

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Tonight we are looking once again at Paul's letter to the Ephesians.
2. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to chapter 5.
3. Tonight we are looking at verse 19.
4. This section is building off his command in verse 18 to be "filled with the Spirit." And now he says, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.
5. In our last study we looked at what it means to be filled with the Spirit.
6. We saw that it is a moment-by-moment, day-by-day controlling of our lives by the Holy Spirit.
7. In the words of Galatians 5:16, it is "[walking] by the Spirit," in order to "not carry out the desire of the flesh."
8. That is the consequence to being Spirit-filled---we will not sin.
9. As we look at verses 19-6:9, we will see 3 consequences that occur when we are Spirit-filled.

10. The first is *singing*.
11. Singing is an expression of the soul.
12. Aristotle said, “Music represents the passions of the soul, and if one listens to the wrong music he will become the wrong kind of person.”
13. We have elevated singing to the place of entertainment but in the Bible it always represented the heart of the redeemed as they expressed worship to their Creator and Savior.
14. We hear expressions like this in the Psalms.
15. **Psalms 30:11-12 (NASB77)** <sup>11</sup> Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; <sup>12</sup> That my soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever.
16. **Psalms 71:23 (NASB77)** <sup>23</sup> My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to Thee; and my soul, which Thou hast redeemed.
17. **Psalms 84:2 (NASB77)** <sup>2</sup> My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

18. This is the passion of the redeemed and this is the song we hear from a heart and soul that has been redeemed.
19. The word “sing” occurs 120 times in the Bible while the word “singing” and “sang” occurs 17 times.
20. Singing was done as a result of God’s victory over His enemies (Ex.15:1), during times of suffering (Acts 16:25), and in times of gladness (Ps.27:6).
21. It also occurred at the creation “when the morning stars sang together” (Job 38:7).
22. So as singing is the response of the one who has been redeemed, it is also the response of one who is Spirit-filled.
23. After his command to be filled with the Spirit, Paul says in Ephesians 5:19 that the results will be “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.”
24. This is the first of three results that occur when we are Spirit-filled. The other two are *thanksgiving* (v.20), and *submission* (vv.21-6:9).
25. Notice in verse 19 the first result---singing.

**I. Singing (v.19)**

**A. Within ourselves**

This is the song that the Holy Spirit puts within our hearts. Our communing is not with ourselves, it's with the Spirit according to verse 18. When you're filled with the Spirit, He puts a song in your heart.

David said in **Psalm 28:7 (NASB77)** <sup>7</sup> The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults [to rejoice greatly; be jubilant or triumphant], And with my song I shall thank Him.

He said in **Psalm 40:3 (NASB77)** <sup>3</sup> And He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear, and will trust in the LORD.

Asaph said in **Psalm 77:6 (NASB77)** <sup>6</sup> I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart; and my spirit ponders.

In Ephesians 5:19, Paul uses an onomatopoeic word when he speaks of singing. It is translated "speaking" because he uses the Greek word laleo. Laleo is usually translated "to speak" or "to say." But as an onomatopoeic word, it refers to sounds like, "la, la, la, la, la."

The word originally came from the chatter or babble of little children when they first learn to talk. It was also used of the chirping of birds and the grunts and other noise animals make.

So in its most basic sense, Laleo (pres.act.part.) means to make a sound.

If we took this word to mean just “speaking,” then we would say that Paul is exhorting the Ephesians to “recite” the “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” to one another.

Kent Hughes says, “The public result of this inner music is that when the church comes together there is verbal, musical communication — both horizontal and vertical. They “speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” The Roman governor Pliny, in his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan in A.D. 112, tells how the Christians in his province had the custom of meeting on a fixed day before dawn and “reciting a hymn antiphonally to Christ as God.” Tertullian, writing from North Africa toward the end of the same century, describes a Christian feast at which “Each is invited to sing to God in the presence of

others from what he knows of the Holy Scripture or from his own heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Whether it is “speaking” or singing, Paul is saying that it “includes any sound offered to God from a Spirit-filled heart. The music from an organ or choir is no more acceptable to God than the sounds of a guitar or home-made flute. The sound that pleases Him is the sound that comes as a result of a heart submissive to His Spirit and that sings or plays to His glory.”<sup>2</sup>

When you sang tonight, did you sing as the result of a heart submissive to His Spirit? Did you sing to His glory?

The same question can be asked of our musicians that led us tonight in our singing. Did you play as a result of a heart submissive to His Spirit? Did you play to His glory?

The first consequence within us is *singing*.

Now, among whom do believers sing?

#### B. With Others

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<sup>1</sup>R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 175.

<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 258.

“Speaking to *one another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

The primary audience for our singing is fellow believers, “one another.”

Throughout Scripture we see the singing of God’s people to be within the fellowship of believers.

1. After Israel crossed the Red Sea and the Egyptians were drowned, they sang a song in Exodus 15:1-21.
2. The psalmist said in **Psalm 30:4 (NASB77)** <sup>4</sup> Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name.
3. He also said in **Psalm 33:1 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright.
4. **Psalm 149:1 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones.

John MacArthur says, “It should be noted that the many contemporary entertainers who think they are using their rock–style music to evangelize the lost are often doing nothing more than contributing to the weakening of the church. Evangelizing with contemporary music has many serious flaws. It tends to create pride in the musicians rather than humility. It

makes the gospel a matter of entertainment when there is not one thing in it that is at all entertaining. It makes the public proclaimers of Christianity those who are popular and talented in the world's eyes, rather than those who are godly and gifted teachers of God's truth. In using the world's genres of music, it blurs the gap between worldly Satanic values and divine ones. It tends to deny the power of the simple gospel and the sovereign saving work of the Holy Spirit. It creates a wide generation gap in the church, thus contributing to the disunity and lack of intimacy in the fellowship of all believers. It leads to the propagation of bad or weak theology and drags the name of the Lord down to the level of the world. The music of the gospel is certainly not a legitimate means for making money or seeking fame, and it must never be allowed to cheapen what is priceless, or trivialize what is profound.

The songs of faith are not for the world to sing or really even to hear. The unsaved person has no comprehension of the praises we sing, because he has no presence of God's Spirit within him. He cannot sing the song of redemption because he is not redeemed. Christian singing is an expression of individual and corporate worship, of celebrating life together in Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 257.



5. Spirit-filled believers sing in three ways: “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

- a) “Psalms” (psalmos) refers to a “song of praise. The verb primarily meant the plucking of the strings and the noun was used of sacred songs chanted to the accompaniment of instrumental music”<sup>4</sup>

The “Psalms” were “the sacred poems contained in the book of Psalms.”<sup>5</sup>

We know that “The Psalms of David were sung by the Jews at the temple, and by the early Christians”<sup>6</sup> and that they referred “primarily to the Old Testament psalms put to music, but the term was also used of vocal music of any sort, such as solos and anthems. The early church did most of its singing directly from the psalter, using various tunes familiar to the congregation—a pattern followed for hundreds of years by many European and American churches, and still

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<sup>4</sup> Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*. 538.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Hodge, *Commentary on Ephesians*, electronic ed. (Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996). Eph 5:21.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible*.

used in some congregations today. The **psalms** primarily speak about the nature and work of God, especially in the lives of believers. Above everything else, they magnify and glorify God.<sup>7</sup>

- b) “Hymns” (humnos) “denotes a song of praise addressed to God.”<sup>8</sup> They were “sacred poetical compositions whose primary purpose [was] to praise.”<sup>9</sup> The early church...probably distinguished from the **psalms...**in that they specifically praised the Lord Jesus Christ. Many biblical scholars believe that various New Testament passages (such as Col. 1:12–16) were used as hymns in the early church.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 258.

<sup>8</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*.

<sup>9</sup> Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*. 538.

<sup>10</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 258.

“Psalms and hymns” is “the kind of worship that Jewish people celebrated in the temple (e.g., psalms and hymns).”<sup>11</sup>

- c) “Spiritual songs” (pneumatikos ode) “were probably songs of testimony that covered a broad category that included any music expressing spiritual truth.”<sup>12</sup> They were “applicable to all kinds of songs, secular or sacred, accompanied or unaccompanied.”<sup>13</sup>

6. Scripture speaks of the song of the redeemed as a “new song.”

The word *new* is used more frequently in relation to song than to any other feature of salvation.

God gives His new creatures a new song, a different song, a distinctive song, a purer song,

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<sup>11</sup>Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Eph 5:19.

<sup>12</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 259.

<sup>13</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 5:18.

and a more beautiful song than anything the world can produce.<sup>14</sup>

“Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones,” says the psalmist; “praise is becoming to the upright” (Ps. 33:1).

It is because we have been made righteous, purified from sin, and have become partakers of God’s own holiness that we sing.

No one but a Christian has any legitimate reason to sing. God Himself puts a song in our mouths, “a song of praise to our God” (Ps. 40:3).

Because we have salvation we sing songs of salvation. “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day” (Ps. 96:1–2; cf. 149:1).

One day the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders will fall down before Jesus Christ, the Lamb, and sing “a new song, saying, ‘Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation’” (Rev. 5:8–9).

God’s new song is the song of redemption.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 256.

C. To the Lord (v.19b)

“Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.”

1. With the human voice

“Singing” (ado) means “to sing with the voice. But in the New Testament it is always used in relation to praising God (see also Col. 3:16; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3).”<sup>16</sup>

- a) **Psalms 95:1-2 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> O Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. <sup>2</sup> Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
  
- b) **Psalms 96:1-2 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. <sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.

2. With accompaniment

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<sup>15</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 256.

<sup>16</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 259.

“Making melody” (psalto) is related to the term psalm and literally means “to pluck on a stringed instrument, particularly a harp, with the fingers. The word, however, came to represent the making of any instrumental music.”<sup>17</sup>

- a) **Psalms 33:2-3 (NASB77)** <sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. <sup>3</sup> Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
  
- b) **Psalms 150:3-5 (NASB77)** <sup>3</sup> Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. <sup>4</sup> Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. <sup>5</sup> Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

3. With “your heart”

Not merely with the lips and the fingers for man, but with the heart for the glory of the Lord.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 259.

<sup>18</sup>*KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994). 2423.

Paul's purpose here is to encourage his readers to sing enthusiastically and with inward conviction ("in/with your heart") to one another and to the Lord.<sup>19</sup>

John MacArthur says, "A person who does not have a song in his heart cannot sing from his heart or with his heart. He can only sing with his lips, and neither his music nor his message will have the power of the Spirit to bless others in Christ's name.

Even as Christians we will not have a true song in our hearts unless we are under the Spirit's control. It is possible to sing for pride, to sing for acclaim and fame, and to sing for money—but such singing is Spiritless singing. A person who comes to worship while bitter toward God, angry with a loved one or friend, or in any other way is out of harmony with God's Spirit should not participate in singing God's praises. Hypocrisy can neither praise nor please the Lord. When peoples' hearts are not right with God, He has a way of turning their "festivals into mourning" and their "songs into lamentation" (Amos 8:10). Through the same prophet God said, "Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream"

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<sup>19</sup>Kenneth L. Boles, *Galatians & Ephesians*, The College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1993). Eph 5:19.

(5:23–24). “Stop your songs until your hearts are right,” he was saying.

Our music cannot be like the music of the world, because our God is not like their gods. Most of the world’s music reflects the world’s ways, the world’s standards, the world’s attitudes, the world’s gods. To attempt to use such music to reach the world is to lower the gospel in order to spread the gospel. If the world hears that our music is not much different from theirs, it will also be inclined to believe that the Christian way of life is not much different from theirs. Christians cannot honestly sing the world’s philosophies nor can the world honestly sing the Christian’s message, because they sing from utterly different hearts. The Christian’s heart and music belong to God and His righteousness, while the world’s heart and music belong to Satan and his unrighteousness.

Because the Christian’s music is God’s music, it will be sung in heaven throughout all the ages to come. And because the world’s music is Satan’s music, it will one day cease, never to be heard again. The sounds of the world’s “harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard ... any longer” (Rev. 18:22). To those who make music that is not His, God declares, “I will silence the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps will be heard no



more” (Ezek. 26:13). In hell, the ungodly will not even have their own music.”<sup>20</sup>

**Psalm 108:1 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup>My heart is steadfast, O God; I will sing, I will sing praises, even with my soul.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. When we are Spirit-filled we will sing within ourselves, with others, and to the Lord.
2. We will do it by lifting our voices either in accapella or with accompaniment, but most importantly it will be with our whole heart.
3. Does this describe your life as a follower of Jesus Christ?
4. Do you sing the new song of salvation in your heart, with others, and to the Lord?
5. If not, it’s because you are not Spirit-filled---you’re not surrendering yourself to the Spirit and letting Him control or dominate your life.
6. I want to call you to examine this issue tonight.

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<sup>20</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 260.

7. If you're here tonight and you haven't surrendered your life to Jesus Christ to be forgiven of your sin, I want to say that none of what I said tonight applies to you.
8. You have no song to sing because you have no salvation to rejoice in.
9. Surrender your life to Jesus right now and be forgiven of all your sin.
10. Peter said in **Acts 3:19-21 (NASB77)** <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; <sup>20</sup> and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.
11. Let's pray.