

Why Do We Sing?

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[0:00] Thank you again for coming. I don't think thank you this morning. I certainly thank the people who came last night. I took a fresh look at this passage and thought, I didn't see before.

Isn't that how scriptural it is? I didn't notice that before. So rather than coming to this passage asking the question, why do we sing?

That's what we think we have on the program. We're going to be asking a different question. And the question is, what effect does the gospel have on our singing?

We're just singing about the gospel. So we're talking about the gospel and our singing. On a recent flight, one of the flight attendants asked if there was someone named Johnny, who was the last name, to identify themselves.

And she went on to inform me and say, it's Johnny's the 11th birthday. And she said, but I'm not going to sing a happy birthday to him because you wouldn't enjoy that.

[1:33] And I thought, oh, man. Poor Johnny, that's been clean now. It's your birthday, but we're not singing. And I'm sure the flight attendant was telling the truth, and I'm glad she didn't sing.

And I doubt that Johnny's day was ruined because the flight attendant didn't sing at the perfect day. Or asked the passengers to join him. And she did that. Hey, why did I make that she didn't do that?

But I'm also sure that the flight attendant represents a number of people. What? Did someone call my name? Okay, good. I'm just not going to hear it. The flight attendant represents a number of people who don't think they have a very good voice.

And singing in public is not something they ever look forward to. Whether it's violence also with your group. You might have some of them in your church. You know, as you're looking out, and you're thinking, yeah, that's one.

Well, they say that. Years ago, I read this book by Ronald Allen and Gordon Boer, and it came across these words that have always stayed with me, and they speak directly to those who don't like to sing, whether it's with the church or anywhere.

[2:46] The question is not, has God given me a voice? But has God given me a song? That just landed on me with such voice.

I've met people through the decades, many people who say, yeah, I don't know a good voice. It's not the question. Has God given you a voice? The question is, has God given you a song?

And we're going to see, as we look at this passage, we're going to focus on it. We're going to read verses 12 through 17. Actually, we're going to read the whole, 1 through 17. We're going to focus on 12 through 17, and specifically on verses 16 and 17.

But we're going to see that if we're among the people that Paul's describing here, those to whom this letter has written, God has given us a song to sing. Because the gospel not only turns sinners into saints, it turns saints into singers.

That's what the gospel does. It doesn't want to turn sinners into saints, turns saints into singers. It doesn't turn saints into soloists. It doesn't turn saints into superstars.

[3:56] But it does turn them into singers. One of the reasons Paul wrote this letter, just to set the context of what we're reading, was this concern that the Colossians were being influenced by false teachers who were adding to Christ.

And you can't add something to Christ to make Him better. You can only take something away. You can add something to Christ. And he wants them to be clear on who Jesus is and what the gospel is.

That's why he's writing. So the gospel's all over this book and this passage. So in chapter 1, he talks about the gospel, the word of truth that has come to the Colossians and to the whole world.

It's the story of Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God who created all things, holds all things together. He's the firstborn from the dead and has reconciled a people to God.

He's actually reconciled all things to God through His blood shed on the cross. And he exhorts them to stand fast in that truth. Be steadfast in it.

[5:03] Don't shift from the hope it brings because it's the gospel. It's what we have. Then in chapter 2, he goes on to say that we're to be rooted in Christ and that if we are rooted in Christ, we're to walk in Him and be built up in Him and not be misled by the people who are saying that we need something else, something extra, something more than Jesus to be accepted by God.

And here in chapter 3, he's going to double down on what the gospel is, what it means for us, and how to live in light of the fact that because we are united in Christ, we've been raised up with Him and now He is our life.

And in the midst of those cosmically significant truths, He's going to talk about singing. So that's how we want to make that connection.

So I'm going to read Colossians 1, I'm sorry, Colossians 3, verses 1-17. This is God's word to us.

And Father, we pray that You would enable us to hear this word, these words, by Your Spirit, with fresh ears, with fresh hearts, open hearts, that we may receive everything You have for us for Your glory, for the glory of Your Son, and for our joy and good.

[6:38] In Jesus' name. If then, verse 1, you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you, you have died.

And your life is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you? Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these things, the wrath of God is coming. In these, you too once walked what you were living in, but now, you just put them all away.

[7:44] In, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 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 not Greek and Jew, uncircumcised, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slain, free, but Christ is all and in all.

Put on, then, talk about what we're to put off, now, put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy, and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, obedience, and patience, bearing with one another.

And if one has a complaint 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 were 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 songs and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[9 : 32] And whatever you do, in word, deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

God, stop right there. But we're not going to. We were talking about four things that this passage tells us about how the gospel affects our singing.

Number one, the gospel specifies the participants of our singing. The gospel answers the question, who is singing?

We can jump right to verse 16 and assume it doesn't really matter who's doing the singing. Just that people are singing. You hear the sound of singing. Oh, but it does matter who's doing the singing.

Not just anyone can sing like this. Now, despite the fact that we are a culture in which singing together is on the decline, we are still a culture that's fascinated by singing.

[10 : 45] Our diction shows like the voice of an American idol and a masked singer can attest to that. I don't get the last one. But it's the most positive.

But when Christians sing, when Christians sing, it's different. What makes congregational singing so glorious and moving isn't simply the sound they make.

It's who makes up the congregation. It's who is singing. The gospel produces individuals who have been transformed.

It turns saints into singing. So how does the gospel define the participants of our singing?

How does this passage define the participants? Well, we have to look at what comes before verse 16 and get the answer. Right before the passage that we read, Paul's talking about false teachers who were seeking to influence the Colossian church.

[11 : 53] They were encouraging things like asceticism, being strict with yourself, disciplining the body. They talked about the worship of angels going on and on about visions they had seen and puffing themselves up in the process.

Hey, guess what I see? Guess what I know? In other words, what they were saying, what you have in Jesus is good, but you need just a little bit more than what you got.

And we happen to have what we're talking about. That kind of thinking is common in every religion outside Christianity.

You have to do more. Something else you have to do. And he describes what they were saying in verses 16 and 18 of verse 2, chapter 2, sorry, therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

Don't let them judge you for those things. These are a shadow of the things to come. The substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and worship with angels going in and down in detail about visions puffed up without reason by a central mind.

[13:07] In other words, they were saying a little more attention to the laws and environments of the Old Testament. Just a little more attention. A little more self-effort.

And by the way, if you really want spiritual fullness, we can tell you about some angelic worship that is really amazing. yet, you just won't believe that we have to be.

I love what St. Claire Ferguson says about this. The technique here may sound vaguely familiar. Various versions of it are promulgated on television, promoted in books. The common factor is this.

You may get some teaching in your own church, but what we have, what we teach, is superior. You will really learn about the spiritual life here, with us, and you will find the fullness you desire.

What Paul says in response to that is, you already have fullness in Christ. You don't need something else to make you more full. In verse, chapter 1, verse 19, he says, for in him, in Christ, all the fullness of God is pleased to dwell.

[14:15] And then in chapter 2, verses 9 and 10, he says, for in him, the whole fullness of deity grows bodily, and you have been filled in him. Because we are filled with Christ, who is the head of all rule and authority.

And that's what he's spelling out in the beginning of the passage we read. You've been raised with Christ. You've died with Christ. Your life is hidden with Christ. You will appear with Christ in glory when he returns.

Do you ever think about that? Not enough, we don't think about that enough. we will appear with Christ in glory when he returns. Why? Because we have been filled with the fullness of Christ.

We don't need that extra added something to bring us to God. We bring Christ. But more precisely, he brings us.

And then in verses 12, Paul uses these three really remarkable terms to describe the participants of our singing. And they go by so quickly you can almost miss them.

[15:27] Put on them as God's chosen ones, holy and lush.

shh. That's what's singing this morning. That's what's singing every Sunday country. With God, you see a lot of problems.

You see a lot of things that matter. You see what God sees? These are my writings. These are my whole wounds. these are my favorite.

Paul's doing something kind of shocking here. He is intentionally applying these words to the Gentiles, the non-Jews who are part of the Colossian church.

And in the past, those words were used for this God's chosen, people, Jews. But now the Gentiles are included. There's something even more shocking, and that is he's using the words that have only been applied to Christ himself.

[16:39] 1 Peter 2:4 says, As you come to him, a living stone protected by men that are the sight of God, chosen and crushed. Jesus is the chosen one. John 6 verse 69, Peter says to Jesus, We have believed and come to know that you are the holy one of God.

Jesus is the true holy one. And if Jesus is being baptized, the voice from heaven said, This is my beloved son in whom I know I believe.

God refers to his people the same way that he refers to his son. Do you think it would be more amazing, more breathtaking than that?

God. I often hear people say, I just don't know why God chose me. Why would God pick someone like me?

Maybe he thought that. Why would God pick someone like me? Apostle Paul answers that question in the passage we read earlier in the planet.

- [17:50] he saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to his own mercy by the washing and regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.
- It was nothing in us that caused God to choose us. Nothing. It's a fruitless pursuit. Why did God choose me?
- Don't spend too long trying to find the answer that. There is not! I heard one teacher say recently before there were any atoms or any atom God chose us to be a part of his people.
- Which means from the foundations of the earth God chose us to be a part of the choir. Paul says in Romans 8.33 who will bring any charge against God's elect.
- It is God who justifies. We are his. But that's not all. We're not only chosen. God says we're holy. We've been set apart for God's purposes, God's plans, God's glory.
- [19:03] And most Christians think of holiness in terms of moral categories, behavioral categories. A holy person is someone who doesn't sin, stays away from worldly things, and has consistent quiet time.
- We can feel holy, more holy, if we've done those things. As we're sitting with the people around us, we can feel more holy if we've done the right things.
- But holiness applies something deeper than that. It comes from the word meaning to cut or separate. Holiness means we've been cut off or separated from other things, separated from common use.
- in his wonderful book devoted to God, St. Clark Ferguson defines God's holiness as his utter and complete devotion to himself as the ultimate glory, the ultimate treasure, the ultimate existence.
- So when God says something is holy, he talked about the Sabbath, vessels, nations, garments, men and women, it means they are exclusively devoted to him.
- [20:10] so he shows us to be devoted to himself as much as he is devoted to himself. We are holy.
- But that's not all. We're not only chosen and holy, we are beloved. We're dearly loved. Notice this, Paul isn't saying in his list of imperatives, if you put off these vices, and put on these sins, then, and only then, will you be loved.
- Mine is about parenting sometimes. Not a good way to parent. God doesn't tell us that. He starts with, you are beloved, cherished, held, in great affection.
- That's who we are. That's who's singing in the choir. That's who we're looking out at or standing with every Sunday morning. Those who are chosen and holy and dearly loved.
- We aren't singing in a choir like soloist wabies. We're not singing because our performance this week made us worthy to sing in the Lord's Choir. In our church, like most churches, requires a musical audition, I call it an interview, if you want to be part of a choir, part of the band.
- [21:36] We're just checking, can they sing in tunes? Can they sing in harmony? Is their voice pleasing? Can they blend in? I'd encourage you in your church to have that kind of choir.
- But there's good news, you don't have an audition to sing in the church. The fact that you're in the church means that you're in the choir. If you're in Christ, you're in.
- You're chosen. You're holy. You're dearly love. It's not dependent on the range, the timbre, the sound, the skill of your spirit. Christ gets you into the choir.
- So the gospel specifies who the participants of our singing are. Number two, the gospel describes the nature of our singing. How should we sing? What should those who are chosen all in dearly love, what should their singing look like?

These passages tell us. It tells us that our singing should be as one, to be unified. The passage is relentlessly corporate congregational.

- [22 : 43] It doesn't make any sense to think of these commands and promises outside the reality of the church. Of course we can and should sing on our own, but here we're reminded that we are the body of Christ.

We're united in Christ. And no secondary differences or skill differences are going to keep us from celebrating our common share in Christ.

David and I did this podcast called Southless Doctrine. One of the episodes we did was musicians are part of the congregation too. You know, we're not up on this platform separate from people in some higher level, well, physically speaking, we are, but we're not different in God's eyes.

We're just part of the choir. And we're not leading that choir. Jesus is leading that choir. So we're singing as one. The gospel enables us to look past the differences and peculiarities and quirks of those around us and say, oh, you're in Christ, just like I am.

And you notice in Paul's list to put on because he highlights those sins and virtues which either threaten or strengthen our unity. Put off coveting.

- [24 : 07] Put off anger, malice, slander. Put on compassionate hearts, kindness, meekness, patience. Bear with one another.

Forgive others as the Lord is forgiving you, so you also must forgive. Oh, by the way, above everything, put on the love which binds it all together. Perfect Harmony. We're not a group of random individuals who are not a show in the same room at the same house.

We are one in Christ. We're not pursuing our own agendas, our own interests, our own goals. We were called in one body, he says in verse 15. We are called in one body.

We are one in Christ. And because of that, we're eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. And that's so ironic that the source of so many differences and conflicts in the church have been over you.

Isn't that wrong? When God says, if you're chosen to hold a dear in love, you're to sing as one. That's why I called you to sing. You sing as one.

- [25 : 11] What else does the gospel say about how we're to sing? Well, the gospel calls us to sing with gratefulness, gratefully. Verses 15-17, thankfulness is mentioned three times. I've tried to emphasize it in the last reading.

Verse 15, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Verse 16, let the word of Christ dwell in you, literally singing, teaching and moshing women in all wisdom, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs, giving the thankfulness in your hearts to God.

And then whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. Giving thanks to God. Isn't that beautiful? It's bothering you. Why do you think God had Paul put that in there three times, in three verses?

Well, really, it's because a lot of times when we come to the meeting we're not so thankful. We're discouraged. Just feeling down, distracted, way down, like sins were bad, or suffering were going through, or maybe even just a sense of numbness, disconnectedness.

This passage tells us that we can enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with grace. And we don't have to ignore the reality of the things that are going on in our lives.

- [26 : 37] God wants us to transcend them. It says there is something going on that's a greater reality that you can see. there are times for lament.

There are times for repentance. There are times for reflection. But God wants us to see that greater reality that surrounds what we see so vividly among.

Remember Christ, who he is, what he's done. Remember who you are. Remember whose you are. Remember where you're headed.

It's just you can't think about these things without being thankful. The phrase singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God, this is a little bit of a twist, might be more accurately translated in grace singing in your hearts to God.

It parallels what came right before, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in grace, singing in your hearts to God. We are singing in grace.

[27 : 49] And this is what Richard Malick says about that. Grace reminds singers that the message and not the singers bring salvation. It further reminds us that everything good about what they sing comes from God because of God's grace.

There is no room for self-praise, ambition, or high-mindedness in the realm of grace. Those who are saying do so, because they have felt the transforming power of God in their own lives and they sing with an awareness of that grace.

Are we aware of that grace from this? God intends us to be. He wants us to be. We're thankful because of the grace we stand in as our Christ. Our sins, the ones we've committed today already, do for good.

Our sins, the ones we're committed for the rest of the day, do for care. We have no fear of health. The grave has been overcome. We're headed for eternal pleasures at God's right hand.

And if you're in a band, a pure musician who serves in your church, often that thankfulness is dampened by thoughts of anxiety or comparison or envy.

[29 : 02] It should not be so. we live in reality that transcends our petty grievances against others.

How often is a thankful heart overruled by a judgmental or critical heart? It's the gospel that enables us. It's only the gospel to put all those thoughts aside and be truly grateful that our sins are paid for, that we've been reconciled to God and that all around us are brothers and sisters who have received the same unfathomable mercy of Christ that we have.

You're a Christian part of me. We're to sing as one and sing thankfully and the gospel says we're to sing wholeheartedly. And you guys have done a great job that way.

Sing wholeheartedly. Singing with thankfulness naturally means to a whole hearted participation. Verse 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and promising one another, and all with him, singing songs and things and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Some people have tried to make the case that that means it doesn't really matter if we sing authorly, we're really singing this in our hearts to God. so I can just sit here and not do anything but God hears me.

[30 : 35] That's not what that was to mean. When the Bible uses the word heart, it is generally talking about our whole being, the center of our thinking and will and affection.

So what Paul's saying is we're not just singing with our lips, we're singing with our whole hearts, our whole being.

This means that our singing isn't just meant to be heard, it's meant to be seen. Seeing is a powerful and beautiful way of expressing our gratefulness to God as we consider the grace that he has shown us in Christ.

No one else can sing like this. Do we get that? No one else knows what we know. No one else has experienced what we have experienced.

So God gives us singing both to express it and to elicit that kind of gratefulness. So Jonathan Edmund in his book Religious Affection says, the duty of singing praises to God seems to be given wholly, wholly, completely, to excite and express religious affection.

[32 : 01] There's no reason why we should express ourselves to God in verse rather than in prose and with music except that these things have a tendency to move our affection, affection.

Quick sidebar here. There's a difference between emotions and affection. Emotions are what I feel. Happiness, anger, excitement, anxiety.

Affections are why I feel them. That's what goes down deeper than emotions. Emotions are response. Affections drive the car. So when we're talking about speaking to our affections, we're not talking about just getting people happy and excited.

We're talking about bringing them, bringing to their minds, to their hearts, what is true, what is real, who they are, what Christ has done, who He is.

Those kinds of things. Singing both expresses and excites those truths. It supplies a way of giving voice to what's in our hearts, but it also stirs up what might be dormant.

[33 : 19] So we might come into the science service overflowing with thankfulness for what God has done for us in Christ. Singing helps us express that wholeheartedly. Sometimes we become distracted.

Sometimes we become overwhelmed by our sin or our suffering. And that's okay. And then we start singing. singing reminds us of what we're about, who we are, what God has done for us and is for us in Christ.

It excites and draws out our affections. We're to sing with thankfulness in our whole being. It doesn't mean that you're a continuation of charismatic if you do that.

and you should be, but it doesn't mean that you're becoming an extrovert. This isn't me. Well, you just got a passing better to sing about.

It doesn't matter about you. It means the Lord of Christ is dwelling in your rich life. That's what it means. And you can't help but respond. That's why hearts include, it's in your hearts.

[34 : 34] It includes what we do of our faces and our bodies. Psalm 34 verse 5 says, Those who look to him are dour. It doesn't say it.

Those who look to him are distracted. It doesn't say it. Those who look to him are radiant. Their faces shall never be ashamed.

It's good to ask ourselves occasionally, what am I communicating with my face, my body, my engagement to others as I sing.

What am I, what can people see about the God I'm singing about? What kind of Savior do I communicate Jesus is through my body?

That's why at our home church we ask our inch of mouth to sing and the folks are going to hear. These are all members of the community church. Love serving with them. We ask everyone else to sing because it's not just about playing the notes.

[35 : 39] It's about who you are in Christ. The one who's done for you. Now there may be occasionally some who say, well I don't want to be a distraction. Okay?

Great, that's a good thing. Don't be a distraction. But being a distraction is different from showing affection. affection. So if my wife, Julie, when I miss all my heart, we're walking to this room, I can stop the mess and have a local group to her and kiss her passionately.

Because we always kiss passionately. That's what we try to do. Actually, don't try to do it. We do it. And you know, I was thinking, here's what I was thinking.

I wonder what people are thinking about me. Is this my show? My show is my attraction? I don't want to seem like too on the top like this.

That would be the fear of me, huh? I don't care what you think in relation to my wife. I never worked on my arm in the year 50 years.

[36 : 50] It's always. You know, I was only one. How much should people see who it is that we are seeing and how the Lord is and how good?

You don't have to be distracted. You shouldn't be distracted. You're not talking about these problems. And I saw them in all kinds of places all over the world. And, you know, there's some very conservative places.

David and I, here, to a conference in California. We're like, you know, two people in the room. You seem to be doing anything. And it's okay, because by the end of the conference, more people are engaged.

And that's the key word, engaged. We know what's going on. Know. So, wholeheartedly. Because one other way, this is, end of this point, how do we sing?

We talked about as one, gratefully, wholeheartedly, and then to God, ourselves, and others. There is an audience for singing. Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[38 : 10] So, what do we do? We're singing, teaching and admonishing one another, but we're also singing to God. Now, no one would argue that when we sing, we're meant to sing to God.

We're singing in our hearts to God. And amazingly, because of Christ, he delights to hear our praises perfected through the work of Jesus Christ. But the gospel reminds us that we're singing to each other.

Back in Colossians 1. 28, Paul described his ministry. He said, him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

That's what Paul's apostolic ministry was about. Warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom. You know what that does to us? Warning everyone and teaching everyone? Those are the same ones he used right here.

Teaching and admonishing one another. We're doing as a community what Paul was doing as an apostle. We're helping each other see what's true, what's real.

[39 : 12] And when he says one another, that can be yourselves, both reflexively as I'm singing to myself, we're singing to ourselves, or we're singing to each other.

Talk about that first part for a moment. First, we're singing to ourselves. How often do we bondlessly participate in congregational singing? singing. I'm aware that the very words we're singing can provide strength before weary.

They can provide truth before confused or distracted. They can provide eternal delights for our relentlessly idol-making heart.

If we're not singing to ourselves, if we're just passing on data or information to other people, we're missing out on how singing the word of Christ is meant to function for us.

People ask me sometimes, or we talk with leaders, music teams, worship teams, you know, the difference between doing it up here and doing it down there. You know, there should be very little words.

[40 : 22] I'm singing myself up here. It's not just about singing you. I am singing you, because that's what we're looking at in a second. But if I'm not singing myself, I'm missing the grace that could come to me through the very words that we're singing.

So we do that, but we also sing to one another. Sometimes we do that by singing songs to God. Jesus is now, Lord, Jesus is now, O Lord, I rock you.

We sing to the Lord, but a large number of songs we sing. Or something about God. Not to Him. In Christ alone, my hope is found.

What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer? We're not singing that to the Lord. In one sense we are. Those words are to each other.

Crown with many crowns. We sing that in just a few minutes. Who are we singing those songs to? Well, to God, but to each other, are we aware that the gospel invites us and encourages us and exhorts us to proclaim the good news to those that they know?

[41 : 41] Now, it's easy when you're up on a platform, you can get it, you're seeing it. But when I'm down front, which is where I usually am, I'm just going to turn around and look at it, it's not like steer somebody down.

It's just nothing to say, hey, we're doing this together. These words are true. They're true for you, they're true for me. Isn't this amazing that we've received this grace?

This is awesome. This is truly awesome that a bunch of neutrals like us are in the same song and such joy in them because we didn't deserve it, we didn't earn it, we didn't ask for it.

God is daily. It's amazing. We often envision singing together as an individual event.

We're concerned with how we look, how we sound, how we feel, and the ultimate idea of worship with God for many Christians is this singing with our eyes closed, shutting out the distracting people around us, to see you.

[42 : 50] That's the height of worship. You know, that's not the height of worship. Surprisingly. That can be one aspect, but sorry, you're always going to be with other people.

Heaven's not going to be just us and Jesus, our own. There's a way myriad to myriad, thousands and thousands of people with us. What are we going to do then? Jesus, just right here.

I want these other people. Can we put that? I want to sing because it's so distracting. God says, no, you're going to sing to them. They're to sing.

That's what, there's a biblical reason for why sitting in your living room in front of a screen can't be described as going to church. Or going to the meeting.

Church online is an oxymoron. It's two things that can't go together. Can God use church online? Is that what the gospel compels us to do and pursue?

[43 : 51] No. The reality is, even when we're singing about God, we're singing to others, proclaiming truths that both they and we need to be reminded of and are encouraged to celebrate.

And it's worth noting that there's no mention of worship leaders here. responsibility for teaching and admonishing falls on the congregation. So as leaders, we don't want to be so involved in leading that the congregation can't survive anymore.

We are facilitators. We're shepherding. We're not the main thing. The most encouraging comment, someone told me in the conference, that I could receive for what I do.

So he said, you know, after a while, I didn't even know this were there. I said, amen. I'm a lead, I'm a shepherd, I'm a shepherd, but I want to get people to the place where they're going.

Because they're so called up the Lord and the Lord and his goodness and his kindness with people of God's savior. So the gospel name is to sing the God and together.

[45 : 07] Number three, the gospel supplies the content of our singing. What should we sing? These last two points are shorter than the others, just in case you're wondering. The process 316 begins, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Notice, we're not the actors in that phrase, we're the receivers. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Let this word, this amazing gospel, this amazing goodness, let that dwell in you richly.

We don't have to come up with new things to sing about. We don't have to come up with new ways of stirring our affections or more creative ways of singing. We're to let the word of Christ, already established, already proclaimed, already accomplished, dwell in us richly.

Now that word of Christ could be understood in a number of ways, could be the words of Christ, the things that Jesus taught and said, I don't think that's what it means, but it could be that. It could be the word about Christ, the gospel, the good news of coming to earth, becoming flesh, we take on our nature, to live a perfect life of obedience, to bear the punishment for our sins that we deserve, to rise from the dead, as Samuel follows our hand, let he reigns and intercedes for us until he comes again as a faithful judge to end all wickedness, and the faithful husband to claim the bride he needs.

It's such a Christ. So it could be that, and the word of Christ could also point to the word of God, which in its entirety points to Christ.

[46 : 50] And it seems to all for it. It's the gospel of the same. The singing is meant to be grounded in and fueled by the objective truth of the gospel revealed in his word.

But is the word of Christ, the root of the teaching of the teaching of the teaching of the singing, or is it the fruit of those things? Is it what inspires those things, or is it the result of those things?

Let the word of Christ go universally so you can sing, or sing so the word of Christ go universally. Well, I don't think we have to choose. And as a word of commentators, they don't seem to be, it doesn't seem to be a consensus.

The word of Christ dwell in us richly does produce singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, but it also dwells in us richly as we sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Have you ever had the experience of singing the same psalm before a message and then after a message? You should try that sometimes. We sang, the most recent example is we sang he is a word of program, and then we heard him and then we had this on playing and thought we got to do the word of it.

[48 : 07] Because that's what the message is about. And you would have thought the word of was going to blow off. They were the same song, it was separated by by time.

Same people, same room. What happened? The word of Christ was well in that worship. It transforms our seeing.

But it works the other way as well. As we sing songs that expound on the reality of the first in the work of Christ, the word of Christ is sung in us richly.

And while the heart of the gospel is the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, when we talk about the word Christ, it means everything in us. It means his preexistence state, his incarnation, his perfect life, his suffering, his death on the cross, his resurrection, ascension, his intercession, his reign, and his return.

It's all those things that we want to draw people's attention to. And we want to make sure that with this content we're not just trying to squeeze so much doctrine into our songs that people don't have time to read, that people don't have time to respond.

[49 : 26] That doctrine of fuel is meant to produce an emotional fire, an affectional fire. We need opportunities to respond to that word of Christ, to express that thankfulness.

That's why songs seem to be spiritual songs, because when you make out it applies a variety of songs, not necessarily a specific type, but it is a variety of songs that make us both to hear the truth of Christ and to respond to that.

And then finally, this is the fourth point, the gospel informs the purpose of our singing. It talks about who the systems are, how we should sing, what we should sing, and what's the effect.

Verse 17 says, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God for all peace. P.T. O'Brien in one of the commentator remarks, there are few expectations in the New Testament which are as comprehensive as they are.

Do whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything. that's that kind of culture. In the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father true of him.

[50:46] This means seeing everything in light of who Jesus is and what he's done. Our singing is meant to propel us into life with fresh faith, with fresh understanding, and with fresh zeal to live for the glory of God in Christ.

there's nothing more we can do to earn God's forgiveness. We're no longer under condemnation. When Satan turns to lead to despair, our suffering is never wasted.

It has purpose and meaning. No guilt in life, no fear in death. This is the power of Christ to me. From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.

Yes, he does. We have confidence in battle against sin in the flesh. Christ has defeated every sin. Those aren't just words to a song that somebody came up with in a dull moment.

That's what life transforming is. Christ has defeated every sin, including ours. Isn't that great news?

[51:58] Cast all your burdens down. It's one of the reasons I singing, by singing worship and singing as synonymous is so awful. It's misguided.

It's even dangerous. God intends our singing to be an aspect of our worship, an expression of our worship, but not the sum total of it. Romans 12 1 says that we're in view of the verses of God which present our bodies as a living sacrifice, not just our singing, but our bodies, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

gospel singing is meant to lead to gospel living. But our singing here on Sundays or here wherever any of this is meant to progress to life, let's prepare for a glorious unending song that you signed out of the floor.

Our singing reflects that song, but it's limited. It's limited in at least three ways. time, understanding, and strength.

Time, the meetings can't go on forever. Some pastors are more attentive to that than others. We don't understand everything we need to understand like the Lord, and our bodies give out.

[53:22] We just can't keep singing. But one day time will never run out. one day will see as it really is and we'll be like it. One day we're stronger, glorifying God.

What would that be like? What would it be like to hear songs we never heard before? Sometimes people say, yeah, when you see that song in heaven, they kind of think that. Maybe, maybe.

But you know, once more glorified with Christ, like actually, I just think we wrote better songs. Are you kidding me?

Come on! But this is what we know. Every time we sing, it's a preparation for that time.

We will behold our Savior face to face and we will look back and wonder our singing could have been so restrained and so distracted and so optional.

[54:38] We sing for the glory and honor, especially Jesus Christ, who has given us a reason to sing. And as His word dwells in us richly, in our minds and hearts, the meaning and the content and the purpose of our singing become clear.

Worshiping God in song, isn't this a nice idea for mutually gifted people? It's for our churches. It's for those who are chosen to hold and have their love.

And we can say to those in the church, I don't know if God has given you a voice, but I know if you've trusted in the finished word of Christ, He has given you a song. And I want to help them sing.

It's a song that will continue throughout eternity for the glory and the triumph of it. And what a joy it is every time you sing to prepare for that day.

Father, we ask that you would prepare us for that day as we sing here. We would not be so caught up in our views and our single singing that we forget what the gospel has done to transform our singing, and what Jesus has done to transform our singing.

[55 : 52] May we sing as one, may we sing with all our hearts, may we sing of Christ and His glory, and may we sing in such a way that our lives will transform.

We know that we want to do this, but we will do this by the power of our Spirit working in us to do more than we can ask to do. So we thank you and help us Father to serve our church as well in this area for your glory.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.