

Why We Do What We Do The Way We Do What We Do: Music

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 April 2017

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] Please take your copy of God's Word and turn with me to two places this morning.! First Colossians chapter 3 and then Ephesians chapter 5.

! So go ahead and find both places.! Mark one with your finger, the other with a ribbon. Bookmark them in your phone. It is our normal habit and I think the most healthy way of preaching here at Christ of the Church of Dahlonga for us to do verse by verse exposition.

And I want you to not confuse that with expository preaching generally speaking. You'll hear many defenses for expository preaching and I would stand with those defenses to be sure.

But what we can tend to do is to think that if we're not doing a verse by verse exposition that we've abandoned expository preaching altogether. And preaching that's not expository is not preaching at all.

Expository preaching is simply this. It works to bring forth for your benefit, glory of God, for your good, what the Bible says. So it may be concerning a specific text.

[1 : 22] Expository preaching can be done with a chapter of the Bible. It can be done with a book of the Bible. Expository preaching can also explore a theme of the Bible as well.

So, again, we think verse by verse exposition is the best general habit for us as a church. But from time to time, we think there's a great deal of value in stopping, considering something together, a particular topic together and trying to take a look at, not in an exhaustive form, but what the Bible may have to say about that given topic.

Throughout history, many faithful preachers have held different views on such things. I'll give you just two quick ones. Jonathan Edwards was a verse-by-verse expositor, even to a fault.

There was a period of time, this church in New England, he was dismissed from for a couple of years. And when he came back, he picked up in the verse he left off. And I think Calvin did the same thing in Geneva when he was kicked out of Geneva for a while.

Came back, and he was in, like, Deuteronomy. Came back to the very verse that he had left off there. Charles Spurgeon, who's one of my favorite preachers, thought that it quenched the Spirit of God to not consider each week what text the church may have needed expounded for that week.

[2 : 40] And so, we try to step in the middle of that. We try to come into the midst of that, trying to preach verse by verse. It's good for you to have big, full understandings of books of the Bible, but also to be sensitive in the midst of the coming and going of our church and what's happening in the life of our church to, at times, step away from that study.

So, we've been in the book of Acts. I'm not even sure where we are. I think we may have finished chapter 17. We're in chapter 17, or we finished it. I should remember that from just last week.

But we're going to take some time to talk this morning a bit about music. Musical worship. And I want you to know that my intention for doing this is not to make this church seem better than other churches.

It's not my goal in what we're doing. It's not to defend the way that we do music together, but rather to equip you to understand that we don't just have a preference for music, but that there are theological, there are biblical underpinnings to the why of the way we do music.

We may carry it out in particular ways that could change, but there's reason behind what we do.

And I became aware of this. I mentioned to you a few weeks ago at a community group that there were some questions asked, and they were good, honest questions.

[4 : 10] And I know some of those people are here. I'm not diminishing you in any way in that conversation, but I realized that we hadn't taught on this in quite some time. It had been a long time

since we had ever mentioned the why of what we do when we do music together.

And I began to think about since this church started January 1 of 2009, so a little over eight years ago. You're going to get, I think you're going to get a kick out of this.

Since then, right now, there are only six people that were part of that original beginning. There are six people.

Myself and my wife, Wes and Liz, you saw on stage, Liz with the mandolin, and Sid and Ruth, who I don't think are here this morning with us, but most of you know Sid and Ruth. Six. So we have this big turnaround.

And I will say that largely 95% of that is not unhealthy turnaround. I haven't across the years run people off all the time, but we live in kind of a transitional town.

[5 : 13] A lot of our congregation across the years has been college students. One of the wonderful things about that is we've been able to equip and send out countless people across the years.

And it's a wonderful privilege that we have as a church, and I think we should pick it up and seize it as such, to build into people good biblical founding for the way they should live their lives in the world and the way they should be involved with and the way a church should meet together.

So we have the ability to have influence in really broad ways because of that. So it's important for you to understand then the why. So you can go find healthy churches, and you can bring health to churches and communities.

So that's the aim. That's what we're trying to accomplish this morning as we start, and we're going to kind of do this across. I'm going to call it a series, but we're not going to do it in series.

Series in that it'll jump months, but in order. And we're going to call it this. You ready? Why we do what we do, and why we do what we do the way we do what we do.

[6 : 16] So why we do what we do, and why we do what we do the way we do what we do. Okay? And this morning, music. Right? This morning, music.

Now, before I get into this, I want to commend just two resources to you really quickly. If you want to know more about this, a wonderful book by a man named Bob Coughlin called *Worship Matters*. Really, really great read. My only complaint about this book, as he uses a term for music leaders that I don't particularly like, which I'm going to talk about in just a moment. He actually makes a case against using such a term, and then he continues to use the term.

Drove me crazy, Wes. Drove Wes crazy as well. Drove me absolutely nuts this week. Secondly, put out by Grace to You, which is the ministry John MacArthur is most related to.

Master's Seminary. *Hymns of Grace*. It's a hymnal. You guys haven't touched one of these in a long time, have you? We typically are using screens now because we can introduce new songs more quickly.

[7 : 17] If we were to do a hymnal in our church, this would be the one. We buy a bunch of copies of this. It's a wonderful, wonderful hymnal. It has a bunch of wonderful, rich, true, well-vetted songs and resources in it.

So if you have an interest in having something like that in your home, *Hymns of Grace* would be a really great one for you to pick up. Okay, so music, specifically music together.

So when we gather together as a church, why do we engage in musical worship? And why do we engage in musical worship the way we engage in musical worship?

Why do we do what we do? And why do we do what we do the way we do what we do? I practiced that this week. I want to begin with an aside concerning our language concerning music in the church.

For far too long, the music sung in church has been referred to as quote-unquote worship. And the individual leading the music as quote-unquote the worship leader.

[8 : 25] Music, rightly sung in our church gatherings, or even possibly outside of our church gatherings, but music rightly sung certainly is worship.

It is. Music sung together is worship, but it is not the totality of worship. And the individual leading music is certainly leading us in worship, but not in the totality of worship.

To call our singing together worship, and the individual leading the music as the worship leader suggests. This is why this matters.

It suggests that our worship of God is reduced to a bit of time during a service. So not even the whole service, but a bit of time during a service on Sunday morning.

And it excludes our prayers together, and our scripture reading together, and our preaching together. This is participatory as well.

[9 : 30] I'm speaking, and I hope you're engaged in listening. And this, all that we do together in a worship service is all worship. But it even goes beyond that.

It goes outside the doors of here. We're meant to have lives that are given to worship. Paul stated in Romans 12, verse 1. He says, I appeal to you, therefore, based on the first 11 chapters, his great treatise on the Christian faith.

I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

And the English word, translated from the Greek here, body, it's a good word to be translated. I wouldn't pick on any of our Bible translators in this case, but it has a grander meaning in the original language.

I like the word being. God means for all of our lives to be committed to his praise. Everything that we do, it's all worship.

[10 : 39] So I have a real problem with this over-reduction of the idea. So it's musical worship. It is worship. But it's a part. It's part of our worship, both together and as individuals in the world.

So we will never call the music here, quote-unquote, worship, or the individual leading the music, the, quote-unquote, worship leader, because it is confusing.

Now some will say, and I've done this, brought a little correction. What are you talking about? Some will say, well, you know what I mean when being corrected.

But the problem, beloved, is that words have meaning. And you don't just get to willy-nilly change the meaning of words. You can't be so cavalier with your use of words, because my response will be, no, I do not know what you mean.

And as the children learned this morning, the heart is where the words of the mouth grow. So we need to be careful about the words that we use and what we're communicating when we use those words.

[11 : 56] This is why we will speak in terms of musical worship and why we call Wes our Pastor for Worship Arts. It's not a bad title.

I think he came up with it. It's good. I like it. Now the subject of musical worship in churches has been a highly contested one in my lifetime.

For many of you, this may be true. Some have called it the worship wars, where churches began to try to pick up new ideas of the way that we worship God in music.

And some wanted to stay very entrenched in the ways they like to engage in worshiping God in music. And these worship wars have had much heat with little to no light.

Meaning they were very much fueled by preference and fueled very little by the Bible. The current solution seems to be for small churches to work to serve a particular demographic.

[13 : 02] So church planters will actually look at demographic studies and they'll figure out the general population of an area and they'll figure out the favorite style of music for that population in an area and they'll try to find somebody who can meet that need, who can present that style.

And they'll say to anybody else who doesn't like the style, sorry, we only do one style here. For the large church, the solution seems to be to cater to every demographic with multiple services.

You see, most large churches will have multiple services and they will contain within them multiple styles of music. So you've got your contemporary service and you've got your traditional service and you've got your blended service.

And sometimes these even happen at the same time on the same campus, just in different locations. Beloved, none of this is good for your faith or for the community of faith.

It is not proper for a church to serve preference over purpose in the way that we gather. It is not healthy for the church to meet felt needs over real needs at the expense of real needs.

[14 : 21] To promulgate consumerism in the worship of our God. So, Wes and I, in the very early days of Christ Family Church, we were a musician becoming a pastor and a teacher becoming a pastor and by God's grace, hear me say that, Wes and I are not better than anyone else.

By God's grace, we picked up, and I wish I could trace the contours of how we so came to love the doctrine of Scripture called the sufficiency of Scripture.

But we came to love it and we came to see that if we were to lead a church well, we must do it by the Word of God. We must do it by His instruction.

And then if it's sufficient, then it contains within it all the instruction that we need. And then by grace, we picked it up and we began asking questions and finding answers from God's own Word. We picked up a principle that was employed by the Reformers and the Puritans called the regulative principle of worship. And that was if we couldn't find prescribed in the Scripture worship of God in a particular way, then we wouldn't do it.

[15:48] And we would just simply do the thing that God prescribed for us to do. And we have, over the past eight years, put that in place.

It has been our prayer that we would be faithful to the Bible. Not just Wes and I. We have had other elders in the life of our church as well. We have pressed at this.

Let's do the worship of God in God's way and let's trust that He'll build a church and He'll reach our community as a result. So that's where we're at. That's why I want to loop you back in, right?

Some of you are new here, so I want you to understand what we've learned and why we practice music the way that we do. So let's begin our study with Colossians 3.16.

Colossians 3.16. Beloved, this is God's Word to us.

[16:47] It was written for His glory and for our good and we would all do well to listen to it this morning in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Paul writes, verse 16, Colossians 3, 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.

Now turn to Ephesians chapter 5. verses 18 and 19, Paul writes, and 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.

So why do we do what we do? Why do we sing together when we gather?

Well, it's because the Bible commands it for God's glory and for our good. You can see two places that I've read to you just already this morning. Colossians 3, 16, Ephesians 5, 18 and 19.

[18:15] There's instruction here for the singing together. Psalm 33, 3 says, Sing to Him a new song.

Place skillfully on the strings. I like this, with loud shouts. Psalm 47, 6, Sing praises to God.

Sing praises. Sing praises to our King. Sing praises. The Bible contains over 400 references to singing and 50 direct commands to sing.

In fact, the longest book of the Bible by verse count, at least, I know that you want to contend with me on that maybe, by verse count, the longest book of the Bible is the Psalms, which is a book of songs, every single one of them.

Further, we have the example of Jesus in Matthew 26, verse 30, with the apostles, and when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

[19:23] We have the example of heaven in the book of Revelation many, many times. You know what book has more songs in it than any other book except the book of Psalms? The book of Revelation, right?

This vision that John has of heaven. Lots of singing in heaven. One example, Revelation 15, verses 2 and 3. And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire, and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God, the Almighty, just and true are your ways, O King of the nations.

And we have the example of Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. Not long ago, we studied this together on the Lord's Day. Acts 16, verse 25.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying, remember they're in the Philippian jail, and singing hymns to God. James says in James 5.13, Is anyone cheerful?

[20:40] Let him sing praise. The Bible is full of this type of instruction. John Calvin once wrote, I think many people are sold a very staunch view of Calvin, but he said wonderful things like this.

wherever faith is lively, holy rejoicing will follow. So, we should sing when we are gathered.

We should. We're instructed to do so. We should sing when we are gathered. And we're told, both in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Now, there is no need in overcomplicating what these three things are. We don't need to set these on a scale and make sure we're doing 33 and a third percent of each of the following things. But there were types of music, and Paul's referencing those specific types, and I think it's valuable for us to pull those up and use those types as well here. So, Psalms are pretty obvious what the Psalms were.

[21 : 49] Those are the songs of the Bible, and we should sing from God's song book. We find some challenge with that, though, in the 21st century English-speaking culture in which we live because those songs were written in Hebrew and they rhymed most often, but they rhymed in Hebrew and they don't tend to rhyme in English, so it becomes difficult, right, to sing a song as such.

But lots of our songs reference the Psalms and pull text from the Psalms. And Wes does a good job, and I think he works hard at trying to sing Psalms to you, particularly during the offering or the Lord's Supper when you're not expected to sing with necessarily because they're often difficult to sing.

They can be hard songs to sing as they don't rhyme and you're trying to make the near rhymes work out, etc. But we should want to sing such songs and be Scripture-rich in our singing. Just before I came up to preach during the offering time, Wes mentioned understanding what we are about to do from the rising of the sun is based on Psalm 113.

We're also instructed to sing hymns, and there's all kinds of talk of hymnology, like what makes a hymn, but most simply, a hymn is a song to or about God and what He has done.

[23 : 19] To or about God and what He has done. Two examples that would be, I think, well known. How Great Thou Art and Holy, Holy, Holy, which we sang just a few moments ago would be considered hymns.

Just because it's in a hymnal doesn't necessarily make it a hymn. We're also instructed to sing spiritual songs, and these are most often understood to be kind of reflexive of hymns.

So, spiritual songs are songs to or about us, but I'd add that there are songs to or about us in relation to who God is and what He has done.

So, what is the effect of God's work in the world? And we sing a lot of songs that would be categorized as spiritual songs. Songs like Amazing Grace and it is well.

Let's speak of the human experience of God's goodness and grace and mercy to mankind. So, we should sing together.

[24 : 23] Why should we sing together? The Bible instructs it, but why does the Bible instruct it? For God's glory, for our good, humans are wired to give and receive through song.

And this is still a bit of a mystery to me. I want to spend more time considering why that is. And it may not be a thing that I can answer, but we are wired to love music.

Musicians have been wildly popular for good and for bad throughout history. Every movement, every uprising, every cultural expression has its music.

Consider that. It's true. There's always a rally cry that's driven by music. We seem to be musical beings.

Some people will say that they don't like music, but they do. They do. You could find the thing that would cause them to tap their foot or to bob their head. There's something that will do that.

[25 : 28] For a person. So, when we sing, when we are gathered, it is our hope that our feelings catch up to the truth we believe.

Right? And we should feel the truth. Right? Feelings don't define truth, but we want to feel the truth, and music helps us to do that.

I have to tell you that I know that as a group of people we're typically drawn to similar things, and I know that that's often an adherence to the Bible, maybe even a staunchness in our teaching of the Bible, but I wish you guys would be more expressive sometimes.

It's okay to move the music. Guys, don't stand in the back of the room with your arms folded. Consider the words.

Right? Consider the words and have it move you to praise. Jonathan Edwards wrote in Religious Affections, the duty of singing praises to God seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections.

[26 : 38] No other reason can be assigned why we should express ourselves to God in verse and to do it with music but only that such is our nature and frame.

He's saying we were made for that. Right? Such is our nature and frame that these things have a tendency to move our affections. And so that's why we sing together.

That's why it's important that we sing together when we're gathered. I was challenged this week by Wes that maybe my community group, we don't sing at my community group, maybe we should. I don't know if we have any musical talent in our community group.

It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. As long as I don't have to lead it. So that's why we do what we do.

But why do we do what we do the way we do what we do? You may have noticed that our church does music a little different than many churches. Not all, but many churches of our day.

[27 : 43] Colossians 3.16 and Ephesians 5.18 and 19 show us that our singing together is the result of the outflow of being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

If you diagram the Greek language out, right, this instruction by Paul to not be drunk with wine, that's debauchery, but rather be filled with the Spirit and his instruction to let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly has things that define what that looks like beyond it.

And there's lists and there's a lot of parallel between those texts. That parallel is incredibly striking between much of Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5.

They both have Paul as their author which allows for an incredible connection to be drawn from them. If you've been here with us in our study of Acts, I've made this connection for you as we've been looking at what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

You see this connection between the two being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. He's using these phrases interchangeably.

[29 : 02] Study the text. You've got all of these things that are the same but these two phrases he swaps out in these cases. So, we're being filled with the Spirit. We're letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.

And I'm going to wrap back to what it means to be filled with the Spirit but let's talk for a moment about letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. The word dwell in the original language means to take up residence, to inhabit.

So, the Word of Christ, the Scripture is meant to inhabit us richly in abundance. Let the Word of Christ fill you.

Change your very being from the inside out. And to do that, we're to read and we're to meditate on the Scripture and we're to memorize the Scripture and we're to speak the Scripture to one another and we're to preach and listen to preaching and we're to sing songs to one another.

So, you can see that letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly looks like picking it up, taking it up within us, having it fill us to overflowing. It creates activity, obedience in us is the same as being filled with the Spirit.

[30 : 31] In case this connection between Colossians and Ephesians is too vague for you, we bring you to another text, Romans chapter 8 verse 5. Paul writes there, those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

But those who live according to the Spirit, who are filled with the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

What are the things of the Spirit but the book He inspired? The book, the way in which He works out and the tool that He uses to work in to us.

Paul wrote in Galatians chapter 5 verse 16, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. So having the Word of God dwell in us richly is to be filled with the Spirit and produces in us good and proper praise.

Proper worship of God is Spirit-filled worship of God, which is mindful worship of God. Our singing together must be head and heart.

[31 : 57] Too much singing in church these days divorces thinking from it all together. And we're to do this, right?

We're to be teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, addressing one another. And I don't think the teaching and admonishing one another in Colossians 3.16 doesn't also include speaking to one another.

But it certainly includes singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. I think that's more clear for us in Ephesians 5.19. We're meant to be addressing one another.

That's the way in which he's suggesting that we teach and admonish. And teaching and admonishing, teaching is the positive way in which we should walk and admonishing is the correction, is the warning away from walking in the wrong way.

John Owen once said, a Puritan pastor, it's on your bulletin, we must not allow ourselves to be satisfied with vague ideas of the love of Christ which present nothing of his glory to our minds.

[33 : 09] I find that songs are improving, like pop Christian songs are getting a little better, not much, but a little better. But in my teen years into early college years, so many of the new songs, you could have replaced Jesus with your girlfriend's name and it would have still made sense.

vague ideas of the love of Christ which present nothing of his glory to our minds.

Christ, prophet, priest, king. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14-15, I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

John 4-23, Jesus said, but the hour is coming and is now here when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

For the Father is seeking such people to worship him. Jesus does not say in spirit and emotional expression. Truth must be central to our worship of our God.

[34 : 24] So, we, and really, maybe we a bunch of years ago, but we now, I really mean Wes, as he handles music for our church so well, use three parameters in considering new music.

So, Wes uses three parameters in considering new music, which I appreciate. And they are truth, depth, and singability.

The truth, is the song true? And when I say new songs, I don't just mean newly produced songs, I mean new songs for our congregation. So, maybe a very, very old song, but that may be new to us. These are all getting run through these filters. Is the song true? Is it biblically true, objectively true? Does it contain within it any error?

Or, and or, is it as precise as it should be? Does it properly present doctrine to us so that as we sing we can pick those things up and we can have them for ourselves and have it shape us?

[35 : 33] I'll give you an example of some lyrical changes that Wes made. Some of you, especially new to us, may have experienced the awkwardness of singing the song as it was written and being totally thrown off because we sang it differently, How Deep the Father's Love for Us, which is a wonderful song, a spiritual song we would suggest here.

We sing, it was his love that held him there, speaking of Christ on the cross, but it was written, it was my sin that held him there.

And I wouldn't, you know, contend, and I don't think Wes would either, with the author of the song, I think the general idea of what he was trying to communicate there is proper, right?

He was suffering for our sin, that's the suggestion of that line. But it also seems to go a little further to maybe make someone believe that we had in our sinfulness the power to put Christ on the cross, that our sin actually placed him there and held him there and that he wasn't powerful over it.

And so I think changing it to it was his love that held him here is a more precise way to think about what Jesus was doing for us on the cross.

[36 : 54] In John 10, 18, Jesus says, no one takes my life for me, but I lay it down of my own accord. And so those types of things are being considered the truthfulness of a song.

And I will suggest to you even to the degree that sometimes I'll misunderstand what a song is saying. And I'll ask Wes, like, hey, I'm not sure about because, and he'll explain to me exactly what it means.

No, that's not what he's saying. If you pay attention to, I'll go, oh, yeah, yeah. Sometimes I check out there. You're right. It's a very good and true song. So truth is one of the filters that we run through.

Secondly, depth. Right? Depth. Does a song merely skip a stone off the surface of the truth, or does it sink deep into it?

Does a song teach us something about God and his work, or is a song content rich? We only have so much time together, but you only have so much capacity in your brain to hang on to information.

[37 : 59] So what do we do with the time that we're together? Our song should be deep, which means most often that our songs are wordy. So you have a friend who asks you, why so many words in your song?

I feel like I worship God better with less words. Because you need truth. Right? Because we want to meet real need, not felt need.

We don't want you zoning out. We want you paying attention. We put it on the screen. You'll note that we don't put a line at a time on the screen. And that's in part for the sanity of the person sitting in the back to try to keep up.

It's in part because we don't have close-up of Wes's hands playing the guitar with the person in all black clothes running around him with the camera. But it's primarily because we want you to look at the words, to see them, to see the verse.

And we put as much as we can up there, the verse so you can actually go, oh, what does that word mean? That's an old word, I think. What does it mean? Write it down. Look it up.

[39 : 05] Be informed by this music. Our songs should have depth. We get, Wes, five songs. Seven if you include those that people don't participate in.

Wes's ministry here at our church is the same as my ministry. He just uses a different vehicle to deliver it. It's ministry of the word. We're united in what we do.

Wes's job isn't to make you feel, my job to make you think. I'm going to minister the word of God to you. And then thirdly, singability. Is a song congregational?

Is a song congregational? I love concerts. I really appreciate going to concerts, especially skilled musicians, watching them perform the music that you can hear on the album is an incredible thing to do.

I love a good rock show. Like, make me not be able to hear things afterwards. I love that kind of big production, big experience, blinding with lights, throw smoke, where'd that guy come from?

[40 : 14] I don't know. He's on top of the speaker stack. that's not what we're called to do. We sing congregationally so we have light.

You can see each other. We don't bring the lights down. You need to see the people who are around you. Hello, beloved. Hello, church. We gather to be together, not separate from one another.

Put you in isolation chambers and put your earbuds in so that you can't distract it by anybody else.

You need the people around you to sing off key and to sing loud off key because they love Jesus.

That your affections would be inflamed for him as well. We need that. I missed this morning. Almost every morning I get you guys, the sound bounces out of this corner and I stand in the back.

That's why I stand back there. It's not because I'm trying to avoid you guys. It's because the sound goes back to that corner and I can hear everybody singing. There's a big choir. It so warms my heart before I come up to preach.

[41 : 13] But I missed this morning Clay who usually stands back there with me and sings alongside me in his gruff CF caused voice because I know he believes the truth and it helps me believe the truth and it builds me up.

It spurs me on to sing songs like that. Let me posit to you that if you're not a singer, you should be because the people around you need to hear you sing.

It takes a little practice. I'm not a good singer but I sing. Sing. We need to be singing to one another.

The volume level in here needs to be low enough that you can hear people around you.

We need to be able to hear each other singing. There's a different way to lead a congregation in singing than to put on a concert. Why? Because Paul's instruction is that we're to be teaching and admonishing one another.

that includes the band teaching and admonishing you but we need to be teaching and admonishing one another and addressing one another as we sing together.

[42 : 19] Not only that but we actually need to be able to sing it and there's so many songs now that are wonderful songs. There are great great great songs written by Christian people that will minister to your soul that you should definitely listen to by yourself in a car singing at the top of your lungs.

Do that. They're so hard to sing. There's many songs like this like almost every Christmas song is that way. Difficult to sing but good. Oh so good. Be ministered to by those songs but when we come together to sing there's some songs we're just not going to do because they're not singable.

Wonderful songs but not singable. Sometimes the band will do a song like during the offering time and also just say you don't have to sing this with us. Like it's cool because it's hard to sing. Does it have a recognizable rhythm?

We all like those songs. Come on. We know exactly. We know what to expect. We know when it's coming. Does it have a recognizable rhythm? Is it in a range designed for the average human

being?

A lot of songs are the chance for a music leader to show off how high his voice can go. Can it be played well by our musicians?

[43 : 29] Is it stylistically can they get together on it and play it? That matters, right? That they can actually perform the song for us. And I'm not saying that style is the question here.

And you've heard me say if you've been here for very long that if all we had was a little old lady and a piano, that's how we do music. We're just fortunate to have a bunch of musicians who do their folk rocky kind of thing for us.

But the style itself is never the point. It's the content. It's the content that carries it that is the point of what we do together.

So I want to run a couple songs through that filter for you. I just want to give you an example to be able to look at this. First, I'm going to look at, super brief, three songs from CCLI.

CCLI is the Christian Copyright Licensing International. It's the way all of the contemporary Christian artists get paid for their music that's performed each and every Sunday. We keep track of it and they get a payment.

[44 : 36] I'm really glad we do lots of songs that are public domain. So I just looked in the top 20. So these are three of the most, dare I say, performed songs on Sunday mornings.

And I want to point out some things to you about them. They're not all bad. They're not all bad.

They're not all bad. But reasons why we would never sing these songs on a Sunday morning.

The first one is called Good, Good Father by Chris Tomlin. Familiar with this song? Flip on radio, you'll hear it. This is number one, Good, Good Father by Chris Tomlin. It's not a bad song.

It's got some good stuff in it. And I want to point out one little thing that irks me about it. But let me read the lyrics to you. I thought about having them put up on the screen, but I don't actually think you need them on the screen. This is how the song goes.

I've heard a thousand stories of what they think you're like, but I've heard the tender whispers of love in the dead of night. And you tell me that you're pleased and that I'm never alone.

[45 : 36] You're a good, good father. It's who you are. It's who you are. It's who you are. And I'm loved by you. It's who I am. It's who I am. It's who I am. I've seen many searching for answers far and wide, but I know we're all searching for answers only you provide.

Because you know just what we need before we say a word. You're a good, good father. It's who you are. It's who you are. It's who you are. And I'm loved by you.

It's who I am. It's who I am. It's who I am. Because you are perfect in all your ways. Repeat that five times. Oh, it's love so undeniable.

I can hardly speak. Here comes the thing I don't like. Peace so unexplainable. I can hardly think. As you call me deeper still, as you call me deeper still, as you call me deeper still, into love, love, love.

You're a good, good father. It's who you are. It's who you are. It's who you are. And I'm loved by you. It's who I am. It's who I am. It's who I am. Repeat four more times.

[46 : 49] Okay? So, the only thing that I find I'm uncomfortable with is that I can hardly think, right? And I can get the thrust of what he was trying to say there and even be okay with that.

So, right, there's not like, it's not like, oh, my word, right? The heresy of the song. It's not that. It's not. It's not. But if we were just to scale out some of, you know, truth, depth, singability, I listened to a recording of it this week.

I think it's pretty singable. I'd give him an A on singability. I think you can hang. I think Tomlin does a pretty good job of writing songs that way, maybe even intentionally so. Truth, I'd give him a B.

I think because of that one little error, bugs me particularly a bit. And I'm the one giving the grade, so I'm allowed to. For depth, though, I'm going to give it a D because here's the summary.

And it's good truth, right? It's good truth and it's good things to consider. But again, I'm saying like, are we going to spend six minutes of our very short time together, our longer time this morning together on this?

[47 : 58] Is this what we're going to do? Summary of this song. You're a good father and you love me. Good father and you love me. Again, good truths, right? But why and how?

To what degree? Important things for us to be considering. Next song, I'm not going to read the lyrics of these next two. The next song is called Holy Spirit by Brian and Katie Torwalt.

These are Jesus culture folks, a couple from Jesus culture. this song, just of interesting note, is typically performed, I found a bunch of YouTube recordings of this song.

The shortest one I found was nine minutes. The longest one I found was 18 minutes. This song and I just, it doesn't say nearly enough for 18 minutes.

There's just, there's just not that much in it. Now again, the song itself doesn't, doesn't air. There's nothing in there that I went, ooh, that's not good for God's, God's people to hear.

[49 : 10] Singability, an A. Depth, depth, a D. Again, it's not a lot of strong substance. It's about the Holy Spirit and God's presence being the world. But for truth, I give it a D because Jesus culture, as well as Hillsong United, the other song, I actually graded these the same.

Hillsong United has a song out called Oceans. It's a really pretty song. It's really, really pretty. I like the song. But both Hillsong United and Jesus culture are part of a movement called the Word of Faith movement.

It's the prosperity gospel dressed up in different language. It's very extra biblical and very dangerous. Both of these, we'll call them bands, Hillsong United and Jesus Culture support ministries of Word of Faith teachers.

That's also called the New Apostolic Reformation. If you want to go look some of this stuff up, you'll go, whoa, they're teaching what? And this is like the soft entry to it because their songs are never astoundingly erroneous, but you get introduced to the teaching of the men that then come to stage afterwards and it's horrible, heretical, dangerous teaching that you're getting introduced to.

So we'll never do Jesus Culture or Hillsong United song knowingly, I should probably say, because we don't want to suggest to you that we think it's okay that what they're involved with as a total is good because the truth matters, right?

[50 : 47] Because the truth matters. Let me walk through a song that we do sing together. This song gets A's across the board. It's a new song, right?

So we don't sing all old songs, although a lot of them feel old because they have words, which is just not a thing we tend to like as a culture, it would seem.

Come behold the wondrous mystery. I think we're going to sing it this morning, this afternoon, together, and I think we have lyrics on the screen.

Come behold the wondrous mystery. In the dawning of the king, he the theme of heaven's praises, robed in frail humanity. In our longing, in our darkness, now the light of life has come.

Look to Christ who condescended, took on flesh to ransom us. There is more depth in verse one of that song than all the three songs previous combined.

[51 : 56] The writers here speak of the incarnation of Christ, John 1, 1-5, the purpose of his incarnation, Luke 19-10, for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Verse 2, come behold the wondrous mystery, he the perfect Son of Man, in his living, in his suffering, never trace nor stain of sin.

See the true and better Adam come to save the hell-bound man, Christ the great and sure fulfillment of the law, in him we stand. It speaks of the judgment of man, the hell-bound man, the depravity of man, speaks of the active and passive suffering of Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 5, 21, for our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 5, 17, another. Verse 3, we're only halfway in, come behold the wondrous mystery, Christ the Lord upon the tree, in the stead of ruined sinners, that's to say instead of ruined sinners, in the stead of ruined sinners, hangs the lamb in victory.

See the price of our redemption, see the Father's plan unfold, bringing many sons to glory, grace unmeasured, love untold.

[53 : 34] He speaks of the sovereignty of God in the suffering of Christ, speaks of the substitutionary atonement of Christ, 1 Corinthians 15, 3, Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures.

Verse 4, come behold the wondrous mystery, slain by death the God of life, but no grave could e'er restrain him, praise the Lord, he is alive.

What a foretaste of deliverance, how unwavering our hope, Christ in power resurrected as we will be when he comes.

What a foretaste of deliverance, how unwavering our hope, Christ in power resurrected as we will be when he comes.

It speaks of the resurrection of Christ, our conquering king. 1 Corinthians 15, 4, he was buried, he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scripture.

[54 : 38] And it also speaks of the glorification of the saints. It turns to us and what will one day become of us that we will have resurrected bodies, Colossians 3, 4, when Christ who is your life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.

And so I hope, just in brief, right, to give you a better picture. Sometimes I know we can sing songs and you can just fly past all of the meaning of a song.

And that was just a few of the things, packed full of good, rich truth, which will help the word of God dwell in you richly.

Which is the same thing as walking by the Spirit. And if you walk by the Spirit, you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. You'll be pleasing to God. And you'll worship him with everything that you do.

Truth, depth, singability, for the glory of God and for the good of his people. Let us be a people, a church, who sing to one another, and who know why we sing to one another, and who know what and how we should sing to one another.

[55 : 54] Let's pray together.