

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Singing And Making Melody To The Lord

"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" (Ephesians 5:19).

There is much we can learn from this passage of Scripture about our singing to the Lord. It is a shame many in the religious world today will not confine themselves to what is taught in the New Testament about this act of worship. Notice with me a few things which the apostle Paul points out in this verse.

(1) He tells them to speak to one another. We all should participate in our song service. There are at least two things accomplished when we follow this command. (a) We teach and admonish one another as we sing these spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16). When we sing hymns, they provide instruction and inspiration. They move people to be obedient to God. I'm often encouraged after singing to work harder and live better for the Lord. (b) We also sing to praise our Heavenly Father, His Son, and the Spirit. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, both tell us our singing is to the Lord.

(2) We are told the kind of songs we are to sing as well, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The word "psalms" is defined as "a pious song, a psalm" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). In Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, he says, "is used in the New Testament of a religious song in general, having the character of an Old Testament psalm." The meaning of the word "hymns" is, "a sacred song, hymn" (Thayer). Vincent says, "A hymn is a song of praise." Thayer defines the word "songs" as "a song, lay, ode." Bullinger in his word study says of the word "spiritual" as "probably implying that the songs were composed by spiritual men; or that they related to spiritual things" (A Critical Lexicon And Concordance To The English And Greek New Testament). This eliminates all songs which are not spiritual, which fail to praise God, and do not teach and edify those who sing to love and obey the Lord.

(3) The command given is to sing. We are not told to play or beat. If we simply follow the instruction given there would be no discussion about the kind of music in our worship service today. The only music which would be heard as people worship the God of heaven would be vocal, not instrumental. There is no command for such, no example of a New Testament church using such, and nothing is implied in any verse in the law of Christ that something mechanical is to be used while singing praises to God.

(4) We are told what is to be used by each individual when they sing, making melody in one's heart. The word "melody" is defined as "primarily to twitch, twang, then, to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, and hence, in the Sept., to sing with a harp, sing psalms, denotes, in the N.T., to sing a hymn, sing praise" (Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words). What instrument does the text tell us to play? It is the heart, not a mechanical instrument. In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he tells them, "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (3:16). Every act of worship we are instructed to do is to be from the heart. Our minds must concentrate and be upon the service to be rendered unto our God. More is involved than just lip service. Carefully notice the definition given of the word melody by Mr. Vine. In the New Testament we are to sing, plucking the heart strings.

I have never heard anyone say it is a sin for us to just sing without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments. Yet, if such is not authorized by God, and it is not, then to act would be in violation of His will and would constitute sin (2 John 9). Why not just do what we have authority for and let everything else alone? Some have told me in the past they have a piano or an organ because they like the way it sounds. Who are we trying to please, God or man (Galatians 1:10)? We must simply follow the Bible (1 Peter 4:11). Are you willing to do that?

- Jimmy R. Mickells, via *The Hickory Heights Messenger*, 12/18/2022

Parents Need Our Help!

We see a mother trying to quiet her three young children during worship and we are reassured of our wisdom in not having a family. Or, we look at the struggling efforts of parents and sigh with relief that all our children have "left the coop." Yes, we are content to know that our present list of responsibilities do not include "training up a child" — or do they?

While it is true that we are not obligated by New Testament teachings to raise a family — this does not remove all responsibility in the realm of child rearing. We may not have any

children of our own, or at least none still under our roof; yet we still must encourage those who are actively engaged in raising *their* children.

Elders have a responsibility to parents in that they must inform them of God's will in this area. The qualifications of elders, including "apt to teach" and "one that ruleth well his own house" (1 Timothy 3:2-4), make them good sources of truth and advice. Elders must also be willing to discipline ungodly members whose example and influence impede the efforts of parents.

The Bible class teacher can be a great help or hindrance in "training up a child." When children inform their parents that their teacher condones social drinking, dancing, immodesty or even (would you believe it?) polygamy — it's time for a new Bible class teacher! Parents need teachers who love God's word and are willing to live as well as teach the truth. Another group which affects the efforts of parents is other parents. I was recently talking to a mother who was having difficulty in convincing her son that Christians should not attend dances. His main argument was that other "members of the church" were allowing their children to attend! A divided kingdom is formed when some parents are genuinely trying to nurture their children "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4), and other parents don't seem to care to do the same. Woe unto worldly members whose leniency with their children hinder the efforts of godly parents!

The last group that is involved in "training up a child" is the group that includes every other Christian.

One of the most destructive forces to godly training of the young is the flippant attitudes and lifestyles of other members. When adults whisper and laugh with the teenagers during worship, while the smaller children watch with interest, parent's efforts are hindered. Christ warns us "But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him *that* a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Some of the young have their eyes on you. What kind of lifestyle are you showing them?

Elders, Bible class teachers, other parents and in fact, every Christian will answer to God for his encouragement (or lack of it) to the efforts of Christian parents. What will your answer be?

- Kevan O'Banion, via *Plain Talk*, June, 1980

The Faithful Will Be Comforted!

The Scriptures affirm that there are some people who die having lived in a condition that the Lord views as righteous. A poor man named Lazarus is just such a person who, following his death, found himself (his spirit, cf. Ecclesiastes 12:7) "carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). Among those faithful to Jehovah God, Abraham's bosom would be a condition of reward for the faithful and great satisfaction, comfort (verse 25), for the spiritual descendants of this great patriarch and example of true faith. This realm of comfort was called "Paradise" by the Lord Jesus as He and one of the criminals hung on the crucifixion cross dying (Luke 23:43). Upon the criminal's statement of the Lord's innocence and request to be remembered by Him in His kingdom, the Christ said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." Obviously, such a place of comfort would be a place of great happiness!

The apostle Paul maintained strong confidence that when the tent of his physical body was laid in the grave, his spirit, being "absent from the body", would likewise "be at home with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8). Being a Christian, Paul's hope was having "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1). To Paul, death was merely departing from the flesh in order to "be with Christ, for that is very much better;" (Philippians 1:23). For Paul and every Christian, "to die is gain." (verse 21). As John's inspired pen wrote, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13).

The only thing that could prevent our deaths is the Lord interrupting history in His second coming (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Otherwise, we will all experience physical death (separation of body and spirit, cf. James 2:26). The account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 contains truth delivered by the Lord Jesus. He never deceives, no matter what His critics say! The Lord's lessons are always true to life. Lack of consciousness or torment for the wicked is an appealing concept to those who design their own doctrines, but such is not true to the doctrine of Christ. In this account of the Lord's words, the power of Scripture testimony is affirmed!

Christians trust the Holy Scriptures of Jehovah God! "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His godly ones." (Psalms 116:15). Are you living in such a way that you will be with the Lord and other faithful servants in paradise?

- Gary Smalley

- * "Your mind is a garden; Your thoughts are the seeds; You can grow flowers; Or you can grow weeds!"
 - * "Grace is not an excuse to sin, it is the power not to!"
 - * "Have your tools ready and God will supply the work!"
 - * "He who is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else!"
 - * "I know not what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)