

162. The Power of Song By Arland Steen

Supreme Scripture

Colossians 3:16 (NKJ): *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Ephesians 5:18-19 (NKJ): *¹⁸And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Sticky Statement: The Church is a caring community, a serving community, a praying community and a healing community but fundamentally the Church is a worshipping community. I received insight on these verses in July 2003 that reveals the priority of worship for infusing God's Word into our lives.

Insight #1: Colossians establishes a *direct relationship* between the Word and worship.

Most of us would consider these as separate operations – with the Word as instructional and the Spirit as inspirational.

But here the fruitful planting of the Word is linked to our singing and worshipping. The assimilation of truth is said to *require* worship for its fullest digestion.

This also gives greater depth to our understanding of meditating the Word. After all, meditation is muttering, uttering or murmuring the Word or reciting it to ourselves.

What better way to do that than in the form of singing or “chanting” as the Jews practice?

Under the Old Covenant God's Word was engraved in stone and on parchment. But in one of the prophets God said He would change the way He engraved His truth.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJ): *This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

This is reiterated by the writer of Hebrews in the NT.

Hebrews 10:16 (NKJ): *This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.*

Obviously, no longer is chisel or pen the prescribed way of engraving the Word.

Question: Could the music of worship be the means God has ordained for fulfilling this prophecy?

I think we should recognize the place of singing in this process.

Insight #2: Ephesians establishes a *direct relationship* between the Holy Spirit and worship.

In light of the above, Paul's second mention of singing becomes all the more meaningful. The exhortation in Ephesians is preceded by two commands.

Ephesians 5:17 (NKJ): *Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

So, a) don't be unwise and b) know God's will.

In other words, if you want to walk in God's will and wisdom, avoid the world-spirit and keep filled with the Holy Spirit and song-filled worship is the way to do both!

Ephesians 5:19 (KJV): *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

This is something you do in your personal and private life. It is utterance inspired by the Holy Spirit; not a song off the latest worship charts. It's actually the gift of prophecy in operation. It's hot off the wire from heaven.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms” – a psalm is a spiritual poem or ode. There is 150 of them in the OT given by the spirit of prophecy. They can be recited, chanted or sung.

(Knox): *Your tongues unloosed in psalms and hymns and sacred songs.*

The three-way power of singing

First, singing brings victory is seen in Israel during King Jehoshaphat's day in 2 Chronicles 20:1-25

2 Chronicles 20:9 (NKJ): *If disaster comes upon us – sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine – we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.*

Notice that in verse 9 Jehoshaphat is putting Isaiah 43:25-26 in practice.

Isaiah 43:25-26 (NKJ): ²⁵*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.* ²⁶*Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted.*

The battle is not yours but God's (verse 15).

2 Chronicles 20:15 (NKJ): *And he said, 'Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.*

2 Chronicles 20:18-19 (NKJ): ¹⁸*And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.* ¹⁹*Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.*

Notice verses 18 and 19. Why are you so loud? Because we are praising the Lord.

And at midnight Paul and Silas sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. They weren't quiet about it.

Now notice verse 20.

2 Chronicles 20:20-21 (NKJ): ²⁰*So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.'* ²¹*And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying, 'Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.'*

Notice the king put people who would sing, praise and say praises to God were put first.

2 Chronicles 20:22 (NKJ): *Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.*

Notice the Lord ambushed them when they were praising the Lord.

2 Chronicles 20:25 (NKJ): *When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much.*

What happened to Israel was written for us to learn from their example. Most Christians need to stop praying and start praising and it would not be long before the answer would come.

But we, in the NT era, can sing because of the victory.

Second, singing brings breakthrough and is a means of His deliverance in the present in Acts 16:16-34

Acts 16:25 (NKJ): *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

At midnight is the darkest hour of your life or the greatest trial. When you get to the place where you say 'What am I going to do now?' remember they prayed and then praised. And we are further behind in our praising than in our praying.

Third, singing in the midst of barrenness births of new life in Isaiah 54:1

Isaiah 54:1(NKJ): *Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child!*