
6. It is just me, my emotions, and Jesus.
7. The goal is warm fuzzies for me, the individual.
8. But this is not the primary point of corporate worship, according to Paul. The point of singing is sanctifying the saints through song.
9. Bobby Jamieson writes,
 - a. “Corporate worship is not about having your personal devotions with a hundred other people in the room.” (Bobby Jamieson, 89)
10. Plus, singing is better corporately... isn't it???
11. There is a theological reason for this...

- a. **Ephesians 2:19–22 (ESV) — 19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. **22** In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- ii. The band is not on the stage performing, they are on the stage to help the church sing to one another and God.
 - 1. They are facilitators of congregational singing.
 - 2. This is not a concert....
- iii. When we sing songs to each other we are sanctifying each other with mini theology lessons.

- 1. We desperately need these lessons...

- 2. When you lose your job... (it is well)

- a. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul

- 3. When you are feeling guilty... (Before the throne)

- a. When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the Just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me
To look on Him and pardon me

- 4. When you are fighting against chronic pain or are severely depressed... (God moves in mysterious ways)

- a. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings, in blessings
In blessings on your head
- b. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense
But trust Him for His grace
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face
- c. His purposes will ripen fast
Unfolding every hour
The bud may have a bitter taste
But sweet will be the flower

- 5. When you have lost a loved one... (it is not death to die)

- a. It is not death to die
To leave this weary road
And join the saints who dwell on high
Who've found their home with God
It is not death to close
The eyes long dimmed by tears

And wake in joy before Your throne
Delivered from our fears

- iv. What are some practical things we can do to get the congregation more involved in singing to each other?
 1. Turn the volume down (we are working on this)
 2. Turn the lights up
 3. Rearrange the seating...
 4. Prepare your hearts on Sunday morning before you come to church.
 5. Show up early...
 6. Sit up front... please!!!
 7. Sing loudly... to each other.

a. *Do we only sing to others? No, we also sing for God. How should we do this? This brings us to the next point...*

- i. *The content of gospel centered worship.*
- ii. *The purpose of gospel centered worship.*

3. The attitude of Gospel centered worship

a. *What is the attitude of gospel centered worship? Thankfulness (an attitude of gratitude)*

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

c. The Colossian Christians are encouraged to sing to the saints and sing to God, *with* thankfulness in their hearts.

d. Paul was an incredibly grateful person...

i. One scholar writes, "Paul mentions the subject of thanksgiving in his letters more often, line for line, than any other Hellenistic (Greek) author, pagan or Christian." (DOPAHL)

ii. The thanksgiving word group shows up 46 times in his letters.

iii. Paul was always giving thanks for something (1 Cor. 1:4, Phil. 1:4, 1 Thess. 1:2, 2:13)

iv. Paul is thankful in his letters for many things, but he seems to be particularly thankful for the gospel.

1. **Colossians 1:12–14 (ESV) — 12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. **13** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

2. See also- 2 Thes. 2:14, 1 Cor. 1:6, Phil 1:5

v. Paul wants us to worship God with thanksgiving in our hearts!

vi. Illustration:

1. There are times when we don't feel like giving thanks
2. The car door shutting on my head...
3. When I was a child, occasionally I would get grumpy, when this happened my dad made me make a list of all the things, I was thankful for.
4. This was surprisingly hard...
5. Putting on thanksgiving produces joy, and joy leads to worship.

e. Application

- i. Do you give thanks more or complain more?
- ii. What would others say?
- iii. We have so much to be thankful for, don't we???
 1. We have life
 2. Health
 3. Freedom
 4. Wealth
 5. We can worship with the saints on the Lord's day
 6. Most of you have jobs and stable families...
 7. But more importantly, if you are a Christian you have been
 8. Forgiven
 9. You are a friend of God.
 10. Even better you are a child of God.
 11. You will spend all eternity in God's presence in resurrection bodies....
 12. Thanksgiving brings joy and honors God.
- iv. Gospel centered thanksgiving motivates worship and fuels more worship.

4. Conclusion:

a. *We looked at-*

- i. *The content of gospel centered worship.*
- ii. *The purpose of gospel centered worship.*
- iii. *The attitude of gospel centered worship.*

b. Let's pray...

c. Lord's supper...

- i. We don't worship like we should!!!
- ii. We come to church grumbling and complaining...
- iii. Etc...