

Praising the Lord in the Congregation: The Element of Singing (5)

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O Come Let Us Worship

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Bible Text: Psalm 111

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Let's turn in God's holy Word tonight to Psalm 111. For those of you visiting, we have been going through a series on worship and now we are into various elements of that worship service and now tonight we are taking up the element of singing. So let's read Psalm 111. The text tonight will be verse one.

Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.¹

I read the Word of God to that point tonight. The text is the first verse of the chapter.

“Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.”²

Congregation of Jesus Christ, we continue this evening our series on worship. We began this series by looking at various biblical principles of public, corporate worship. And at

¹ Psalm 111:1-10.

² Psalm 111:1.

this point in the series we are seeing those principles applied now to our own biblical worship service.

Last time we looked at the opening service, those first few elements of worship, the call to worship, the opening doxology, the salutation, the vatum and the benediction. And we saw last time that in that opening part of the service what God is doing there is he is drawing us close to himself in that first part of the service. He is leading us into his service like a king would lead a subject that is also his Son into his presence.

Remember that we saw that there is the combination of formality and familiarity in that opening part of the service as God draws us close to himself. We recognize that this is the God of heaven and earth. There is a formal aspect to his drawing us in, but there is also familiarity. He treats us as sons whom he loves and he draws us by his love close to himself in the worship service.

Now tonight we begin looking at the main body of that medium between God and us and we begin tonight with the element of singing. Besides the doxologies, we sing four psalms in our worship service. This is why partly we come together and join, separate ourselves to meet with God face to face in public worship, to sing praise to his name, to exalt him, to lift him high.

We are limiting ourselves tonight, you understand, to singing in public, corporate worship in the service. Music in other contexts is a different matter that we are not taking up here. We are talking about singing as a body in worship, where together we come before the Lord God and do what he calls us to do in his Word in Psalm 66 verse two.

“Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.”³

Let’s look at that element then of singing tonight under the theme praising the Lord in the congregation, the element of singing. Let’s look, first, at the element itself; second, the content, what we are to sing; and then, third, the blessing that is upon those who do the singing.

Praising the Lord in the congregation, the element of singing: the element, the content and the blessing.

Singing, beloved, is an element of public, corporate worship that is commanded by God himself in Scripture. God calls us to sing. He commands us to sing in the public worship of his name. The psalmist here calls us to that in verse one when he commands us:

“Praise ye the LORD.”⁴

And then he gives his own personal example of fulfilling that by saying:

³ Psalm 66:2.

⁴ Psalm 111:1.

“I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly.”⁵

He commands us to praise the Lord. Singing in public, corporate worship is demanded by the regulative principle of worship. For the New Testament also calls us to sing in worship. Colossians three verse 16, which does not limit singing to corporate worship, but certainly includes public worship and probably primarily is talking about public worship, calls us to sing in that worship.

“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.”⁶

The New Testament worship was a worship that included signing. The New Testament Church sang songs to the Lord in their worship.

1 Corinthians 14 verse 15, which, if you know anything about that chapter is a chapter about the public corporate worship of the Church at Corinth. And the apostle Paul, in speaking about that worship says that the Church in Corinth sang. That was part of what they did in the service.

“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”⁷

The Church is commanded to sing and the example that we have of the New Testament church worshipping as recorded in the New Testament is that part of their worship was singing. Singing is closely connected to prayer. They are not the same thing, of course. One is sung and the other is spoken. They are separate elements, but they are connected. They both, singing and prayer, express praise to God. They both express confession of sin, sorrow for sin. They are both means of bringing requests. We bring requests also in song before God. They both express thanks to God. But for singing, the primary purpose is praise. The primary purpose of the praise of the Church of God as she gathers as a corporate body is praise.

So often in the Scriptures and especially the psalms, the word sing and the word praise are put together. Singing is praise. Sometimes they are put together back to back and repeated like, for example, Psalm 47 verse six.

“Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.”⁸

This is what singing is especially, praising Jehovah God with the voice.

Psalm 111 verse one calls us to that praise. And when the psalmist calls us to that he uses

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Colossians 3:16.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:15.

⁸ Psalm 47:6.

two words for praise in that verse. They are both translated the same way, translated praise, but there are two different words there. The first is when the psalmist says:

“Praise ye the LORD.”⁹

That word calls us to laud, to exalt, to magnify the qualities, the names, the attributes and the works of Jehovah our God. To praise as the psalmist calls us to there is to say that this God is worthy. He is worthy of all exaltation. He is worthy of adoration. And it is to give him that adoration, then, from the heart. It is to say that he is unique. He is set apart. There is none like him. He is exalted and great. He is the only one that is truly worthy of the adoration of anyone else. His attributes, his mercy, his works all make him and him alone rightfully able to command us to worship him and to praise him.

That means, then, that praise must be intelligent. A person can't praise God if they don't know God. Praise might be based on a simple faith at times, but it has to know something in order to praise. It has to know the God that it is exalting. And it ought to be the case that the more we know God, the deeper we know God, the more we praise and the more fervent our praise is to him.

This is what that first word:

“Praise ye the LORD.”¹⁰

...indicates.

The second word translated praise is a little bit different. It is used when the psalmist says:

“I will praise the LORD with my whole heart.”¹¹

Literally that word is I will constantly hurl exaltations at God. I will throw exaltations up to him. This is what singing is. It is laudable words that are being hurled at God. And the idea is that God is so worthy that we can't get them out fast enough and we can't proclaim them fervently enough because he is so glorious. We are shooting them out to him to worship and adore his great and holy name. That is the idea. It is lauding him, exalting him as the God who is worthy. And it is doing that, beloved, in a very specific way. Saying is a particular form of expressing thoughts. It is a poetic form of speaking by which we communicate to God.

There are two purposes for singing. The first is to communicate an idea, to communicate to God with words, intelligible words. But the second is the communication of emotions or affections that go along with those words. These two things are never separated in the element of singing. They are always together. It is through singing, then, that one

⁹ Psalm 111:1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

expresses ideas, thoughts to God in a very unique way. A person can express, communicate ideas via writing prose. A person can express, communicate information by speaking as I am doing right now. But in singing there is a unique way of expressing those same ideas. In signing one puts those words, those ideas to a melody so that the emotion that those words bring up in a person is also expressed in this form of communication.

If someone just says the words, “Jehovah reigns in majesty, let all the nations quake,” it communicates an idea. You can understand what that means. It speaks to a person. But if someone sings those words—we just sang those words a little bit ago—and if someone sings those words with the tune that is given to those words, it expresses not only an idea from one intellect to the other, but it carries with it the emotions that are appropriate for those words, do you see? And the combination of those words and the tune that is appropriate to those words affects the will as we exalt the God of majesty.

Because of this unique ability of song to combine ideas and emotions, singing is a unique and powerful way of praising God. Expressions that include emphasis in the right places, rhyme and set to an appropriate tune represent the entire person as the person is singing.

It is possible, of course, just to stand there and mouth the words and go through the motions and to not be involved in the singing at all. But if someone is singing rightly, that song not only represents his intellect, his mind, but it represents his emotions and his will. Everything that he is, is coming forth and being set before the God of all glory. This is what is happening. He is laying himself down in all that he is as a whole person before Jehovah God in exaltation.

This unique way of praising, by virtue of what it is, is prone to abuse. There is a danger in song and singing that it is simply an emotional release. Singing can be abused and be made a purely subjective thing. And if it is that, if it is only an emotional fervor then it is useless and even dangerous.

For example, a person can be singing heretical words, but still feel like they are praising because of the power of the poetry and of the music. But what must be the power of singing is the truthful words, the true things that are being said in combination with the appropriate tune that facilitates those words. It has to be that way because the Holy Spirit is the power of singing. The Holy Spirit is the power by which we actually praise God in the gift of song and the Holy Spirit always uses the Word, always uses the truth of God’s Word.

You could talk to a Mormon, for example. A Mormon would say they have deep feelings of praise and worship when they sing a song with a powerful tune that proclaims instead of the divinity of Jesus Christ, their heretical doctrine that Jesus Christ was just a man and was not God. And if you talk to that Mormon person they will tell you that they feel the Spirit. The Spirit is... I can feel it when I sing. That is the Spirit working.

Well, beloved, this is not the work of the Spirit and neither is it praise. It is the

combination of truthful words and appropriate music that leads the child of God to praise from the regenerated heart. As that Spirit works in the child of God the singing becomes an expression then, of the praise of his whole heart. As the psalmist says in our text:

“I will praise the LORD with my whole heart.”¹²

When truthful words with appropriate tunes are combined and the Spirit is working in the heart of the child of God, all that he is is given over, laid down before the Lord Jesus Christ if his heart is right before him. This is what praise is. This is the Spirit’s work in working in us to sing and to praise. It is the giving of all that we are to Jehovah God. It is laying ourselves down as a living sacrifice of thanks for all that he has done for us. It is surrendering ourselves, all that we are to him who is so majestic and so glorious and worthy of our praise. And it is giving ourselves in this way in response to the fact that God had given himself to us already in the worship of his name.

You recall that the worship service is a dialog between God and his people. God speaks and we respond. It is the experience of the covenant of grace. God fellowships with us in this service. He speaks to us through his Word. We respond to him in prayer and in song. And, beloved, it is in this worship service that God gives himself to us. He gives us himself and all of his blessings.

In the law that is read he is giving us his character and his will in that law. In the reading and proclamation of Scripture God is giving himself to us. He is coming close to us and he is giving himself as the God of grace and glory to us in Jesus Christ. That is what is happening. And in praise of song, the child of God responds by giving all that we are, body and soul, mind and will to him as a sacrifice of love and thanksgiving, to exalt him who is worthy of our entire life.

Psalm 111 talks about this. The call of verse one is to praise God. The rest of the psalm is the reason why we are to praise God. Verses two through four tell us that God is the God who has given himself to us in all of his wonderful works. And then verses five through nine goes into detail about what those works are and how God gives himself to us in those works.

Verse five. He is the God that feeds his people. He gives them his providential care.

Verse six. He is the God that gives his people the heritage of the heathen, which means much the same thing as the phrase in the Sermon on the Mount:

“...the meek... shall inherit the earth.”¹³

It means that in the end, all is for the child of God. Everything is given to him.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Matthew 5:5.

In verse four and in verse nine the psalmist says that God is the God who has commanded his covenant forever, that he will ever be mindful of that covenant. In that covenant God gives us himself. The experience of the covenant is that God is ours. We are bound to him and he to us in love and fellowship.

Then in verse nine the great surety of that covenant is that he gives us redemption in the death of his own Son. Redemption gives us himself in Jesus Christ, do you see? And God who was made flesh, this is God giving himself to us.

And in the service, God recounts this. He sets before us himself as the God who gives us himself. That is what is in the law and in the preaching, the God who in Jesus Christ lays himself before us as the gift of salvation. Therefore our singing must be a giving to him in response.

The singing we do as a body, the singing in the public, corporate worship service is and should be congregational singing. We are a body that has been called together to meet with Jehovah face to face. And our response to him is song as a body together.

The psalmist in our text recognizes the importance of that. Verse one.

“I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.”¹⁴

The psalmist understands that the Church is a body and he doesn't want to just sing to God by himself. He wants to be bound with the body, to place his voice amongst the other voices and be as one coming to worship Jehovah God. He is committed to that, to joining with those who are the upright, those who also have this greatest desire to exalt the name of Jehovah God. He wants to be a part of that group, that body that has one purpose, to lift high the name of our God.

There is something wonderful about that. This is something that we should look forward to, singing together, singing together as a body of Jesus Christ, to place our voice amongst the other voices, to be amongst the assembly of the upright, declaring the name of the Lord. We should cry out with the psalmist in Psalm 122:

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.”¹⁵

For the thought of singing, exalting the name of Jehovah with the saints is a thought that makes me glad, excited to be a part of the body as it comes together to lift him high.

It was the Reformation of the 16th century that restored congregational singing to the Church. In the Middle Ages singing had degenerated into the work of individual monks or of choirs of monks. But as the Reformation restored the doctrines of the Word of God, it also restored congregational singing. When the Reformation restored the doctrine of the

¹⁴ Psalm 111:1.

¹⁵ Psalm 122:1.

priesthood of all believers a natural implication of that was congregational singing. To everyone in the pew that is a believer holds an office of prophet, priest and king and all must be allowed, all must have the privilege of bringing praise to God without going through a mediator together and as individuals to praise the name of Jehovah.

Choirs then and solo performances does an injustice to the truth that the congregation has gathered together as a body before Jehovah God and that we come together each one in the office of believer, little children and those older as well.

Besides that, beloved, remember that the public corporate worship service is not a concert. We are not here to be entertained. We are not the audience in what is going on here. God is the audience. We are not here to receive what somebody else is doing. We are here to give God praise together. He is the audience. We are speaking to him, called together as a people to worship him and to laud his name.

As the body of Christ does that in the worship service, there is a wonderful combination that... of the individual and the communal. There is no individualism as the body joins together in choruses of praise. But there is no depersonalization. We are a body gathered here singing, but it is still individuals that sing. It is still me that sings and I remain me, personally singing, personally singing from a heart that individually wants to honor and worship God. I remain singing and offering a personal song of praise to the Lord. I do not become something other than myself. I am me. But as I come in the body I am joined to something that is more than me. I am united with the upright who also from the heart individually and personally want to seek and worship this great God.

Beloved, it is an attribute of the psalms that they were inspired by God to perfectly maintain this combination of the individual and the communal in the body of Christ. The psalms are written in such a way that at times they represent the individual, but always as a part of the body of Christ. This is something very unique about the psalms. There are many beautiful hymns out there that should be sung as a part of the Christian life generally. But many of those hymns are songs that are only about the individual's personal salvation before the Lord. The psalms, however, are, if they are about the individual, always about the individual as he lives his life in the covenant community, as a part of the Church so that there is always this combination of the individual and the communal, no matter what psalm you read or sing.

Some psalms are Church psalms. They are about the Church as a whole. And in those psalms that express the praise, the desire of the Church as a whole, there is also the desire of the church as a whole as it is experienced by the individual. And the psalms that are written with the first personal pronoun, me and I, there is the experience of the individual, but always as he is a part of the whole body of Jesus Christ. This is one of the things that makes the psalms so appropriate for the singing of praise in public, corporate worship.

The psalms, beloved, are given to the Church to be sung in the public worship of Jehovah God. And though written in the Old Testament they are still fitting for God's people

today. They are God's inspired songs and when we sing them, we are singing God's Word back to himself.

You remember earlier in this series I said that at every point in the service the Word of God must be taken up, for the Word is the power in the worship of God's name and here, too, in singing, God has given us his Word. He is giving us a specific collection of songs that he has inspired for the singing of praises to his name. These psalms contain every emotion of the child of God as he lives life in the covenant.

Calvin said once that these psalms are an anatomy of the soul. Every aspect of the human soul is represented here in the psalms of the Old Testament. They contain joy. They contain lament. They contain frustration. They contain pleading. They contain helplessness. They contain sorrow and they contain great delight. All of it is found in the psalms and that is an important point to be made, beloved. It can be the case sometimes that when non inspired songs are sung, that in churches that sing non inspired songs there are always happy. And, of course, the Christian must be happy and the Christian does have this deep sustaining joy in his life, but every time you come to church you are not on cloud nine, are you? It can be unreal. It can be fake. Sometimes the child of God comes to the worship of Jehovah's name and he needs to lament before his God. Sometimes he needs to express frustration still with respect in the psalms. Sometimes he needs to plead. Sometimes he needs to express helplessness. Sometimes sorrow that is real. And all of this is contained in the psalms, do you see? All that we are as children of God is there and all of it yet still that we can express with words of praise. Through the laments there is still praise. Through the sorrow there is still praise. Through the frustration there is still praise.

Human nature never changes. God never changes. This covenant though progressive is essentially the same covenant. And though we now sing the psalms with New Testament eyes, the psalms are for us in the year 2010 just as much as they were for the people of God in the Old Testament. We sing them differently than they did. We see Christ now. We see the fulfillment of all the Old Testament types and shadows and we see that then we sing the words of the psalms, but these psalms still represent our life in the covenant of grace now the praise of our hearts this time.

Jesus sang psalms as part of his regular worship when he was upon the earth. Jesus worshipped in the synagogue and the synagogue was a psalm singing synagogue. Besides that, after the institution of the Lord's supper in Matthew 26 and verse 30 when the Scriptures say of Jesus and his disciples:

“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”¹⁶

That hymn there was a collection of psalms called the great Hallel, the great praise. It was what was normally recited or sung at the end of the celebration of the passover. It was Psalms 113 through 118 that the Lord Christ and his disciples sang there.

¹⁶ Psalm 26:30.

When Colossians three verse 16 speaks of singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, all three of those words are probably referring to the Old Testament book of Psalms. The Greek version of the book of Psalms had those three words, psalms, hymns and songs as titles over various different psalms of the Old Testament. Therefore, probably those three words are all referring to the book of Psalms of the Old Testament.

And, at the very least, Colossians three verse 16 is limiting the songs that were sung to inspired songs of the Bible. The adjective there spiritual, spiritual songs can and should be applied to all three of those categories, psalms, hymns and songs. They are songs of the Spirit, songs that the Spirit is the author of, that he wrote. That would primarily be the Psalms, of course, but now it could also include other songs that are recorded in Scripture, the song of Mary, the song of Zacharias, the song of Moses. And the church order of the Protestant Reformed Churches allows for the singing of those songs as well.

Besides this, history vindicates the use of psalms in worship. It is well documented that the early Church following the worship of the Jewish synagogue sang psalms in their worship. And while the Middle Ages turned away from psalm singing, the Reformation was a return to the singing of psalms as it was a return to congregational singing, so much so that at one point the term psalm singer was almost synonymous with Protestant. To be a Protestant was to be someone who sang psalms. That was the idea.

It was John Calvin who led the charge in the return to the singing of psalms in the reformation. And, perhaps, beloved, he puts it best when in his preface to the Genevan Psalter he wrote this. "And, indeed, we know from experience that singing has great strength and power to move and to set on fire the hearts of men in order that they may call upon God and praise him with a more vehement and more ardent zeal. It is to be remembered always that this singing should not be light or frivolous, but that it ought to have weight and majesty. Now what Augustine says is true, namely that no one can sing anything worthy of God that he has not received from him. Therefore, even after we have carefully searched everywhere, we shall not find better or more appropriate songs to this end than the Psalms of David inspired by the Holy Spirit. And of this reason when we sing them, we are sure that God puts the words in our mouth as if he himself were singing through us to his own glory."

It is for these reasons, congregation, that the PRC is a psalm singing denomination. And, Lord willing, will be until the return of Jesus Christ. We sing almost exclusively psalms in our worship service. I say almost, because the Protestant Reformed Church have, nevertheless, never been exclusive psalmists. The church order article 69 of our churches says the 150 Psalms of David shall be sung besides that some of the inspired songs of Scripture, the song of Mary, the song of Zacharias." But besides that, we sing a hymn every single worship service. The opening doxology is a trinitarian hymn.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow is scriptural, no doubt, and one that is sung in many churches, but it is not a psalm. It is the last part of a hymn that was written by an Anglican bishop of 1674. However, the Protestant Reformed Churches are committed to

singing psalms for all the reasons that I gave. And this is the vast majority of what we sing. And we ought, beloved, to love the singing of psalms. This ought to be a joy to us. This ought to be wonderful to know that we are singing what God has given us in his Word. The psalms are God's gift to his Church. We ought to love to sing, to sing praises to his name and to love to sing psalms to his name.

We sing from the Psalter that gives metrical versifications of the psalms. It was put together in 1912 and that Psalter has good versifications with rich deep meanings and words and for the most part tunes that are appropriate to the words, although there are improvements that could and probably should be made, poor words and poor tunes that do not match the words. But this is a good collection of versifications of the psalms. It may be added to if the synod desires. There are other versifications of psalms that are good and, besides that, if the Lord gives us musicians with lyrical skills, a deep understanding of the reformed faith and piety, there can be versifications produced still and accepted by the synod of the churches for singing. The last time that happened in our denomination was 1947 when the reverend John High's renditions of the Lord's prayer were adopted and added to our Psalter.

I say t hat to point out that our love for the psalms ought to continue. Our love for singing the psalms ought to continue. But I believe a part of our expression of our love for the psalms ought to be a continuation of the versification of those psalms if the Lord grants those gifts to our churches.

Singing, beloved, in the public worship, although first of all, of course, and primarily for the lauding and exaltation of the name of Jehovah God, grants blessings upon the singers as they sing. The first of those blessings is that the congregation is edified by her own singing.

Colossians three verse 16 talks about that when it says:

“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.”¹⁷

When the congregation sings to God the words of the Word of God, she also teaches and admonishes each other and herself as she sings the Word of Jehovah God. Each one here hears the other person singing and each one here hears himself singing the words of Jehovah God. And by that, a person teaches the others in the Church, teaches himself the words that are being sung. We teach each other, the doctrine of creation and the effect that that doctrine should have upon our piety when we sing Psalm eight, those words of that great psalm about the creation of God. We teach each other about the depths of our sin when we sing Psalm 51. We teach each other about sanctification and its connection to the Word when we sing Psalm 119. We teach and admonish each other about assurance of salvation from Psalm 23. We teach each other about the sufferings of Christ when we sing Psalm 22. We admonish each other not to slander our fellow brothers and

¹⁷ Colossians 3:16.

sisters in the Lord when we sing the words of Psalm 15. We comfort one another by singing of God who binds up the brokenhearted with the words of Psalm 147. And many more examples could be given.

But it is not only the case that we admonish each other when we sing the words of Scripture. It is also the case that we admonish unbelievers that are present in the worship service if they are present. This is another importance of the psalms. They speak of sin and judgment and the need for repentance.

When an unbeliever is present in the church and we sing Psalm one we call him to repentance and faith by the Word that we are singing. We sing, "Blessed is he who loves God's precepts who from sin restrains his feet." And then we sing, "Like the driven chaff the wicked shall be swept from off the land." We tell him what the life of a godly man is. We tell him the end of an unbeliever and those words call him to take seriously the road that he is treading in his own life.

That is a blessing of singing that we teach each other. We are edified by each other. We admonish each other and perhaps unbelievers who might be present.

Finally, beloved, the blessing of singing is the absolute delight that we experience in worshipping Jehovah God in song. We said at the beginning of the sermon that God commands us to sing in worship. This is our duty. He calls us to this. Sing, he says. He commands us. Sing in the public worship of my name.

By the Spirit of Jesus Christ that duty becomes a great delight for the child of God as well. And part of the reason why God commands it in the worship of his name is that in the giving of ourselves though song we delight in Jehovah God. We enjoy his presence for in song Jehovah comes close to us. When we exalt his name he comes near to us and the glorifying of him he bows down, as it were, and presses himself close. And this is the chief end of the child of God to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

The human soul finds full meaning and fully joy in the glorifying of God, in the enjoying of God as he comes close to us in the glorification of his name. Who hasn't experienced this, beloved? Who has not had an experience of this delight and joy?

Sometimes we come to the house of God with an unprepared heart. Sometimes a heart that is maybe even bitter or hard. Don't you experience that it is not until songs of praise fill the lips, come out of the soul that God softens the heart and the soul is lifted to our great King and we delight in the worship and praise of his name.

Our sin nature prevents us from experiencing that sometimes. There are times when we just mouth the words, aren't there? And the singing to him is pure duty and there is really no delight. That is our sin, but it is true. We still sing. We are still called to sing and it is still good that we sing, for we dig trenches, as it were, patterns, habit by our obedience, by our duty.

The trenches that we dig sometimes are filled with the waters of great delight so that duty does become delight sometimes, hopefully a lot of the times, but not always if we are honest. Nevertheless, we dig those trenches and we do so knowing that one day the sin nature will be removed, that nature that prevents duty from becoming delight. That nature will be taken away and the flood waters of delight will fill those trenches for all eternity. The Church of God will worship and will delight. There won't be duty anymore. It will only be praise from the heart.

Imagine what that will be like, beloved, in that day, singing together in that great assembly in heaven with no sin nature to hold us back where it will be pure delight, where it will be giving of ourselves fully to Jehovah God with everything that we are in song, where an assembly of the upright will be gathered that no man can number and we will join together in glorious, Spirit filled praise.

Revelation 7:9-12:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.¹⁸

What a day that will be. Amen.

Let us pray.

Father, we are thankful for the gift of song. And never work so that the duty becomes delight. And may it be now in this next hour as we sing praises, fill those trenches, Lord, with the waters of delight as we lay ourselves down before thee, the God of all glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

¹⁸ Revelation 7:9-12.