

Essentials of Christ-Exalting Worship

Col 3:16-17

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC, February 7, 2021

ASK THOSE WHO MEMORIZED V. 16-17 TO RECITE TOGETHER

REVIEW NOTE SHEET LAST WEEK (RAISE HAND IF NEED ONE)

Specific applications also sent out in weekly email from the office (how to add yourself to emails if not on, fill out cards at the kiosk?).

Exhort people to put into practice sermon application ? after church.

Scripture memory challenge for next week to let Word dwell richly.

Say Col 3:12-13 on screen

TALK THRU PARTS OF SERMON NOTES FOR KIDS (AT END TOO?)

Title: Christ-Exalting Worship (His name glorified and His people edified)

Main point: Christ's Word must dwell in us richly by speaking and singing.

Theme of book: Christ is to have first place in everything (1:18 -> 3:16-17).

Word -> worship with the congregation and fellowship in our conversations.

Christ's Word -> our words and deeds done in Christ's name (re-read v. 17).

Col 3:17 parallels 1 Cor 10:31 '*whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*'

Everything is to be done in the name of the Lord = to the glory of the Lord.

GCBC Purpose Statement: 'This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities'

Principles: This church shall seek to glorify God by:

-The Worship of God

-A high view of God and His Word (prayer, teaching, etc.)

-Loving Jesus as Lord, edifying, equipping, evangelizing, etc

All of that flows out of Col 3:16-17, all we do is in His name/for His glory.

His Word richly dwelling comes from a high view of Him and His Word. That affects how we speak to God in prayer and speak to others in teaching.

v. 14 says put on love over all. v. 17 says His Lordship is over all, our deeds of evangelism or equipping and words of edifying / admonishing in v. 16.

Last week: speaking in fellowship (v. 16a) today singing in worship (v. 16b)

Outline – Christ-Exalting Worship in Song is:

- 1. Biblically essential**
- 2. Blessing the Lord and His people**
- 3. Balanced with variety**

1st It's Biblically Essential

We start with the context: Paul is writing this to a church in Colossae (1:1).

3:16 commands we let Christ's Word dwell in us, that's the Bible, and part of that command is speaking with and singing with 'one another.' The Bible defines this as essential biblically that we worship corporately. You can't obey this by yourself, you need other bodies in person, this is for the body of Christ to sing together as a local church like the church Paul writes to.

This ties in with our growth goals this year: connection, community, care.

We need to be connected to the head and other parts of the body to grow.

Look at Col 2:19, it talks about those who are '*not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body [that's the church], nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.*'

CONNECTION – COMMUNITY - CARE (love in v. 14 binds us together)

Col 3:15: '*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to you indeed were **called in one body**. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you...*'--'plural form...means '*in your assembly*' not simply in each one of you personally.'¹

We're called into a church body where Christ's word dwells as we assemble and speak and sing. We can't fulfill v. 16 or a lot of verses just individually or virtually, or even just with family watching a screen, this is the family of Christ called in a church body. In v. 16 singing, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom is essential for every person in every local church

Look at 1:28: *Him **we** proclaim, **warning everyone** and teaching **everyone** with all wisdom, that **we may present everyone mature** in Christ.* Podcasts can't do that, but proclaiming Christ can with people we see and can warn and disciple to maturity – but you have to be present to present one mature!

CHRIST-EXALTING WORSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS

Philosophy of Ministry comments on Colossians 1:28: 'the goal [is every person] admonished or built up through life-on-life iron- sharpening relationships. This is a responsibility "we" all share; Paul does not say this is what only one does as a preacher or pastor. It is a church effort... teaching with [all] wisdom would encompass both small and large settings (Acts 20:20 "publicly and from house to house") ...

Fellowship [is] close association involving mutual involvement and relationships, sharing, joint participation, communication ... not for the sake of "what I can get out of it" ... but ... sacrificial giving [financially and spiritually, Koinonia fellowship is] taking part, imparting, especially with a believer who lacks something you can provide... [Acts 2 says] they were all together... large corporate gatherings and also "from house to house" (smaller fellowship settings).

It is in these more intimate environments that Hebrews 10:23-25 and the "one anothers" can take place. The point is not getting more people in the pews so that your

numbers look better, the point is that the body dynamic is crucial and when you're not there you not only miss out on the blessing... but others miss out on you encouraging and stimulating them on to love...'²

Col 3:16 says part of that is singing or teaching from psalms, depending on which translation you have. It's not clear the difference between *hymns and spiritual songs* (more on that later) but it's clear what *psalm* means: the OT book of psalms that are for teaching and singing. We sang one earlier, Ps 95

The psalms teach the NT church how to worship and why it's so essential. Our govt. has classified the church as non-essential but our God doesn't see it that way. Col 3:16 is still forbidden in CA, no singing allowed since July. Our State is the only in America outlawing worship assemblies *in a church building*. Our Governor went against federal court rulings the last 2 months.

But we're committed to keep doing what we are as a gathered church.

In CA some county leaders are trying to shut churches down permanently for doing Col 3:16 in their church as a church. 2 weeks ago San Jose pastors were threatened jail time for what we're doing today and \$1.6M fines to try to get them to stop doing what the Bible commands in church as a church.

LA tried to evict GCC's parking lot, LA judge said no (I was there in Jan.).

Friday 6 SCOTUS justices said Newsom's church ban is unconstitutional. But for us our supreme Lord is why we worship. We obey God, not man.

The State isn't head of the church in how it gathers, our Savior is

Our King in heaven commands: '*Praise God **in his sanctuary***' (Ps 150:1).

Ps 149:1 '*Sing to the LORD...**in the assembly***' (ESV, NAS 'congregation').

His mandate in Ps 134:1-2: '*Praise the LORD, **all you servants of the LORD ... in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary...***' (NIV)

His order is above all, Ps 7:7 '*Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered.*'

Ps 68:26 *Praise God **in the great congregation**; praise the LORD **in the assembly...***

107:32 *Let them exalt him **in the assembly** of the people...* NIV

Worship is about exalting the Lord in the assembly

We won't close our doors. Ps 100 says *Enter his gates with thanksgiving... Ps 95 'let us come into his presence...come let us worship'* (not me, let us). We only bow to Him. We kneel before our Maker not rules man makes that go against the word of Christ. He is our God, we gather as His people/sheep.

#1. Worship is biblically essential,

#2. It's Blessing the Lord and His people

Col 3:16 ends with '*to God*' – it's ultimately to bless Him, to exalt our Lord.

Worship is about Him and your heart. Don't ask others 'what'd you think of worship today, how did it make you feel?' Ask yourself 'what did God think of my heart today,

did I thank God in my heart in worship' (end of v. 16)? Not 'did I feel good,' but 'did I fear God?' Not 'did it please me,' because it wasn't for me anyway, but 'did I please Christ who I came for as I heard His Word read, sung, prayed, preached, and did it dwell more richly in me?'

Worship isn't based on acoustics and aesthetics, it's based on affections for Christ as His Word is rich in us, or treasured in us. Paul is writing this from prison, and he keeps talking about how thankful and worshipful he is. There was no loud music on a stage or light show, he lived in light of the gospel. Paul practiced what he preached here in Acts 16, he and Silas were in jail, they sang joyfully. If he could there, how can we not in church as free men?

'The people of God have always been and will always be a people of song. If the enjoyment of song is gone, that is a symptom of far greater disease. A congregation's singing is not an absolute thermometer of their spiritual temperature, but it is one indicator. Luther said "If any would not sing and talk of what Christ has [done], he shows...that he does not really believe.'³

If you have never been transformed by the gospel, you need to turn from your sin and trust Christ alone as Lord. Turn from anything else you were trusting in, the good works you do, or the good person you think you are or hope to be, transfer that trust to Jesus, the only truly good person in God's eyes, the only hope you have in His works for you: life, death, resurrection. Then you're saved and you sing. You're changed to bless God and others.

Notice Col 3:16 says we 'teach and admonish one another' when we sing. We exhort one another as we sing. Eph 5:19 says we address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, or speak to one another as we sing. Music is ministry to others. It's not about us, it's about God and His people.

1 Cor 14:26: '*When you **assemble**, each one has **a psalm**, has a **teaching** [or 'a hymn, a lesson' ESV]... Let all things be done for edification.'* (NASB)

If you don't sing because a style or sound doesn't please you or do much for you, Rom 15 says in a worship context we '*ought...not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up...so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify...God...Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God...I will sing **hymns** to your name...with his people...sing praise to him, all you people'*⁴

ILLUSTRATIONS: HOW HYMNS BLESS OTHERS AS WELL AS US

Marion Cundall

Joni Eareckson – teaching and admonishing with psalms and hymns

Christmas week Joni got COVID-19. She shared "[Psalm 84:11](#) assures me that ‘No good thing does he withhold...good courage, good endurance, a heart that sings good songs, and confidence in my good and great Savior.’"

She wrote before: I have felt like caving in emotionally. It’s one thing to sit in a wheelchair or lying in bed at night with chronic pain, but COVID 19? I’ve found that my mind sometimes is so scattered, I cannot put two words together in prayer...during this pandemic, I am singing hymns. The words come easily since I’ve memorized so many, such as “All the way my Savior leads me, cheers each winding path I tread; gives me grace for every trial, feeds me on the living Bread. When my weary soul may falter and my soul a-thirst may be, gushing from the Rock before me, lo, a Spring of joy I see!”

When my weary soul falters, singing is a way of turning my soul God-ward. Especially when affliction tries to drag me in the opposite direction. When my mind is in a brain fog, I can still express my confidence in Christ through hymns I know by heart. If I am not able to speak my praise? I can sing my praise. When I sing a hymn, the wise words—enriched by my whisper-of-a-melody—become my sacrifice of soulful praise to God. When we follow God’s command to sing, we receive the promise of Colossians 3:16.

We are assured that the word of Christ will dwell in us richly. For example, last Sunday when we watched the live stream of our church’s worship service, we sang “Come Thou, Almighty King.” Every stanza is a theology lesson which teaches us about the character of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Sitting in my wheelchair, each stanza became a reminder of the faithfulness of my high and holy God. Suffering can so easily lead us down grim, dark paths of remorse, doubt and fear. Especially during a pandemic like this! But memorizing...hymns of the faith is a way of learning the great Christian doctrines on which my convictions are founded.

When I am weak, “I will sing of Your strength; I will sing aloud of Your steadfast love in the morning. For You have been to me a fortress and a refuge in my day of distress” ([Psalm 59](#)). And when my suffering tries to convince me that I am helpless to do anything, [Psalm 63](#) teaches me, “For You have been my help, O Lord, and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy.” ... Here, God had reached down and rescued me from suicidal depression; why shouldn’t I sing?!⁵

Christ-exalting worship is biblically essential, blessing God and His people

3rdly finally it’s Balanced with variety (psalms, hymns, spiritual songs)

TALK A BIT ABOUT 3 TERMS – Balance, blending, variety of all types

The Jews sang psalms and we sang a psalm at the start of our service ([Ps 95](#), ‘come let us worship...’). But let’s close this time doing what Col 3:16 says, teaching with psalms on how to worship, admonishing/correcting our ideas. Turn to [Psalm 149](#) and remember the NT says psalms are for our worship.

Look at Ps 149, v. 1 commands '*Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD...*' If you're one who only likes old hymns but not new songs, keep reading '*Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly ...*' If you think music beat or drums aren't for congregational singing keep reading to v. 3: '*Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine ...* [Hebrew for beating a hand drum]. The next verse says God is pleased with praise like that, whether or not that pleases you

150:1 *Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary...how in the sanctuary?*
⁴ *Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!* ⁵ *Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!*
 Cymbals were loud clanging metal plates that when skillfully used could be worshipful or annoying used improperly (1 Cor. 13:1). *SHOW SLIDES*

Ps 68 '*into the sanctuary...In the midst of the maidens beating tambourines. Bless God in the congregations...*' (v. 24-26). That's worship in old days.

Ps 81:1 (NKJV) *Sing aloud ... make a joyful shout!* ² *Raise a song and strike the timbrel* ['sound the tambourine' ESV] ... *blow the trumpet ...*

There are also trumpets going off in Revelation and loud praising. If you think worship is best quiet and somber, heaven disagrees in Revelation ☺
 And when we get there, even reserved pocket people will let it all loose!

Other psalms call for lifting up hands, clapping hands, shouting. You might think that wild or worldly or not worshipful, but I've seen it done in Congo in pure praise to God with eyes upward, not as a performance. We need to remember a few centuries ago some thought pianos wild and worldly and some today would think the same about other instruments Ps 150 calls for. You may have cultural preferences, but don't condemn what God's Word commands. Are modern songs too repetitive, with one word over and over? Ps 150 does that with the word 'praise' (11x in 5 verses, *praise, praise...*) Some mock songs repeating a line 7 or 11 times, Ps 136 the same line 26x. Some criticize choruses as short, but Ps 117 is shorter than most choruses. If you flip back to Ps 146, notice Ps 146:2 has a lot of 'I/me/my' in it (6x in 1 verse). That doesn't mean it's man-centered, it can mean it's personal. There is a place for personal individual emphasis songs in worship, even laments.

Ps 145:4: *One generation shall praise Your works to another...* So we're called to praise across generations to one another, with one another, young to old, old to young. Eph 5:19 says we minister to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as we sing from the heart to the Lord, and we submit to one another it says right after that. Spirit-filled worshippers submit to others and don't expect leaders or other generations to submit to their preferences.

There's a one-another aspect of praise in the NT, and it encourages the body as voices unite. As kids sing out old songs, seniors sing new spiritual songs, there's mutual encouragement as one generation praises His work to another (other psalms 'from generation to generation' in the context of music sung) [we need songs from prior generations as well as good ones in ours]

Ps 48:12 fills that out just a few pages later, I like how ESV words Ps 148:12: *Young men and maidens together, old men and children! Let them praise...* Why don't we do separate praise services by style? To me, Ps 148 settles it.

The young are to honor the old, and all of our musical personal preferences or interests we see as important need to be subject to God's Word that says to young and old: 'regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others' (Phil 2). Paul starts Rom 12 talking about our worship and he says 'give preference to one another in honor' (v. 10), other versions '*Honor one another above yourselves... Outdo one another in showing honor*' [ex: honor a hymn you don't prefer that helped widow down the row]

Teaching with psalms admonishes those who divide the people of God into worship services by prejudice or by preference of music. Churches used to segregate by skin color, now they segregate by song style or culture. But we need gray hairs with teens who have purple hair and babies with no hair yet!

We need to welcome the joyful noise of infants and the praise of toddlers as well as tone-deaf older folks! God wants praise of all His people together, and the psalms say the old are not to be forsaken, because the next generation needs to hear their praise (Ps 71:18). There's radio playlist songs the old won't know and in a few years the young won't sing, or old songs a few love that are hard for most to sing. Let's pursue the best of old and new.

Col 3 says the Word must drive hymns and songs and they are for teaching. There's much more we could teach from the psalms, that's just Ps 145-150! But they and Col 3:16 are clear why we do music and that it's to be biblical, blended, and balanced, with diversity and variety. The music isn't worship, music can lead to worship, but don't worship the music. Don't idolize style or prioritize self and its preferences. Don't reject the heritage of hymns or good new songs that exalt Christ or the old psalms that teach and admonish.

This takes us to **communion**, a community of worshippers around the table of the King. In the upper room as the Lord instituted the **Lord's Supper**, the gospel writers say they sang a hymn together before they went out and Jesus went to the cross. So as we close our time at His table we'll do the same.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ John Kitchen, *Colossians and Philemon for Pastors*, p. 270-71.

² <https://www.gcb.church/philosophy>

³ Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer, *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel*, 165.

⁴ NIV.

⁵ <https://www.joniandfriends.org/sing-your-way-through-suffering/>