



Nov 15, 2020 - The Evidence of Song - Col 3:15-16; I Chron 16

OPEN

This past Wednesday at the 54th Country Music Awards Eric Church was awarded “Entertainer of the Year”. He stated, “*It’s gonna be music that brings us out of this. That is the one thing that’s gonna save the entire world.*” How will country music rescue humanity from the grips of a global pandemic!? Yet Mr. Church’s comment certainly shines a spotlight on the role of music and song in our lives.

In our current sermons we have been trying to see are the specific pieces of evidence which reveal a follower of Jesus to be one who lives with thankfulness. So far, we have considered seven indications of gratitude:

Joy Submission Generosity Freedom Celebration Intercession Witness

Today we consider the evidence of **song**. Think about it. What is typical for thankful person? They have a song of joy in their heart which is often heard through a song or even a happy whistle!

In their book ***Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel*** (Multnomah, 1982) Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer write, “*It would be difficult to overstate the power of the musical language. It has emotional-mental stimulation unmatched by any other means of communication.*” (160) Referring to the song of Moses and Miriam in Exodus 15, they go on to say, “*Each time God did great things for His people they burst into songs of praise.*” (161)

DIG

When do you burst into a song of praise to God? Such songs are fundamentally expressions of thanks to God for redemption – which roots our worship in the goodness and grace of God. Today we will look at two passages which reveal the importance of song as an evidence that we are thankful people.

Do you have a thanksgiving-song in your soul?

Read Colossians 3:15-16. In these verses we are given two invitations. Consider two “rules of life” for having a song in our soul.

- ***The “peace of Christ” – v. 15***

This is the truth that His peace (think of all our salvation accomplishes) can actually rule (literally, “umpire”) in our lives. What does this provide? It leads to unity in the “one body” to which all Christians have been called. What is included as a part of this process? We are commanded to be thankful!

- ***The “word of Christ” – v. 16***

The second invitation is to allow the word about Jesus Christ to richly dwell in our hearts – to give ample room for Jesus in our lives. This is a deep “implanting” of the Gospel! What is the result? Christians fully engage in the wisdom of God to the point where we share it with one another. Paul highlights the obvious tools of **teaching** and **admonishing** (or counsel).

We are also given the tool of song to share God’s truth with one another! Again, what does Paul state is the vital accompaniment of such praise? It is thanksgiving! Paul highlights musical worship...but not to negate worship in all of life. We discover then that **psalms**, **hymns**, and **spiritual songs** are effective communicators of the truth *and* experience of the Gospel.

I remember chapel at St Michaels University Boys School at age 13. I noticed that when we would sing great hymns of the faith they meant something to me. But to my classmates these songs were just a silly joke. What made the difference? Because of God’s grace, I already had a song in the soul!

Though it is doubtful that St. Augustine said these words, yet tradition says he did...nevertheless, these are insightful thoughts about thanksgiving song:

“...he who sings his prayer prays twice. But before this praising of God in song can be truly prayerful, the spirit of praise must run high in the soul. The song of the lips must first have been a song in the soul.” (***Musart, Vol I-V, 1949***)

Read more <https://fauxtations.wordpress.com/2015/02/24/augustine-he-who-sings-prays-twice/>

Do you sing a thanksgiving-song in the sanctuary?

Read I Chronicles 16:4, 7, 34-36, 41. In this passage we have a wonderful example of grateful song. The ark had just been brought back to Jerusalem and a deeply delighted David arranged music for the sanctuary. There are three important principles about *thanksgiving-song* in this passage. Please bear in mind that even though this was a specific **event** yet it portrays a practice of musical worship to **nurture** the spiritual life of God’s people.

Here are three principles from the story and song found in I Chronicles 16. Also, take some time to reflect on the “self check” questions about your own engagement in thanksgiving-song.

- **Christians must be intentional about singing songs of thanksgiving to God – vv. 4,7**

Is a song of thanksgiving to God a priority in your life?

Do you intentionally or occasionally thank God?

- **Christians find their life’s purpose in singing songs of thanksgiving – vv. 34-36**

Why do you thank God?

Is your thanksgiving circumstantial (what God has done for you) or substantial (who God is)?

Do you see the giving of thanks as your *raison d’etre*?

- **Christians need to dedicate their best to singing songs of thanksgiving to God – v. 41**

Do you thank God with a sense of devotion or duty?

Does spiritual entitlement choke out your thanks?

REFLECT

Thanksgiving reaches a critical crescendo as we engage in song that grows from a heart redeemed by Christ’s blood. Here are some practical steps to be more engaged in a life of musical worship- thanks.

- **Songs can stick** - Consider Edgar Dale’s “cone of experience”...if we only hear, or see something, we learn it somewhat well. But if we act on it and experience it, it will be more well learned. We must welcome song as an experiential opportunity in which we deepen our appreciation and devotion to God. Because songs “stick” they help to unify believers in a greater depth of thanksgiving-song. Songs help us *rejoice in, reflect on, and retain* the Good News about Jesus Christ.
- **Acquire an account** - There is no reason that you cannot saturate yourself in wonderful worship music. I suggest that you subscribe somewhere and carry psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in your phone wherever you go.

- **Meaningful not mechanical** - This is a hymnbook. It is not sacred. Yet it contains life transforming truth, set to song. Whether it is an ancient lectionary or the latest digital file, there is no perfect worship music “script”. True worship is in “Spirit and truth” as we read in John 4:24.
- **Exalting and edifying** - In advising the Corinthians Paul wrote, “*I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.*” (I Cor 14:15) Why is this important? Because the goal of our singing is not only *exalting* God. We also build up the Body who can “say ‘Amen’ to *[our] thanksgiving*” (v.16).

For further reflection...

- Take some time to read the entire thanksgiving-song which is recorded in I Chronicles 16:8-36.
- Here are some links to thanksgiving-song presented by Todd Gallahar, who was our musical guest November 15

[*It Is Well With My Soul*](#)

[*Wisdom and Grace*](#)

[*Be Still and Know I AM*](#)