

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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WHAT IS IN YOU WHEN YOU SING?

Paul writes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God" (Colossians 3:16).

Do you ever find yourself entering into the song service just mouthing the words? Your mind is elsewhere, almost totally disengaged from the meaning of the song. Have you ever completed a song service, and if asked, could not remember the songs you had just sung. This is a scary situation to be in. Not that you might be developing a mental disease, but that we could ever offer this kind of empty worship unto God.

Take a moment to think on the following things God connects with our singing that will help you avoid the dreaded "empty" or "unmeaning" song service.

Are you allowing the word of Christ to dwell in you richly? The word of the Lord cannot abide in us and affect our lives if we are not continually reading and meditating upon it. Allowing the word to fill our heart with truth and wisdom, the spiritual part of our being is properly fed, and is alive (Matthew 4:4).

Allowing the word of Christ to dwell in us richly, will require a genuine love for God's word. Whoever wants more and more of something that one does not truly love? Therefore, having a love for God's word, and allowing the word to abide in us, we will be filled with great anticipation to sing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs".

The *spiritual songs* will not be mere words because we have developed a deep appreciation for where spiritual words are leading us. *Hymns*, which praise God, will quickly connect with a mind that has been thinking on God's marvelous ways as revealed in His word. *Psalms* will touch a meaningful chord in our hearts because they have been our steady diet and source for daily meditation.

Is your intent to give and receive teaching and admonition when you sing? When we enter a song service prepared to give and receive instruction, such conscious intent helps guard us from simply mouthing words. We will be more prone to concentrate on the meaning of the words when we enter the song service because we want to learn and be strengthened.

Do you have grace in your heart when you sing? Our hearts should be filled with joy and thanksgiving as we think of God's great love extended to us through His Son, Jesus the Christ. We have been saved from sin and its eternal consequence of death. I am now ready to sing these hymns from the heart with genuine joy.

Do you sing unto the Lord? We speak to one another in our song service, but we also sing unto the Lord. How can I just mouth words unto Him? How can I utter words of songs designed to praise God and they leave my lips having no meaning to me?

An empty song service is the product of empty participants. Fill your heart with God's word and the proper intent before you enter the song service. Because you are filled, the singing will not be empty.

- Jerry Fite, via *Glad Tidings*, 9/21/03

Legalized Murder

Just because something is "legal" does not mean it is right. Gambling is legal in most states, yet it is still condemned by the Bible (Col. 3:5). The sale and consumption of alcohol is legal, but ungodly (1 Pet. 4:3-4). Prostitution is legal in Nevada, but God denounces all sexual immorality (Heb. 13:4). Murder is also legal.

Perhaps the most horrific example of legalized murder is abortion. Since the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion, tens of millions of babies have been killed. It has come to the point that abortion protesters are legally barred from getting close to the slaughter houses (medical clinics). Though it may be legal to kill babies, it is immoral. God condemns it (1 Pet. 4:15). The Bible declares all "murderers...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). This includes those who murder innocent, helpless, defenseless babies in their mothers' wombs.

There is another, pervasive, incipient trend in our society, the murder of the physically and/or mentally disabled. The recent case of Terri Schiavo in Florida highlights the point. She collapsed in 1990 from unknown causes. Since that time she has been in a coma, in need of a feeding tube, but not life support. Her husband, Michael Schiavo, has recently

won the legal right to remove her feeding tube. The result will be a slow death -- starvation over a two-week period. This is murder any way you look at it.

In an article on the Terri Schiavo case, the following shocking statements are made: Not only are many routinely dehydrated to death -- both the conscious and unconscious -- but often the people making decisions to stop food and water, like Michael, have glaring conflicts of interest. Some of the worst such conflicts come not from family members but from a medical establishment eager to remedy the chronic shortage of organ donors. The literature is brimming with advocacy that death be "redefined" to include a diagnosis of permanent unconsciousness.

An article just published in *Critical Care Medicine*, the journal for doctors who specialize in treating the most seriously ill and injured patients, urges the adoption of an even more radical policy. Drs. Robert D. Troug and Walter M. Robinson, from Harvard Medical School and the Medical Intensive Care Unit at Children's Hospital, Boston, want to discard the "dead donor rule" requiring that vital organ donors die before their organs can be procured, writing: "We propose that individuals who desire to donate their organs and who are either neurologically devastated or imminently dying should be allowed to donate their organs, without first being declared dead" (*The Weekly Standard*, Oct. 20, 2003). Let that sink in a minute.

Evolution brought us the doctrine that all men are "created" equal to animals. This laid the ground work for legalized abortion that gave us the idea murdering another human being was acceptable in some circumstances. This prepared us for assisted suicide that told us the value of a life is based on health and/or happiness of the individual. These unholy thoughts and actions are taking their natural course. Now, if a person is physically and/or mentally disabled, others have the legal right to terminate his or her life. More and more voices are calling for such barbarity. All of this is the product of an "advanced" society, one that is "enlightened" and "educated." "Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22).

It is past time that God-fearing people spoke up about these abominable practices. We need to teach our friends, neighbors, and representatives what God says about the sanctity of life. Man, being created in God's image, is not just another animal, but His special creation (Gen. 1:26-27).

Suffering does not give the individual the right to take his own life; nor does it allow another to take his life from him (Job 1, 2). If so, we suppose Job's friends should have killed him the minute they saw him (Job 2:11-13).

People also need to be taught that the murder of God's special creation is not to go unpunished (Gen. 9:5-6). Government should support good and suppress evil, including capital punishment for certain crimes (Rom. 13:1-4). Sadly, it is not doing its job these days. No, we are not to take vengeance, but rest assured that God will (Rom. 12:17-21). As noted above, God has a place in hell for murderers (Rev. 21:8).

Legalizing murder does not make it right. The helpless and defenseless deserve respect because they are God's creatures -- as much as anyone else. They deserve our help and defense (cf. Lk. 10:25-37). So, let us speak out!

- Steven F. Deaton

Total Inherited Depravity

One of the most prevalent doctrines in denominations is Calvinism. The starting point of Calvinism is a doctrine titled "Total Hereditary Depravity." It says that man's nature is completely corrupt, and man does not have the ability to choose spiritual good over evil. The doctrine claims that this sinful, hereditary nature has been passed down through humanity since the time of Adam.

This doctrine reasons that men cannot know God naturally without an extraordinary means of conveying the knowledge of Him to their hearts -- the Spirit must penetrate our hearts to convince us of God's will. One of the most detestable "side effects" of this doctrine is that infants are lost in hell. In our day, this is regarded as anathema by most people. The doctrine is so unpopular that in 1910 the Methodist Church rejected it.

A "proof text" of total depravity is Romans 5:12-19. Paul discusses how sin entered into the world. By one man, Adam, sin entered the world and death by sin; so death passed on all men on the ground that all sinned. Through one act of righteousness, the free gift came to all men.

Another "proof text" of total depravity is Psalm 51:5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." His mother was in sin, not David. If he were brought forth in a garden and conceived in a pumpkin patch, would he be a pumpkin? Jesus was born in a stable; laid in a manger, but He was not a colt or a bale of hay. Jesus was born of woman (Galatians 4:4). Was He totally depraved? What David referred to was the environment in which he was conceived and born. It is a world of lust and evil influences. Nothing in these texts suggest the doctrine of total depravity.

- Kyle Campbell

- > "There's an old Spanish proverb which says that kind words don't wear out the tongue!"
 - > "It is certainly true that every time you lose your temper you advertise yourself!"
 - > "If you want to travel fast, travel light; take off all of your jealousies, selfishness and fears!"
 - > "It's been observed that many people use mighty thin threads when mending their ways!"
 - > "The man who drinks and drives is getting the quart before the hearse!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Abortion!*" (Text: Psa. 139:13-16); Sunday evening: Hebrews class: "We have an altar" (13:10), p. 146.