

Sovereign Grace Chapel

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“Singing by the Church”

By: Walter Pendleton

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19).

Ephesians is Paul’s main letter concerning the doctrine of the church, and being so the inspired apostle details different parts of our practice concerning the way we are to conduct ourselves as the church. This is God-breathed instruction to the church through the apostle. Therefore, we would do well to give great diligence of attention to these details. We have here clear testimony, by exhortation, that as believers in Christ we are to sing praises to Christ our

By: Joe Galuszek 2 Cor 11:1-5, 12-15

2 Cor 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

We are surrounded by people who say they are ministers of righteousness. The television is overrun by them, with the exception of Henry Mahan. They lie. It is that simple. They lie about the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. They exalt the work and position of man in salvation and therefore bring down the work of Christ in

Head and Saviour (5:23).

Singing is not some sort of “local assembly putty” used to patch in the holes. In other words, our singing is not something to do to fill in the time between praying and preaching. We are commanded, in direct context to our conduct, including singing, to be actively redeeming time because of its present evil state (5:16). Therefore, singing is that time when the assembled saints join together in one voice to openly praise our Lord, and become a witness against the enemies of God, by praising Christ, while the world sings their own praises and they engage in the consumption of their own evil lusts (5:11-13). While this is certainly true of the assembled

redemption. Here are a few of their own words.

“Jesus was just a man. He did what he did by the Holy Ghost and you can too.” - Gloria Copeland

“Satan thought he had a bad time at Calvary, think what a bad time he had at pentecost with 120 people filled with the Holy Ghost!” -Gloria Copeland

“God is just like the ol’ devil. He can only do what you let him! And Jesus is just like the ol’ devil. He
2 Cor 11 cont. Page 3

assembly, the question must be asked and answered. Is this instruction for the assembled assembly (when we are gathered together) or is it for our private worship (all times other than when we are gathered together) or does it include both? The context demands that it includes both. Take note of the instruction, in the direct context, to husbands and wives (5:22-33), parents and children (6:1-4), and to servants and masters (6:5-9). These all clearly include both our public and private conduct. All of this instruction is to the church whether assembled together or otherwise! Therefore, this “kind” of singing is not to be done solely “in the church,” as some are prone to say,

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but rather it is to be done “by the church” as ordained by God.

But how are we instructed to sing? First, there is the *manner* of our singing. Second, there is the two-fold *direction* of our singing. So first, our singing must be in the *manner* of **speaking** [Greek—*laleo*: to commune in words the substance of something uttered, cf. Jn. 12:49] and it is to be *directed to each other* [speaking to yourselves] and **to the Lord** (5:19). In other words, we are to sing in a *manner* where what we say conveys the actual truth that we are verbally expressing to the benefit of others who are hearing us (cf. I Cor. 14:26). Singing, therefore, is not for entertainment or for a mere emotional charge, as is sadly evidenced so often in our day. Singing is to be done for actual teaching [instruction] and admonishment [to impart positive truth]. This must be done, if it is done in the proper *direction*, to the Lord. In other words, we benefit each other in our singing only when we sing the actual truth of Christ to the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:16). Also, take note of the similarities between Colossians 3 & 4 to Ephesians 5 & 6 (instruction to wives and husbands, parents and children, servants and masters)! So we have two epistles exhorting us as to the *manner* and *direction* of our public as well as our private conduct in singing by the church.

In our singing Paul clearly encourages three different categories of songs: psalms, hymns,

spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Sadly, some have complicated this encouragement and hoisted up their own standards. Men refuse to see the simplicity of Paul’s instruction here. We are to sing psalms and we have one hundred and fifty of them ready for use. They are to be sung! Seeing that even a single psalm (I Cor. 14:26) can contain a plethora of truth, and that truth can be sung from the actual context of the psalm, then there is no limit of possible psalm music to sing. The next type of song is a hymn. The word **hymn** denotes celebration or praise directed toward God Himself. This type of song is one that exalts God in particular, especially in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. No song truly praises God if it rejects or even ignores the reality of God manifest in the flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Redeemer. So we have psalms and hymns, but we also have spiritual songs. This last group is the more general type of song and covers singing about the whole of Christian doctrine, practice, and conduct, yet it must be spiritual (of the Spirit of God in Christ, Col. 3:16-17). Thus even our “odes” (songs) must be Christ centered and be the truth. Then and then only are they truly spiritual songs! There is no place for flesh, conjecture, entertainment, or false doctrine. Our singing is to be no less truth than is our preaching! However, certain groups use these to promote their own ideas. One group uses the psalms (singing with an accompanying instrument, but strictly speaking it is: *to*

pluck the string) to promote all manner of instrumental use. Rather than having a stringed instrument for musical aid they use just about any kind of instrument and that for entertainment. They even play the instrument with no singing, even engaging in the use of drums, organs, cymbals, and even synthesizers, wherein we now have so-called “Christian” rock, pop, and even rap music. Notes are not played as an aid to sing the truth of Christ with the voice from the heart but rather elaborate preludes, overtures, chords and crescendos are employed by both singer and instrument to excite the flesh. To worship God with great joy is honorable but when it gives way to the excitement of the flesh it is sin. Another group uses the word psalms as the distinguishing mode of all types of singing. They reject the literal etymology of the word psalm as defined by the word when used in scripture (to pluck the string of an musical instrument) or the simple meaning (the actual psalms of the OT which are God inspired, spiritual poems which were set to notes) and they hold to a complete reversal of nomenclature where the word *psalm* now means: to sing without instrumental accompaniment. They are allowed to sing a cappella only, and some even prefer songbooks without notes. The clear fact is that Paul does not write that we sing hymns and spiritual songs as psalms i.e. a cappella mode. A psalm is not a **mode** of all singing but one of three types of songs to **Singing..... Page 3**

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be sung, publicly and privately. To battle against fleshly entertainment in song is honorable but even a cappella singing can become entertainment. To demand a cappella singing only, and on top of that to deny fellowship based upon that is the height of man-made doctrine. According to Paul we are to sing psalms (the OT psalms in fact, and nothing in scripture forbids accompaniment by a stringed instrument, it actually includes it), hymns (songs of direct praise to Christ's person and work), and spiritual songs (songs that deal with the whole of scriptural truth). Scripture **alone** is our rule of faith and practice. Any less than this is to reject the words of scripture and any more than this is to add to it.

It is also interesting to note that Paul never speaks of gospel songs, as is so common a phrase in our day. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as a gospel song. There are psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We may sing a psalm that declares the gospel [gospel = the message of the person and work of Christ] (Psalm 1,2,22 are just a few). We may sing a hymn praising God for the gospel, or we may sing a spiritual song about the gospel, but there are no "gospel songs." This phrase has become a catchall for describing just about any religious song about Jesus and going to heaven. If it has Bible words it is called a gospel song. It may well lie about Christ's true person and work but if it promotes LUV for Jesus and "going to heaven" it is called a gospel song. This flippant use of the word "gospel" manifests

the spiritual ignorance of our day!

We should not pass up the truth that our singing is to be done "making melody in your heart [with grace, Col. 3:16] to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). To reject or ignore the free, reigning grace of God in Christ is the height of unbelieving folly. We should note however, that Paul in Colossians does not say that we are to merely sing about grace (although we should) but we are to sing "with **grace in your hearts** to the Lord." Paul is not encouraging the inclusion of grace in our songs he is expressing the absolute necessity of the existence of grace in our hearts. Grace is not just a doctrine we believe it is a blessing of God we possess. God's grace in Christ is a reality not a theory. That is, grace is a reality we have within us not a theory to which we hold. Grace, doctrinally speaking, has to do with the truth that God choose certain people, he sent Christ to suffer under His holy justice and satisfy His holy justice against sin on their behalf, and then He regenerates them by His Spirit and converts them by His gospel, with the purpose of preserving them unto perseverance in the faith, and they shall one day be with Him in glory. Grace, personally speaking, has to do with the factual reality that God did something *to me* and what He did wisely and lovingly constrains me to trust Christ and worship Him. This personal desire as a believer, even when collectively gathered as a group of believers, constrains me to desire to hear Christ preached, it constrains me to pray to Christ, and it even constrains me to sing with and to my brothers and sisters as we sing as to the Lord.

The question I must ask myself, in all diligence, is, when I sing am I singing the word of Christ in truth, and am I doing it in a real relationship with the words I sing and persons with which I sing, and am I doing it as unto the Lord? Singing by the church is a part of our conduct in this world. Let us do it in truth to the honor of Christ.

.....**2 Cor 11 (cont.)**

can only do what you let him."

-Tammy Baker

"I always give people an opportunity to get saved before I pray the prayer of healing."

-Richard Roberts

The following is a 3 point outline of a message given by Jimmy Swaggart:

1) Freewill is your passport to salvation.

2) Freewill is the foundation of salvation.

3) Salvation is of the will of man and not of god.

A preacher had the nerve to tell Earl Cochran that the crucifixion was the biggest mistake ever made, and it never should have happened. This is the depth of lies, deception and ignorance that fills this religious world. This is Christianity to most of America. The almighty God the Father is unknown. The Christ of the Bible who does what He will in heaven and on earth is not preached. The God whose arm is mighty to save is denied. The Holy Spirit who moves when, where and upon whom He wants is never mentioned. But God is true though every man is a liar. The Father purposed to save His people. Christ did redeem His people. The Holy Ghost is bringing life to dead sinners. The lies cannot change the truth of God.



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We also have some messages on the site that may not have appeared in our newsletter.

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