

A People United in Christ, Singing Together to Christ

Colossians 3:12-17
Leader Discussion guide

Sermon Summary:

We are commanded to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs together. Worshipful singing together is an expression of the unity we have in Christ. Worshipful singing together is built on our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ. Our worshipful singing together is a participatory ministry, not a spectator event.

Illustrations Used:

- Mark was taught to sing by Aleeva Graham and his Dad in the pews of church
- Children's church they ask 4 & 5 year olds, "Why do we sing?" (3b1)

Comprehension Questions:

1. How are singing and unity related?
 - a. What does v13 say about deep, visible, relational unity? v14? v15? v11?
2. Mark quoted D. A. Carson in his sermon. Read aloud the quote and discuss the meaning.
3. Verse 16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." What does this mean? Why is the plural "you" important? (Let it dwell among you)
4. What did Mark say were not the goals of Sunday morning worship? (being loud, music aimed at a certain demographic, etc.)
 - a. What did Mark say were the goals of Sunday morning worship? In light of that how important is style?
5. Who are we singing to on Sunday mornings? (Both God and each other)
 - a. Why do we sing to both God and each other? What is the purpose of each?
 - b. How do we teach and admonish one another in singing?

Application Questions:

1. Singing out in church is not natural for all of us. What keeps us from singing? How can we grow in this?
2. In 2e Mark challenged us to, "Tend to our hearts." We can sometimes tend to think, "if I have the right style of music, then I can worship." Why is the internal (let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts) a more powerful and consistent way of worship than anything external. How does this challenge you?
3. How can we encourage each other and our whole church to singing and unity?
4. Below are Mark's main points of the sermon with his application statements. Use these to remind your group some of the proper responses to this passage:
 - a. **1.) Worshipful singing together is an expression of the unity we have in Christ**
 - i. **Application for us as a church:**
 1. We want to be a church united not by a certain musical style or common preferences, but by our common love for our Savior.

2. Our goal is not music that young people like, or music that older people like. But all generations united in Christ, singing together of and to Christ.
- ii. **Application for us as individuals:**
 1. Church, let's walk in unity. Let's keep singing. Let's exult in Jesus, together, united in Christ.
- b. **2.) Worshipful singing together is built on our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.**
- i. **App for church:** Based on this, we continue to be absolutely committed to singing songs that are biblically true. Songs that are not mainly about us. Songs full of truth about who Jesus is and what He has done. As we do, the word of Christ dwells deeply among us.
 - ii. **App for us as individuals:** Let us tend our hearts. We can sometimes tend to think, "if I have the right style of music, then I can worship." There is something more fundamental. More internal. As we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, and the word of Christ dwell in our hearts, then we will sing from our hearts.
- c. **3.) Our worshipful singing together is a participatory ministry, not a spectator event.**
- i. **Application for us as a church:** The main goal and focus is not what happens on stage. The most important sound on Sunday morning is the congregation singing.
 1. What happens on stage is meant to encourage, enable, and draw out the whole-hearted singing of the entire congregation.
 - ii. **Application for us as individuals:** If you are a member of this church, you are a worship leader. New people are going to learn what it means to worship from standing next to you, or in front of you.
 1. So sing out. As you do, God is pleased, those around you are built up, and Christ is glorified.

D. A. Carson Quote:

"The church itself is not made up of natural 'friends.' It is made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, [common music preferences] or anything else of that sort. Christians come together, not because they form a natural collocation, but because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ and owe him a common allegiance. In the light of this common allegiance, in the light of the fact that they have all been loved by Jesus himself, they commit themselves to doing what he says—and he commands them to love one another. In this light, they are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus' sake."

Extended Outline:

Read Colossians 3:12-17

1. **Worshipful singing together is an expression of the unity we have in Christ.**

- a. In verse 16 we are commanded to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs together. The call to sing together is given in the context of a call to a deep, visible, relational unity among diverse people in the church.
- b. V13 – We are called to bear with one another and forgive each other.
- c. V14 – put on love, which binds together in perfect harmony.
- d. V15 – you were called in one body.
 - i. Exp: God has saved individuals. And then he joins us together into one body. One family. A united church.
 - ii. Christ is glorified by bringing together diverse people.
 1. Look at verse 11 – “HERE” – in Christ, in the church, the most profound divisions in society are overcome. – Jew/Gentile, slave/free, male/female.

DA Carson: “The church itself is not made up of natural ‘friends.’ It is made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, [common music preferences] or anything else of that sort. Christians come together, not because they form a natural collocation, but because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ and owe him a common allegiance. In the light of this common allegiance, in the light of the fact that they have all been loved by Jesus himself, they commit themselves to doing what he says—and he commands them to love one another. In this light, they are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus’ sake.” – Love in Hard Places, 61.

- iii. The church is a gathering of **diverse** people who enjoy a deep unity, through Jesus Christ.
- e. **App:** v16 - One of the main ways our unity is expressed, is through our singing together.
 - i. Music is given by God as a means of experiencing and publicly expressing our unity in Jesus Christ.
- f. **Application for us as a church:**
 - i. We want to be a church united not by a certain musical style or common preferences, but by our common love for our Savior.
 - ii. Our goal is not music that young people like, or music that older people like. But all generations united in Christ, singing together of and to Christ.
- g. **Application for us as individuals:**
 - i. Church, let’s walk in unity. Let’s keep singing. Let’s exult in Jesus, together, united in Christ.

2. **Worshipful singing together is built on our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.**

- a. V15 – Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
- b. V16a – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
 - i. The word of Christ, is the word about Christ. The word about who Christ is. It is the word about what Christ has done.

- ii. This truth, should dwell (take residence in us) richly. This passage is mainly focused on the word of Christ dwelling richly in us as a church – “you” is plural -- Let it dwell *among* you.
 - c. V16b tells us how to do this.
 - i. Singing together is one of the main ways we let the word of Christ dwell richly among us
 - ii. He mentions 3 diverse styles of music – psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. All must be saturated with the word of Christ.
 - d. **App for church:** Based on this, we continue to be absolutely committed to singing songs that are biblically true. Songs that are not mainly about us. Songs full of truth about who Jesus is and what He has done. As we do, the word of Christ dwells deeply among us.
 - e. **App for us as individuals:** Let us tend our hearts. We can sometimes tend to think, “if I have the right style of music, then I can worship.” There is something more fundamental. More internal. As we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, and the word of Christ dwell in our hearts, then we will sing from our hearts.
- 3. **Our worshipful singing together is a participatory ministry, not a spectator event.**
 - a. We (all of us) are commanded to sing. We see it here in verse 16.
 - i. The command to sing is the most frequently repeated command found in Scripture. Direct imperatives 39 times.
 - ii. **Illus:** I learned to worship God through singing by watching Aleeva Graham and my Dad in the pews around me sing with all their heart.
 - b. V16 - We are singing to each other as well as to God.
 - i. V16 - We are to teach and admonish one another, [through] singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. See also Ephesians 5:19.
 - 1. **Illus:** In children’s church they ask the 4 & 5 year olds, “Why do we sing?” The answer: “We sing to praise Jesus, and tell each other true things about Jesus.”
 - c. **Application for us as a church:** The main goal and focus is not what happens on stage. The most important sound on Sunday morning is the congregation singing.
 - i. What happens on stage is meant to encourage, enable, and draw out the whole-hearted singing of the entire congregation.
 - d. **Application for us as individuals:** If you are a member of this church, you are a worship leader. New people are going to learn what it means to worship from standing next to you, or in front of you.
 - i. So sing out. As you do, God is pleased, those around you are built up, and Christ is glorified.
- 4. **Conclusion:** This church has a long history of biblical, united, Christ-centered, congregational worship through singing. Let us pray and serve together in the coming months and years to continue as a people united in Christ, singing together to our Savior.