

The Music Mentality

Tim Dubberly, January 23, 2005

Text: Ephesians 4:17,18

Introduction:

Have you ever wondered about music and how or why God created it in us? Does God really want us to go around with a song or melody in our heart, and how important is it?

Paul wrote to the church, at Ephesus, to show the relation between spirit filled and melody filled. He was convinced that the point of overflow for the Spirit is singing, and he suggested that the Spirit would energize us to sing, or at least have a melody in our heart.

Music has a place in our worship. Although, music is not worship, it can be used to worship God. Music is not worship music until you worship with it.

■ In a large stone cathedral in Europe there was a large, magnificent pipe organ. It was a Saturday afternoon, and the sexton was making one final check of the choir and organ loft high in the balcony at the back of the church. He was startled to hear footsteps echoing up the stone stairway, as he thought the doors were all locked and no one was around. He turned to see a man in slightly tattered traveling clothes coming toward him. "Excuse me, sir," the stranger said. "I have come from quite a distance to see the great organ in this cathedral. Would you mind opening the console so that I might get a closer look at it?" The custodian at first refused, but the stranger seemed so eager and insistent that he finally gave in. "May I sit on the bench?" That request of the stranger was met with absolute refusal by the cathedral custodian. "What if the organist came in and found you sitting there? I would probably lose my job!" But again the stranger was so persistent that the sexton gave in. "But only for a moment," he added.

The custodian noticed that the stranger seemed to be very much at home on the organ bench, so he was not completely surprised when he was asked by the stranger to be allowed to play the organ. "No! Definitely not!" said the custodian. "No one is allowed to play it except the cathedral organist." The man's face fell, and his deep disappointment was obvious. He reminded the custodian how far he had come and assured him that no damage would be done. Finally the sexton relented and told the stranger he could play the instrument, but only a few notes and then he would have to leave. Overjoyed, the stranger pulled out some stops and began to play. Suddenly the cathedral was filled with the most beautiful music the custodian had ever heard in all his years in that place. The music seemed to transport him heavenward.

In what seemed all too short a time, the dowdy stranger stopped playing and slid off the organ bench. And started down the stairway. "Wait!" cried the custodian. "That was the most beautiful music I have ever heard in the cathedral. Who are you?" The stranger turned for just a moment as he replied, "Mendelssohn." The man was none other than Felix Mendelssohn, one of the greatest organists and composers of the nineteenth century!

The cathedral sexton was alone now in that great stone edifice, the beautiful organ music still ringing in his ears. "Just think," he said softly, "I almost kept the master from playing his music in my cathedral!"

Each one of us has the opportunity to have a personal relationship with the Master of the universe, Jesus Christ. Let's not keep Him from "playing His music" and being Master of our lives!

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) pp. 71-72.

Today I would like to share some historical bible truths concerning music and its place in the life of the Christian.

I. The origin of music and place in the church (17,18a).

A. Pre- Davidic music was extemporaneous.

- In the early times of biblical history music was used for merrymaking, incantation, and marital noisemaking.
- It was not used in the presence of God for worship.
- The songs of the well diggers in Numbers 21:17 and the harvesters in Isaiah 16:10 were songs not used very much on a repeated basis.

B. David brought music into the presence of God through worship.

- From Jubal to David music was considered neutral, not religious or associated with worship.
- Women, prior to David's reign, preformed most of the music.
- He brought music from the secular into the sacred.
- He set up tabernacle and gave the Levites new jobs. 4000 were trained to be musicians before the Lord. They were divided into three groups.

C. David was a man after Gods own heart.

- He also invented and constructed instruments to be used in God's service.
- He passed this skill unto his son, Solomon, who also wrote 1009 songs.
- David took music and began to worship God with it.

II. Music is described by three components (18b).

A. Paul labeled the first as psalms.

- Psalms are songs taken from scripture.
- These songs can either be about Him or too Him.
- Songs like "Enter His gates with thanksgiving in your heart".

B. The second was Hymns.

- These are musical songs about God to God.
- These songs are designed to be intimate.
- Our hymnbook is more spiritual songs than hymn songs because they are more testimonials, for they talk more about Him than too Him.

C. Then there are the spiritual songs.

- The Greek implies, "extemporaneously" composed musical numbers expressing ecstasy.
- These songs are more descriptive about things He has done and accomplished.

III. Music changes in the church.

A. A glimpse of the past to the present.

- When the church was poor, it felt rich to have one book and one light to read and sing by.
- As the church prospered we developed choir lofts and everyone had a book.
- In many churches today there are no more choir lofts and no one is seated while singing is being conducted.

There have been many changes in styles, tempos, and content from One generation to another as men seek to express their worship to God.

■ A young boy complained to his father that most of the church hymns were boring and old-fashioned, with tiresome words that meant little to his generation. His father challenged him with these words: "If you think you can write better hymns, why don't you?"

The boy accepted the challenge, went to his room, and wrote his first hymn. The year was 1690, and the young man was Isaac Watts. Among his 350 hymns are "Joy to the World," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "I Sing the Almighty Power of God," and many other classics.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 154.

B. How music affects our worship.

- It has often been said that we learn more doctrine from the hymnbook than the bible.
- Singing can be more of a powerful teaching tool than preaching.
- Singing should be a melodious flow of God's spirit through our spirit that produces a flow of worship and a life of godliness.

C. The Holy Ghost helps us to worship through music.

- Paul thought it impossible to be filled with the spirit and the word of God without also being filled with song.
- He believed the Spirit is a singing spirit, and the bible is a hymnbook.
- He believed that God's presence and his precepts would stir such an inward stir that only singing could release it.

IV. The purpose of music.

A. Music is the release for our spirit.

- The black slaves of our history sang to release their frustrations, anger, and hopelessness.
- They also sang to energize themselves for continued labor.
- And they sang to maintain a sense of community in a lifestyle, which did not belong to them.

B. Music is an expression of our heart.

- Music can be worship or it can be entertainment.
- Worship demands participation.
- Sitting in the pew and listening to the music is not worship if you do not sing it as a praise or praise God as you agree with its praise to God.

C. It comes from the deep emotion of the heart.

- It can stimulate others to feel what we feel.
- Its power in the church can unite worshipers regardless of social standing or racial background.
- Music gives vocabulary to worship.

Conclusion:

Paul realized the power of music that came from the heart of a Holy Ghost filled child of God. He wanted us to sing to the church family and sing to God music that would speak to God of God.

One of the elements, in my study, has led me to see the church in my own lifetime. Men and women came and prayed and came into God's presence through prayer and much of their worship, through song, was spiritual songs. However, as times have changed, the church went through a season when its members stopped coming into God's presence through prayer and the power began to cease because the music alone could not bring them into the presence of God. The church tried through programs, ministries, and even changing the face of music in the church world. Today, most of the music sung is choruses, and the reason is because, they help to bring people into the presence of God, for the sing to God of God.

My conclusion to this study is simply this; we need to go back to praying before service to enter into the presence of God. Then we can sing songs that will help us worship Him. These songs need to be hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs, a blended mixture to cause a release in our spirit of love, praise, and affection to God.

Today, as you hear Paul's words to the church at Ephesus, is there a song in your heart? If not, perhaps its because there is no relationship with Jesus Christ.

■ I have a dear friend, Bill Mann, who has one of the great singing voices in the Christian church in this nation. I remember some years ago he told me about the most special concert in his life. It was after the concert was over and he returned to his dressing room. Waiting for him there was a woman who was blind, deaf, and mute. Through the lady who was with her, she asked if he would sing for her the last song he sang in the concert. "Surely," he said.

And standing only five inches from his face--and placing her fingers on his lips and on his vocal cords, he sang again, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" As he finished singing, a tear trickled down the face of Helen Keller. Indistinctly, she said, as the words were repeated by the lady with her, "I was there!"

"Deaf, blind, mute from birth?" you say. "Isn't that too much for one individual to bear?"

No, as a matter of fact, of all the women in this nation there was probably no contemporary who gave others more insight into the meaning of suffering than Helen Keller--or more insight into the love of God.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 277.

My Challenge:

- Search yourself and see if you came today to worship Him in song.
- Ask Him to help you to walk close to Him that the joy of the Lord would produce the melody in your heart unto the Lord.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and create that hunger and desire to worship God in song.