

Musical Worship

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[0 : 00] It is a joy to be here with you all this morning. We're taking a small break from our regular exposition of the gospel according to John.

! Over the past couple weeks, Nathan has preached on elders and deacons. And this morning, as Nathan mentioned, we're going to be in the book of Colossians to consider the command, the purpose, and the design of singing within the church.

So if you would, go ahead and turn with me to Colossians 3. We'll be reading and looking at verse 16. Our text reads, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Let's pray. Father, we praise you for your word this morning, for the gathering of your saints. And yes, Lord, for the singing. We pray that you would enlighten the eyes and the ears of our hearts, that we may come to know you more deeply this morning.

We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. All right. Throughout the book of Colossians, Paul and Timothy are focusing a lot on the person and work of Christ.

[1 : 27] He spends a bulk of his time leading into chapter 3, reemphasizing that Christ is preeminent and rightly to be worshiped. They are correcting the worship of man and imparting the worship of Jesus, which, to be clear, is not just through singing.

Worship is much more expansive than singing. But as we come into chapter 3, Paul describes Christian living in light of God, creating a new man from death to life in Christ.

And not only is he producing new individuals, but he is building his church. Those in Christ are to be putting off the old man with its practices and putting on the new man with Christ's likeness.

All right. And then Paul goes to give us some commands to achieve that and what that might look like. And we find ourselves this morning focusing on one of these commands in verse 16.

So the first part of our text, it starts with an objective and a precondition, dwelling on the word that guides us to the rest of our text, teaching through singing.

[2 : 36] So we exhorted to dwell on the word and one way to do that. And as a result of doing that, we sing. To begin with, the command to let the word of Christ.

In our English language, the word let is often used to like allow or permit. The Greek, however, is a little trickier than that to give the English a clear translation.

The word in Greek, the word let actually isn't even there. It just starts with the word of Christ. It's more of an exhortation than asking permission.

Paul's not asking us to give permission for the word of Christ to dwell richly. Piper brought to memory how we might start off the Olympic Games. Let the games begin. That announcement is not asking the crowd to convene on when or how to start the games.

But it's more commanding, start the games. So the English doesn't have a true one-to-one for how this text reads, but he is being exhortative here. There's some debate on what the word of Christ actually is, whether it is the canon of Scripture, the words Jesus actually said, or the general message of Christ the gospel.

[3 : 47] Later in chapter 4, verse 3, Paul is talking about sharing the gospel, and he uses the word there to communicate that. And in Romans 10, he says, faith comes from hearing through the word of Christ.

So I believe he's specifically referring to the gospel here, and that's what I want our hearts to be thinking about. But since Scripture is ultimately one metanarrative of the gospel message of Christ, it's breathed out by God, I think we can take this either way and not lose too much of the intent.

But I do want to specifically be meditating on Christ and the gospel, since that's the main focus throughout the book. So the word of Christ is foundational. I mean, it is its utmost importance to anything we do, and that particularly includes our singing.

And I'll explain more why it's a particularly important singing later, but as God himself birthed human history with his words, the Christian is born again through the word of Christ, the gospel.

And at all times, we should be immersed in this truth. It is our identity once the gospel has taken its regenerating effect in our hearts.

[5 : 02] And this message, to be clear, is that God created all things. The first humans, Adam and Eve, fell to temptation. They disobeyed God and introduced sin into the world.

And the sin of our first parents is now inerrant to all of us. Therefore, we all now disobey God, and this separates us from fellowship with him. We stand condemned for breaking his good and moral law.

And the sentence being eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might. But praise the Lord, Christ came to uphold the law perfectly, and then dying the death that we deserved, so that we would not have to.

Through faith and repentance of sin, this can be true for anyone. For you and your household, for the Jew, the Greek, the male, the female, the slave, the master, anyone confessing and believing leaves you justified instead of being condemned.

And being justified, we are reconciled to God and adopted into his family as his children. And I love that this is the beginning of our text. I mean, it truly sets the foundation for what proceeds.

[6 : 17] And this word of Christ, this gospel message, is to dwell in us richly. Our goal in singing is to draw nearer to Christ and into deeper fellowship with him.

And we're going to focus a lot on music today, but our musical worship is not worship, unless it is aimed and set upon Christ in his glory, not the glory of the music itself.

Paul does not say, let the music dwell in us richly, but rather the word of Christ. So the word dwell here alludes to God's dwelling place amidst the Israelites and now in his covenant people.

And 1 Corinthians 4, or 3, excuse me, 1 Corinthians 3, Paul interprets Ezekiel by saying, you are God's temple and God's spirit dwells in you.

So the heart of the believer is now the dwelling place of God. Christ has torn the veil. And so now his word, the word of Christ, is harbored in the hearts of Christians by the spirit.

[7 : 20] And as God dwelled in the Holy of Holies, his word now dwells in us. And the glories of the word of Christ, they're rich. They are rich in and of themselves.

And it is like a deep mine with the most precious of jewels to lay hold of. And the deeper you go, the more you realize how vast that mine is.

And those jewels become more and more precious to you. It ought to and it does. It captivates our whole being, our hearts, our minds, our souls.

And it produces outward fruit. We become more refined and more Christ-like the more the word dwells within us. And that means we have to consume it.

We have to meditate on it. We have to marvel at its beauty. Study it. Practice it. Love it. And yeah, sing it. And for this to be true of us, for us to have the word of Christ dwelling in us richly, we have to have eyes to see and ears to hear that only the spirit of God can give us.

[8 : 27] So therefore we must pray for the word to dwell in us richly. And we must believe it like our life depends on it because it does. So this word is rich. And if the eyes and the ears of our heart have been opened to it, it will produce wisdom with its knowledge.

It's not just enough to know it. As James tells us, you believe God is one, you do well. Even the demons believe and they shudder. You can know all about the gospel, the word of Christ, but not truly grasp it.

And therefore it be worthless to you. And perhaps worse than worthless, leaving you without excuse to worship the right God rightly.

But if the gospel is dwelling richly within you, it will produce wisdom. And this wisdom should characterize how we teach and admonish one another. In our text, it specifically moves us to teach and admonish each other through singing and teaching wisely through our singing at that.

So the ESV, it is a very faithful translation. But one point of clarity I do want to address is regarding the commas in our text. I think it is best understood to add a through or by after those phrases about the dwelling and the teaching.

[9 : 46] The ESV puts these verbs in the present tense to communicate the flow of this verse. It's all connected. It's happening together. But the commas kind of can tempt me to read them as three separate commands.

So I think it's helpful to read it like this. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly by teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

We are actually teaching and admonishing one another through our psalms and our hymns and our spiritual songs. And the outcome is that the word of Christ dwells in us more richly.

It's not just that we have three separate commands. Let the word of Christ dwell, teach and admonish, and also sing. Instead, we have these three commands that are connected together and influence one another.

And the big one I want to really harp on to connect is the teaching and the singing, teaching one another with psalms. So we have a parallel text in Ephesians 5.

[10 : 49] You're probably familiar with it. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.

Same author, probably written from the same prison, at the same time, sent via the same person, Tychicus. And notice it starts with being filled, and then it goes on to command us to address or to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

So those lyrics are sung to one another as well as to God. And another compelling reason is more systematic to consider it this way. 2 Timothy, All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

All scripture for teaching, reproof and correction, or admonishment. Right? Well, the scriptures are filled with songs. Have you been taught and admonished by the book of Psalms?

Yeah. Psalms is actually one of the most quoted books. It is the most quoted book in the New Testament. Also, the Song of Solomon. We have Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Moses.

[12 : 08] There's 185 songs in God's word. And God's word is profitable for teaching and admonition, that the man of God may be complete. So singing is a means for the words to dwell in us richly, as it teaches us and as we teach one another through them.

And so since we're teaching and admonishing one another through these songs, they better be true, soul-sustaining, God-honoring songs. It is critical that these songs are informed by the word and that those truths run through the lyrics and ring through the musical elements.

The congregation, the songwriters, the music leaders, all need to be dwelling on the word richly to properly teach and admonish one another. We want to be sure that we are clinging to the word of Christ, not man-made innovation.

And there is room for heresy to invade the church through the songs we sing, as not all of the songs are verbatim scripture. False teachers will secretly bring in destructive heresies.

And it's very easy to do that in singing. Destructive songs might say some true things about the gospel, but not the full gospel, which leads people astray.

[13 : 29] I've noticed in most of these songs you rarely hear about sin, but you do hear all about how much Jesus loves you. And sadly, they miss the true grace and love and mercy of Christ by singing as if they deserve Christ's love.

Here's one example from Hillsong. It says, Don't let your heart be troubled. Hold your head up high. Don't fear no evil. Fix your eyes on this one truth.

God is madly in love with you. Take courage. Hold on. Be strong. Remember where your help comes from. There's some scripture thrown in here, but where's the magnificent grace that Christ came to cancel the record of debt you owe?

Where is the assurance being placed? Is it on Christ or is it on your loveliness? Places that claim the name of Christ are singing songs like that all over this morning.

And this is why it's particularly critical for the word of Christ to dwell in us richly, with all wisdom, as we consider singing. It's either teaching us to glorify Christ or to glorify man.

[14 : 51] So this also means the lyrics should be clear and not ambiguous. Otherwise, we might not be clinging to anything substantial for our souls.

It can be a mere emotional experience, while no instruction or admonishment is actually occurring. The Riseners have been on a Lion King kick recently.

And I was reminded of the song, Can You Feel the Love Tonight? And Timon starts that song really vaguely, and he says, I can see what's happening. And Pumbaa says, what?

Timon says, they don't have a clue. Pumbaa chimes in, who? Pumbaa can't discern what Simone is talking about. We don't want anyone to be a Pumbaa when we sing.

We want the word of Christ to be clear and rich in its presentation as we sing, so that we can cling to the Christocentric truths. And more than the lyrics, it's also helpful to consider our environment and our presentation to effectively teach one another.

[16:00] For example, we keep the lights on. We are not being mystical or individualistic. We are speaking to one another. I don't suppose any of you have conversations with the lights off, chanting counsel out loud to yourself.

We do go alone to the Lord in prayer, privately, behind closed doors. But that's not the use of singing congregationally. It's not always wrong to close your eyes or lift your hands, and perhaps that actually can be good sometimes.

David speaks in this way sometimes, lifting his hands in praise to God. But just remember that you are addressing others with these truths. You are singing to one another. And just because we are singing to others, that doesn't mean that the sun rises to hear you crow and the church didn't gather to marvel at your singing.

That's not what verse 16 is teaching. We sing, as verse 14 describes, in perfect harmony, serving others and not ourselves. And the other side of the spotlight coin is maybe distractive singing.

We should probably practice our singing if we find ourselves being a disruption on Sunday. I put myself in this camp, but you know who you are.

[17:21] We do the same thing for public speaking, to better teach and admonish one another. I've probably already said um like 20 times this sermon. But it is something that we do, and we take to heart so that we can more faithfully practice, you know, verse 16, seeking to deliver these truths in song effectively while not being the center of attention.

But in contrast to this center of attention, we also didn't come here this morning for the band to be the center of attention, to just sit back and entertain us while we passively mouth the words or just pragmatically sing them without actually seeking the edification of one another and the worship of God.

The band is here to facilitate the congregation's role. They play in styles and in keys. We can all sing. They don't have a blaring electric guitar and overwhelming volume so that we can't hear one another.

It's a happy medium where we can hear one another as the band leads us in the key and melody, and therefore the truths of the lyrics are communicated well.

So we incorporate these practices as we sing various kinds of songs, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. I'm not convinced of the exact definition and distinction between these three different kinds of songs.

[18:46] Some who, to be sure, are smarter than me do break them down into specific categories, but I think the main point is that we're using a variety of songs. Songs from Scripture and songs composed as a response to Scripture, songs of lament, songs of rejoicing, songs of triumph, and so on.

The psalms, however, they do point to using instruments. I wouldn't let someone tell you that instruments on stage are sin. It would be okay if we didn't, but it certainly isn't sin to include them faithfully.

The very word psalm actually means to strum or pluck on an instrument. So we are to use all kinds of songs, some accompanied by musical instruments, others perhaps not, but to teach and to admonish one another.

And so that's the gist of what our text is saying in this first half, but it leads me to the question, why singing? If the word of Christ is what we want to dwell in us richly, why are we not just commanded to speak it to one another?

Why do we go the extra step into singing it to one another? And this is no new command in Scripture. It's actually one of the most frequent commands in our Bibles.

[20:07] For reference sake, Exodus 15 and 18, Numbers 21, Deuteronomy 31 and 32, 2 Samuel 1, 22 and 33, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Psalms, Ephesians 5, 1 Corinthians, it

goes on and on.

It's very frequent in our Bibles. And I think there are many reasons we seem to glorify God, but three significant reasons we're going to dwell on today are one, it's a design feature.

It's part of creation. Number two, it's a means of displaying displaying our oneness in Christ. And three, we actually edify one another through our response to God in song.

So number one, singing is founded upon a design feature in creation. The first song recorded in Scripture isn't until Exodus 15, but we have reference to music and song all the way back to Genesis 4.

A few generations after Adam and Eve, we have Lamex children and their trade recorded for us. One is Jubal, and he was the father of all those who play the lyre and the pipe.

[21 : 26] There was also Tubal Cain, and he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron, which may indicate tools, but I like to think it includes musical metal instruments as well.

So in the first few chapters of human history, there's enough business for these brothers to actually be professional music teachers and perhaps instrument makers, and we have music being played here from the start, and I have to assume there were songs being sung.

We start in Genesis, and it continues throughout human history until Revelation and beyond. Singing is baked into creation.

The Lord was creatively and gloriously pleased to make it an active part of human history, and it's not just found within the church, as we all know.

It's found everywhere. I think most, we go to concerts with people who appreciate the same music. We see Marion Pippen at the pub singing their Green Dragon Inn. In high school football, if we won a game, we would gather in the locker room and sing a traditional song of triumph.

[22 : 36] It's in the DNA of humans. We are singers, music makers. Furthermore, creation itself is described to be singing a song as it displays God's glory and his sovereign rule over nature.

Psalm 98, let the sea roar and all that fills it, the world and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands. Let the hills sing for joy together. In Psalm 65, the pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain.

They shout and sing together for joy. So this is all downstream from the attributes of our creator. God didn't just create a world that had mere mechanical function, but he created functional systems that are beautiful.

For instance, in Genesis 2, God created out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to sight and good for food. So the function of some trees were for consuming their beauty and other trees, their beauty and their fruit.

The oak tree is beautiful, but I had a rough night one time after I ate one of its acorns. It was not for beauty and food. Psalm 19, which is a song, the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaim his handiwork.

[24 : 08] Day to day pours out speech and night to night reveals knowledge. So not only is God's creation functional, but it is beautiful as it displays the glory of the creator.

His unique creation, mankind, was created in his image. The creator created more, little c, creators to reflect and display, to image the glory of their creator.

It's like Norman Rockwell's painting of himself, painting himself. The great creator or artist or composer has created us with a pleasure in musical expressions.

It's one way that we bear God's image of creating by creating music. God's gift of music and song is a means of communication, but it's in an artistic and creative way.

It is both functional in presenting information, but it's also beautiful in the way it is presented. It takes words on a page and enhances the effect of their truths by employing our emotions and appreciation of the musical features.

[25 : 27] God himself seems to be pleased with musically communicating deep truths, again, as he has given us so many songs in his word. Harmony, rhythm, pitch, poetic lyrics, everything about music, everything about music, when we put them together correctly, is pleasing.

And we will put thematic music to our lyrics to expound our expression of the words we are singing. It deepens our experience of it so that we can feel the lyrics.

And although we see God's thumbprint in all mankind as they create songs, it naturally falls short of its intended design in Adam.

Singing can be done for the glory of man or for the glory of God. It has been corrupted in Adam, but it can be redeemed in Christ. If we look back in our chapter 3 at verse 10, we put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

So we've already been created in the image of God, but now we are again being made more into the image of a creator. So setting our minds on the things above, what we now create will reflect God's attributes all the more.

[26 : 48] Our songs seek to creatively adorn the truths that we are speaking to glorify our great creator as an act of worship. So songwriters and music leaders, they have the important and spiritual task of understanding what key to play in, what volume, pitch, so that we can reflect God's image as creators.

They heard us musically challenged cats to sound better than we would have otherwise. They're attempting to make us both functional and pleasing to experience the lyrical truths all the more, enhancing the truths that they may richly dwell in us.

It incorporates our emotions, our natural attraction to music, and our propensity to create, and it channels those things to present rich truths beautifully.

And, for instance, when we sing, great is thy faithfulness, there's a line that reads, all I have needed, and the pitch ascends.

Where do we look for what we need? Seek first the kingdom of God. I look to the hills, from where does my help come from? It comes from above the hills, and as our hearts are lifted to look for the things we need, so does our pitch.

[28 : 09] The conclusion to that line is, thy hand hath provided. My help comes down from above, from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth. So as the Lord descends with aid from above, so does our voice.

And that's just a beautiful way to further experience the truths that we're singing to God. There's also the famous Easter hymn, Up from the Grave He Arrows.

That song starts, Low in the grave he lay. It's really kind of somber and low, and you can almost hear the hopelessness of the disciples as they felt everything was amiss.

Messiah was gone. Death had won the day. But then the response is high and fast when it sings, Up from the Grave He Arrows. It's really high and it's triumphant because He has triumphed over His foes.

And it's a way to declare the victory of Christ over death and sin thematically in those lyrics. And I remember a few weeks ago, Alex led us in Behold Our God one time.

[29 : 20] At the end of that song, we repeat, You will reign for... And I found myself thinking, Man, He repeated that line one too many times. How long is this going to go on?

And it hit me. Yeah, the Lord will reign forever. Forever. And ever. All the way down throughout history and beyond.

So singing that line again and again emphasizes the ongoing and forever nature of God's rule and reign. So it's one way that we thematically present these rich truths to one another.

So the second reason I see, and perhaps the sweetest meditation of all this, is the fact that we are doing this as a people who have been called into one body. We, the redeemed, are no longer just people.

We are now God's chosen people. Let's look back into our text for a little bit of context of where we're at, where Paul's mind is as we come to verse 16.

[30 : 28] We're going to start in verse 9. It says, Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all.

Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you.

So you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you are called in one body and be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And

whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

[31 : 43] Right? So this text is emphatic about our oneness in Christ and how to glorify Him. That's the context we find ourselves as we consider singing together.

Congregational singing is not only a means of praising God individually, but it's a way of displaying and embodying our oneness in Christ.

The word church is a singular noun, but it describes a plurality of people. The word body is also a singular noun, but we are members of one body with, as Colossians 2 tells us, with Christ as the head.

The church is beautifully comprised of diverse people. We come from different places, we have different upbringings, we have different preferences and opinions.

You know, some of us wouldn't have even dared to hang out with one another before Christ had called us together. But at the end of the day, the Lord has brought us into one heavenly family, and we with one voice glorify the same God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[32 : 53] There is one body and one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. And we are His one chosen people that metaphorically sing the same song.

The word of Christ is our anthem. Our sins have been paid for by the blood of King Jesus, and that's our song. When we sing together, we are showing this usurping power of Christ over our earthly differences.

And more than calling up people from all kinds of places, we also have different and unique giftings that the Lord uses to bless the church. The church in this way is like a heavenly orchestra with Christ as its composer.

And when we're using our gifts for the greater good of the church, we play the score that the Lord wrote for us. Our singing and harmony depicts our harmony in Christ.

It illustrates the beauty of the church using her unique roles in one accord. We give our individual gifts to bless the body, and we give our individual voices in our songs.

[34 : 09] And when everyone plays their part, it makes a joyful noise. And so since we have a variety of people with subjective experiences coming to worship in harmony, it is good to sing a variety of songs.

Songs of lament for the grieving heart, as well as songs of rejoicing for those who aren't, it would be somewhat self-seeking to think that we can't sing a lament because we're feeling too cheerful that day, or that we can't sing some lively carol because we're feeling a little gloomy.

But we sing those songs genuinely for the one who may be in a different season than we are. We weep with those who weep, and we rejoice with those who rejoice. And if you're feeling down, maybe you need to sing a joyful song so you can practice being joyful always and giving thanks in all circumstances.

Maybe you've been living a little too lightheartedly, and you need to be brought back to the sincerity of following Christ. We can do those things through our songs. And whatever your circumstances are, we put on love, and we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

So this leads us into our third reason. Singing exemplifies how the heart responds to the truth. We are teaching and admonishing one another as we are exemplifying the worship of God through song.

[35 : 40] When you see a brother or sister truly singing and praising the Lord, doesn't that edify you? I remember one Sunday morning, several years ago, as we were singing, I was standing next to a brother, and he was just passionately singing.

He then threw his arm around my shoulder, and he brought me into this praise of our mutual Savior. His transparent clinging to Christ, you know, belting these truths out amidst the church, it was edifying to me.

Even this morning, as I hear you guys sing, it is edifying, exemplary to me, to my heart. And when we compose a song in response to scripture, it can teach and admonish us by artists who we should trust again.

We're dwelling on the word of Christ. God has gifted many with the ability to consume scripture and experience the Lord working in their hearts and then output, creative, encouraging, and convicting songs.

Psalm 51, for example, David singing the song of repentance, exemplifies how a man, after God's own heart, responds to committing that grievous sin with Bathsheba.

[36 : 57] And we come together to both sing praises to God and to teach one another to worship the Lord. It is something that the Lord has ordained that supplements the exegesis of the scriptures.

Singing teaches and admonish one another by showing us the work of the spirit through the way that we sing and through the lyrics of the songs we compose in response to the indwell word.

So the very end of our text, it almost comes a bit naturally to me. After considering the glory of God in our singing, it nearly goes without saying with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

But I think it goes with saying because it directs our heart posture as we sing. There is a duality that we are singing to one another, to teach one another, and to God with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

You can't just check this cognitive box. Sing good lyrics, mission accomplished, congregation has been taught. It needs to be from your heart and sincerity with thankfulness from your heart and for the hearts of others.

[38 : 12] The goal of our teaching through song is to affect the hearts of one another as our hearts are affected. as this heart change isn't from the music or the smoke and mirrors.

It's the truth of the word of Christ. Christ has consumed the wrath. We deserve to save a people who rejected him. And this should move you spiritually and emotionally to sing praises to God and proclaim his goodness to one another.

I think this is going to look different than just singing. What we sing and the way we sing reveals what's inside. Out of the mouth flows the heart.

We are called to dwell on the word richly. Our hearts are turned to thankfulness. And then that sentiment is displayed outwardly in singing. It is a spiritual and emotional expression.

Women aren't immune from failing in this, but they are typically more inclined to emotionally express themselves. Whereas men have a harder time. Our culture often tells us that men are to be tough and that means we are to not show our hearts outwardly.

[39 : 29] We need to be steady and stable and objective. Colossians, however, tells us that we need to be displaying the influence of the word in our hearts outwardly as we worship God and edify the church with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Vulnerability and outward expression is not just for the subjective relativists or the emotional flutty-duddies. Art, the ordinances, imagery, allegory, metaphor, all these things when informed by the word can be used as a means of worshiping God.

Worship through song is for those strong in Christ, willing to, as Matthew records, to acknowledge Jesus before men so that Jesus will acknowledge us before the Father.

And I confess, I used to think I was too tough to be transparent, to outwardly display the inward work of the Spirit in my heart through various means. The Lord started to sanctify me in this when I got married.

It was such a beauty in displaying Christ in the church through marriage. I probably never cried in front of y'all until that day, but I wept that day. Yeah, since then I've grown exponentially in being influenced by the beauty of God illustrating his word in various ways.

[40 : 59] And now I probably cry most in church through our singing. That's when my heart is affected deeply. And singing, it just brings a felt weight to the doctrines we are confessing together.

The underlying power of that all is certainly the words, the lyrics, the truths in them. But there's an influence of the heart there, and that influence is commanded to be displayed outwardly.

So we are to be bold and sincere and transparent. We're to let the word of Christ have its effect and be compelled or moved to worship him with thankfulness in your hearts to God through song.

We could go on, I promise you, but time is limited. I think we hit the meat of why the Lord commands us to sing. There are many entrees, but he himself is a singer and a composer.

We, as one, yet many, are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. He commands us to sing because he built us to sing to experience his grace and mercy in deep, affectionate ways.

[42 : 17] Use this gift of singing to bless others today. Sing with gusto and confidence in the word of Christ. We sing with thankfulness in our hearts to God because God is due all thanks as every good gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.

So in closing, our application is going to be very practical. We're going to sing. The first song, I know Jordan posted these on Slack the other day, but the first song is Come Behold the Wondrous

Mystery, and we're actually going to do this a cappella.

We chose to remove the instruments so that you all can utilize the instruments. God gave you and to use them to create a joyful noise and experience the oneness we have in Christ.

This song gives us that full word of Christ in his lyrics. We were in darkness and the light of Christ has come. He saved the hell-bound man through his propitiation.

We are bound for glory together in Christ. And for the second song, we all love to sing that one, O Christ, our hope, our heart's desire. It's a hearty and joyful and thankful song to really feel the effect of how music supplements our praises to God.

[43 : 40] But I'm going to pray for us really quick before we sing, and then as the band comes up, just take a minute to think through this text and pray through this text and put on Colossians 3.16 as you approach singing together.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Thank you.