## TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

*Welcome by: Daniel Balch/Opening Prayer by: Bobby Rader*
*Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch*

#797 Lord, We Come Before Thee Now
#543 Wonderful Words of Life
*Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary*
#383 Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross
*Communion Devotional by: Jerry Mallernee*
***Lord's Supper and Contribution***

#650 Send the Light
***Sermon: "Paul's Appeal"***
***Acts 25:1-26:31***

#904 Have You Been to Jesus
#895 I'll Live in Glory
*Closing Prayer by: Zach Arthur*

***Tonight is our***
***2nd Sunday Evening***
***Service Project***

***Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth***

**Sunday**: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
**Wednesday**: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Dec. 11, 2022

# *"Stand Firm in…Liberty"*

Galatians 5:1

### The Doctrine of Singing

For several years now, most of the bulletin articles I have written in December have focused on the "Christmas songs" that are commonly published in our hymnals. The purpose of that has been to get us to really think about they content of the lyrics so that we understand the message they are conveying; ideally, that will create a deeper appreciation of these works and even recover them for use in the worship assembly, where we sometimes shy away from them.

But we might wonder why that even matters. When we sing together, *we are addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart* **(Eph 5:19).** There is a conversation going on here: we are speaking to each other, and we are speaking to God. What we say when we sing matters!

We talked about this on Wednesday evening in our Bible class. We are studying the church deeply, and currently, we are discussing what we do when we gather together. One of those things, obviously, is singing. When we talk about singing in the worship service, so much of our time historically has been spent defending acapella. But we seldom make a positive case for why sing in the first place, something that is far more fundamental. It seemed to me it might be beneficial to share some of those insights in this space for those who are not present on Wednesday so that we take singing more seriously (and, if nothing else, so we know why I keep writing those articles about Christmas carols!

1. **Singing is a way of praising God.** In **Heb 2:12**, the writer depicts Christ right there in the assembly of his people, singing along with them from **Psalm 22:** "*I will tell of your name to my brothers, in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise*" Many of the Psalms are praises to God. Christians used these from the earliest days of the church, as the passage from **Ephesians** quoted above indicates as well as its parallel in **Col 3:16.** They have continued to be a staple of Christian worship ever since: go read **Psalm 148**, for instance, and then think about our hymn "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah." We sing the psalms in praise of God more than we realize!

# Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

## *Our Sick*

**Gary Nielsen** is in Methodist Hospital.

**Dixie Bay** had knee surgery last week.

## *Continued Prayers*
## *(Need cards, phone calls & visits)*

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Susan McCain, Gary Nielsen

## *Shut Ins*
## *(Need cards, phone calls & visits)*

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

## *Our Missionaries*

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

## *Upcoming Activities*

**Elders, Minister** meeting Monday, Dec. 12th at 5:30 p.m..

We will have a meal on Wednesday, Dec. 14th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Dec. 15th at 8:00 a.m.

**Primetimers** will have a Christmas party on Tuesday, Dec. 20th at 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship room. Bring a $10 gift to exchange. It will be a potluck dinner.

## *Sympathy*

We extend our sympathy to Audrey Duhon and her family on the passing of her husband, Howard Duhon, The funeral was Saturday.

## *Thank You*

Church of Christ Brothers & Sisters,
Thank you so very much for texts, phone calls & cards.
I appreciate you all.
Thank you again from the bottom of my heart,
Love you all very much.
Judy Jones

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2. **Singing is a way of giving thanks to God.** The next verse of that text from **Ephesians** continues, *giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* **(5:20).** Both it and the parallel in **Col 3:16** connect the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thanksgiving to God. Our hearts should be overflowing with gratitude to the Lord for all the ways that he has blessed us, to the point that it is almost as if we cannot help but burst into song. And many of our songs do just that—we sang several of them recently at Thanksgiving! But that should characterize our response to God's beneficence at all times.

3. **Singing is a confession of faith.** Consider what the Hebrews writer says: *Through Him therefore let us constantly and at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that thankfully acknowledge and confess and glorify His name.* **(Hebrews 13:15 AMP)** When we sing, we acknowledge God by praising him, telling of his mighty acts, confessing our faith in him, and expressing gratitude for what he has done for us. *There is a God, He is alive, in Him we live, and we survive; from dust our God created man, He is our God, the great I Am.* These songs of praise and adoration pay tribute to our God.

4. **Singing is a way of preaching and teaching Christ.** Christians sing about Christ. If we praise God, it is especially for what he has done in and through Christ. If we give thanks God, it is especially for his *indescribable gift* of Christ. If we confess our faith, it is especially our trust in what God has done for us in Christ. If we instruct one another, it is in the new life we live in Christ. So when we, as the body of Christ, sing about him, we are preaching Christ. We often think of our singing as primarily vertical in orientation—that is, that it is directed to God. But remember that there is a horizontal component too, that is at least as heavily emphasized in the NT as the vertical: we are having a conversation with each other. We teach and admonish each other in our songs.

5. **Singing exemplifies the unity of the church.** Raising our voices together expresses and symbolizes that we are all one people of God, *that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* **(Romans 15:6).** Not only does our singing express that we are united to the Lord and each other, it actually helps to accomplish unity. There's a reason why schools, clubs, and even nations have songs: they create a sense of solidarity, reinforcing who we are and what we believe. *I'm not ashamed to own my Lord, nor to defend his cause; maintain the honors of His Word, the glory of his cross.*

There are other doctrinal points we could mention here, and we talked about more than these in class. But these are sufficient to make the point: singing is powerful. And it is important. I hope that we all feel a deeper appreciation of it as we lift our voices in song together this morning.

***Bryant Perkins***