

Giving Glory

The Worshipping Church Part 4

Revelation 4:8-9 1-22-2012

Summary: The content of praise is the statement in verse 8. It focuses on attributes of God. Later they also praise Him for His works of creation and redemption. And the goal/outcome of this praise was that they gave God glory, honor, and thanks. Giving God glory means making much of His attributes so that He is more glorious in the eyes of others and of us. So we need theological depth in songs (Col.3:16), but also short, exclamatory, celebrative songs to express the joy that comes from the theology.

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Revelation 4:1-11 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. 3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. 4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. 5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. 6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Introduction

Today is part 4 of our series on corporate praise and worship, and our text has been Revelation 4 and everything we have said so far has all been preparation for praise. We are studying the ultimate worship service that takes place in the throne room of God, and we still have not actually witnessed any worship yet. It has all been a description of the throne of God and the glory surrounding it. You have to first see God's glory before there can be any true praise in your heart. But now that we have God dead center, and we have shoved out everything that might distract us from His glory, we are ready to start worshipping. So in verse 8 the Spirit finally lets the camera zoom out just enough to capture the first row of worshippers closest to the throne.

Revelation 4:6 ... In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures... 8 ... Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

The Content of Our Praise

Attributes

I have two points in my sermon this morning, and the first one is The Content of our Praise. What kinds of things should we say in our praise songs? The greatest worshippers in all creation sing about the attributes of God. That is the beginning point. Celebrating the attributes of God is the highest and holiest aspect of praise. The next circle of worshippers will sing their song in verse 10, and they sing about what God has done. So we praise God for two things - His nature and His works. His attributes and His actions.

And it is good for us to see the order in which they appear here - first attributes, then actions. We praise Him first for what He is, then for what He does. That is important because if we find ourselves mainly praising God for his actions and not very much for His attributes, it could be a sign of false worship.

God bestows all kinds of wonderful blessings on this world - believers and unbelievers. Even unbelievers can enjoy the sunshine and great food and good health and unexpected bonuses at work and the beauty and bounty of the creation. And if we are not careful, it is possible for us as Christians to enjoy those things the same way the world enjoys them. Our delight in those things can become love for the things themselves rather than love for God. And so we might say, "I praise You, God, for these blessings..." but in reality the real praise in your heart is oriented not toward God but toward the blessings themselves. You can tell that has happened in your heart if your praise stops when the blessings stop. You say, "God, I praise Your name for giving me this great job!" and then you get fired, and the praise stops.

"I praise You, God, for my health" and then you get sick and the praise stops.

If the praise stops when the blessings stop that means the joy in your heart was from enjoyment of some created thing and not enjoyment of God's presence (because when the blessings are taken away the presence is still available).

So how do we guard ourselves against a phony baloney kind of worship that is really just worship of blessings rather than worship of God Himself? One way is to follow the pattern we see here - praise God because of His attributes first. If looking at God's holiness or supremacy or eternity causes joy in your heart that generates praise, then there are not any doubts about whether your delight is in God. And then you have the green light to praise Him for His blessings as well, because you can enjoy them as part of your enjoyment of Him.

Holiness

So the cherubim praise God for His attributes. And of all the thousands of attributes of God, they

pick out three for this song: His holiness, His supremacy, and His eternity. Let's just take a real brief look at each of those.

8 ... Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Distinct From the Creation

There are two aspects of holiness. The word "holy" means "set apart." And God is "set apart" in the sense that He is distinct from the creation. God is not a part of the universe. Pantheism says that the creation is God – you put the whole universe together, and you have God. But the Bible says, "No, God is transcendent above and distinct from the creation."

That is great news if you are in the book of Revelation and there are wars and famines and earthquakes and all kinds of horrors shaking this world to its core. Hebrews 12:26 says God will not only shake the earth, but also the heavens. We can already feel the instability of this world with the tremors of judgment that are going on even now. But when the time comes for God to bring final judgment and eradicate evil once and for all, He will shake this place to pieces. And the god of the pantheists will be shaken with it. But the God of the Bible will sit enthroned above all of it, presiding over a sea of glass in perfect, unruffled, calm, composed, imperturbable control without one maverick ripple. God is transcendent above the creation.

That is good to know when your world is falling apart around you, because it enables you to say this:

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

When everything hits at once and the foundations of your life crumble beneath your feet and everything you have relied on and counted on disintegrates – those are the times when you are really, really glad that God is separate from and far above this world.

Moral Perfection

That is one aspect of holiness – separate and distinct from the creation. The other aspect of holiness is the moral part. God's holiness means He is morally perfect – totally separated not only from the creation, but also from sin. He is not tainted with sin, He is not tempted by sin, He is not involved with sin, and He will never look with favor upon sin.

It is God's holiness that drives His justice when He punishes sin. He punishes the guilty not just because that is His job, but because in His holiness He *hates* evil. And that is really good news when you are being persecuted by evil people, because you know God is going to do something about it. It is great news that God is holy, because when you are distressed about evil things people have done to you, evil things they are doing right now, horrible sins that have been committed against you – you know a holy God is not going to let any of that stand. He is not going to overlook it, He is not going to forget about it – heads are going to roll. He is going to make it right, because if you think you hate the evil that was done against you – that is nothing compared to how much He hates it. And He has the power to do something about it. And if you wonder how far He will go in doing something about it, just read the book of Revelation.

So we love God's moral perfection because it guarantees justice. And we also love it because it guarantees our sanctification. He has promised to make us like Him in our character. We hate the sin in our lives - so we love the fact that God has promised to make us more and more holy in this life, and in the next life we will be completely sinless forever!

That just blows my mind. The other day I just stopped and tried to imagine what it will be like to have zero sin of any kind, and I could not do it. I cannot even imagine it. I do not even have an

imagination that wild - to where I could picture what it might be like to be completely sinless in my actions, words, thoughts, attitudes, motives, desires, inclinations, and affections. It is a mind-blowing promise, and we have that promise only because God is perfectly holy. No wonder the four living creatures burst out with praise when they look at the One seated on the throne and they see His perfect, infinite holiness!

Supremacy

That is one thing they love about Him. Another thing is His supremacy.

8 ... Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

That title - **Lord God Almighty** points to His supremacy. The Old Testament account of this same scene is in Isaiah 6. And there it says, "**Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of Hosts**" (Isa.6:3). The word "host" means army - Yahweh of armies. (By the way - When we sing the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress" - there is a line that says, "Lord Sabaoth His name, age to age the same." Sometimes people assume that is just a funny way of spelling "Lord of the Sabbath." But the word is not "Sabbath" - Sabaoth is the Hebrew word translated **hosts**. (So that line in the hymn, "Lord Sabaoth His name," means, "The Yahweh of armies His name, age to age the same, and He must win the battle.") The title, "LORD of Hosts," refers to the fact that God commands His armies of angels, which is a vivid way of referring to His supremacy. Here in Revelation 4 instead of saying, "Lord of Hosts," it's, "Lord Almighty."¹

pantokrator - *kratos*:: strength or might, and "*panta*" - "all" or "total." Lord God *pantokrator* - Lord God, the *totally* mighty One. He reigns supreme above everyone and everything.

And that is great news when your enemies are stronger than you are. When the people who are hurting you have the upper hand - maybe your boss, or someone who has more money or more power or more physical strength or more intelligence or who has greater influence, so that you cannot defend yourself - that is when you are especially glad to be a servant of the LORD of hosts. What an incredible blessedness to have a Father in heaven who is always greater than your biggest problem! If the One on the throne is holy - above and beyond this crumbling world, and morally perfect, and on top of that He is the supreme Lord over all - no wonder they are shouting praises!

Eternality

And they are not done. There is a third part of this title:

8 ... Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

When I was in junior high I saved up over \$100 to buy a pair of Herman Survivor hunting boots because they had a lifetime guarantee. I figured, "Man, they are expensive, but I'll never have to buy boots again my whole life." A few years later that company went out of business. So my lifetime guarantee lasted about two hunting trips. That is the thing about guarantees - they are only as good as the guarantor. As soon as they go out of business or cease to exist, or no longer have the resources to honor their commitment, you are out of luck.

And even if they stay in business to the day you die - lifetime guarantees are only good in *this* lifetime. Once you die, the deal's off. A few months ago Tracy got me some socks that have a lifetime guarantee. If you ever get a hole in them you just take them back and they give you a new pair. So I told my dad about them. I said, "Dad, these are amazing. You're guaranteed to never have to replace them as long as you live!" To which he responded, "At my age? Big deal. All my socks will probably last me that long." Now, I do not know if that is just pessimism on his life span or if he just is not very

1 Of the 245 occurrences of the Hebrew phrase "Yahweh of Hosts" in the Old Testament, the LXX translates "Lord Almighty" ninety times. That does not happen, however, in Isaiah 6.

hard on socks, but either way – the point is, even the most rock solid guarantees in this life go null and void the moment your heart stops beating.

At least that is how it is for the world. But not for us. Did you know that you and I are all set for socks for the next billion years? Whatever clothes we need, whatever food we need, whatever resources of any kind we need – we are fully insured with zero deductible *forever*. And that is guaranteed personally by the full faith and credit of a Guarantor who will never go out of business, who will never become insolvent, who does not require a receipt, and on the day you breathe your last breath in this life – His promises are just getting started. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever; He never changes, and He never disappoints.

And that is great news when you are in the world that is falling apart around you, and one person after another after another in your life proves unfaithful and unreliable and lets you down. No wonder the cherubim are singing praises! They look at the throne and they see a King who is ultra- holy, who is the Lord God of total supremacy, and who lives forever and never changes.

Other Attributes

Now, those are not all the attributes of God. There are hundreds and hundreds of others revealed in Scripture, and who knows how many that have not been revealed yet. We will be discovering more attributes of God forever - throughout eternity. But of all the countless attributes of God, when the Holy Spirit picks out three to get us started on worship, it is these three - God's holiness, supremacy, and eternity. And that makes sense since our biggest problems are sin, trouble, and mortality.

So does that give you an idea of what it means to see God's glory? Seeing God does not mean having a vision where there is some vague light at the end of tunnel or Jesus sitting on cloud or something. Seeing God's glory means understanding and appreciating and delighting in His attributes. Remember when God showed His glory to Moses? He said, "Here's My glory," and then Moses heard these words, "Yahweh, Yahweh, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love. Yet He does not leave sin unpunished..." He showed His glory to Moses mainly by giving Moses a list of some of His chief attributes. That is not to say there is not also visual splendor that we will see on that day we meet the Lord face to face, but for now His glory is seen in His attributes.

Actions

That is one thing we sing about. The other thing we sing about is God's actions. We praise Him for all the good things He does - especially in creation and redemption. Down in verse 11 the twenty-four elders praise Him for His work of creation and His upholding of the creation, and then in chapter 5, where Jesus enters the picture, there is an explosion of worship for His work of redemption. We will talk more about all that when we get to those verses, but for now the point is we praise God for His attributes and we praise Him for His works. That is the content of our praise. When we write worship songs, or when we select worship songs, this is what we should be looking for. Not just songs that make us feel good, not songs about us, but songs about the attributes and actions of God.

The Goal/Objective of our Praise

The Words of verse 8 Achieved the Outcomes of verse 9.

Now let me show you something that I found extremely helpful in verse 9. This really taught me a lot this week about what worship is. We have seen the content, but content alone does not define worship. You could read the words of the living creatures' song verbatim and not worship at all. Listen to John's characterization of the living creatures' worship:

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and

who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down...

*That is what worship is - giving **glory, honor and thanks**. And that was what the four living creatures were accomplishing with their song. So in verse 8 we see the *content* of praise, and in verse 9 we see the *goal*, or outcome of praise. The *content* - the actual words that are said, are not worship unless they achieve the *goal* or outcome of giving God **glory, honor, and thanks**.*

The Nine Components of Worship

So when we have our corporate praise time that is what we should be trying to accomplish. If I have joy in the Lord, or if I have longing for Him and I go to express that joy or longing in worship, what should come out of my heart? Answer - praise for God's attributes and actions with the goal of giving Him glory, honor, and thanks. At least that is what it is in this verse. Back in chapter 1:6 it was glory and power. And down in verse 11 of chapter 4 it is glory, honor, and power. In 5:12 it is power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise. Then in chapter 7 it is salvation, praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength. And in 19:1 it is salvation, glory, and power. If we take all those lists of things that we are to offer God in worship, and eliminate all the duplicates, we get nine different components of worship. In the book of Revelation, true worship is when you give God Glory, Power, Honor, Thanks, Wealth, Wisdom, Strength, Praise, and Salvation. If we want our worship to resemble the worship that takes place in the ultimate worship service in the throne room of God, then this will be the goal of our worship. If someone leads worship, that person's goal should be to bring about these outcomes.

But what does that mean, exactly? We have some idea of what it means to give God praise or thanks, but what does it mean to give God power or wisdom or salvation? God already has all those things, so what does it mean for us to give them to God? Hopefully we will eventually have time to get to all nine of these, but for now let's just start where the Holy Spirit started - with these three - **glory, honor, and thanks**. This passage is especially helpful, because it gives us wonderful insight into what it means to give those three things to God because we get to see the four living creatures do it. You might naturally think, "Oh, giving glory, honor, and thanks to God means singing a song with those words in it 'Lord, we glorify You, we thank You, we honor You.'" But if we want to know for sure what it looks like to give God glory, honor, and thanks, all we have to do is back up one verse and watch the four living creatures do it. And they do it without ever actually using the words, "glory," "honor," or "thanks." All they did was mention His holiness, supremacy, and eternity.

Giving Glory

So how is it that they gave God glory, honor and thanks simply by mentioning those attributes? Let's start with glory. (Actually, that is as far as we will make it today.) Glory is the one that appears more often than all the others in the lists. Glory appears six times in those lists.

Glory	6 times
Power	5 times
Honor	4 times
Thanks	2 times
Wisdom	2 times
Strength	2 times
Praise	2 times
Salvation	2 times
Wealth	1 time

More than anything else, worship is about giving glory to God. It is not worship unless you have that as your motive, and you succeed in achieving that goal. But is it done? We do not have any glory to give Him, and even if we did, He cannot become any more glorious than He already is because His glory is already infinite. When Scripture speaks of us glorifying God or giving God glory, it does not

mean we supply Him with something or add to His perfect nature in any way.

Glorifying Equals Increasing God's Glory in the Eyes of People

What it means is we increase His glory in the eyes of people by making much of His attributes and actions. When you make much of something or make little of something, that has an impact on the attitudes of the people around you. Their opinion of that thing is influenced greatly by how big a deal you make of it. For example, suppose you got a call from a radio station and they told you...

“Congratulations! You have just won an all expense paid family vacation to _____”

And you and your spouse responded with the wildest celebration your kids have ever seen in your home. You are running around hoot'n and holler'n, calling all your friends, dropping down on your knees and thanking God, laughing, hugging each other. This place you are going - your children have never been there, never seen it, never heard of it before, but after seeing your reaction - what kind of attitude do they now have about this place? They are excited. They are bragging to their friends about it, counting the days - they LOVE this place, even though they have no idea what it is like. What have you done? You have glorified that place in their eyes. By making much of it, you elevated their opinion of it.

That is one way to glorify something. Another way would be to just sit down and describe to your kids what is so great about the place. If it is a place that would be the thrill of their lifetime, and you do a good job describing it, then they will have a high view of it.

So you can glorify something (make something appear glorious in the sight of others) by your reaction and attitude, or you can glorify something with a good description. But whatever the method, glorifying means making something or someone more glorious in the eyes of onlookers ... or in your own eyes.

In Your Own Eyes

One goal of our singing is to preach to our own hearts.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Literally it says, “**Make Christ holy as Lord in your hearts.**” Sometimes you know in your head that God is glorious, but your heart is not having much of a response, so you have to put the paddles on your dead heart and try to get it jump-started. And you do that by preaching to your soul about the attributes of God, meditating on them and studying them, and then by participating in the activity of celebration - songs, raising your hands, etc., with an attitude that says, “Awake my soul and sing!”

How important is it for you to give God glory?

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness ... 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him

The people who are going to hell are going there because of a failure to give God glory. That is how important His glory is. And so we willingly, gladly glorify Him. We proclaim the truth about Him to one another and to our own hearts, and we participate in the activities of praise with an attitude that says, “Come on, soul - wake up!”

More Detail is Better

And if that is what you are doing, then the more descriptive the better, right? For example, suppose your kids ask you about the vacation place and you say, “It's fabulous,” and then you walk away. Then your wife comes in and spends a half hour telling them about all the fun things there, and shows them pictures and videos - that will go a lot farther in glorifying that place in their eyes than your little one-word description. The greater the description, the greater the glorifying effect. This is another difference between the great hymns and some of the more shallow praise choruses.

Take that first attribute the four living creatures focus on - God's holiness. Suppose we want to glorify God's holiness. If we take a typical praise chorus that just says, "God, You are holy, oh, You are holy, we love You because You are holy..." Does that glorify Him? A little bit. It is like the dad saying to the kid, "The place is fabulous, fabulous, fabulous." But compare that to the hymn, "Holy, holy, holy." In that song you see the twenty-four elders casting down their crowns before Him, and the cherubim and seraphim falling on their faces before Him who was, and is and is to come. Then the third verse talks about the fact that God is so holy that His glory has to be hidden from the eyes of sinful man. He is so perfect in power and love and purity that we cannot look upon Him with impure eyes. And yet all His works will praise His name in earth and sky and sea. That is like the mom taking a half hour to show photos and videos and give vivid descriptions.

And by the way - that is another reason why it is good to memorize the great hymns. Sometimes people complain about hymns because it is heavy, complex doctrine coming at you at 90 mph. If you don't know the hymn, your heart is not moved when we sing it because the words and ideas go by so fast that you cannot even process them. And if the music is unfamiliar, it takes all your brain power just to get the right notes, much less consider what is being said.

But if you have ever gone for a half hour walk and spend the entire time offering that hymn to God phrase by phrase as a prayer, and meditating on the meaning and implications - then when you hear that hymn sung by a whole congregation it can send you right into the heavenlies.

Theological Depth in Music

It is crucial that we have deep, rich theological content in our songs. In fact, Colossians 3:16 goes so far as to say we are to teach and admonish one another with our singing. We have been focusing on Ephesians 5:19 in our study of the principles for corporate praise. But the parallel passage to Ephesians 5:19 is

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching, and admonishing one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Almost the same as Ephesians 5:19 except instead of it flowing out of being filled by the Spirit, the praise flows out of the Word of Christ dwelling in you richly. Ephesians 5:19 says speak to one another with the music, but Colossians 3:16 takes it a step further and puts singing right alongside teaching and admonishing with all wisdom.

So I need to clarify something I said last week that was probably misleading. Remember the point I made about worship being an end in itself? We do not worship to accomplish anything else. When I was making that point I said we do not worship in order to raise money, or to increase our numbers, or to teach our children, or to grow spiritually, or anything else. If I had it to do over again, I think I would state it differently. I wish I would not have included teaching our children or spiritual growth in the examples. There is debate about exactly what connection the grammar makes between the teaching and the singing. The grammar is somewhat ambiguous. Some say it means we teach by means of the music. Others say it is just teaching, admonishing and singing in a list of ways the Word dwells in us richly. But either way, the connection between singing and instruction is so close that I do not want to go so far as to say we should not use our music for teaching. I do still think the basic idea of worship as an end in itself is valid. We do not think of worshipping God as a stepping stone to get us to the ultimate goal of instructing one another. Rather, the goal of our instructing one another is to increase our worship. So the point of honoring God as the highest, ultimate, final goal still stands. But the way I said it last week made it sound like picking out songs with the motive of instruction is a bad thing, and I wish I would not have given that impression. So I need to ask your forgiveness for my carelessness in the way I made this point last week.

And whether or not we should use songs to teach, one thing we can say for sure is that the terms *teaching*, *admonishing*, and *singing* are all descriptions of having the Word dwell in us richly. That

means our songs should be doctrinally rich. In the New Testament, whenever there are passages that have meter or parallelism or rhythm, it is generally assumed they are early Christian songs. And those are some of the most doctrinally rich, theologically dense portions of the whole Bible. And we see exactly the same thing in the Old Testament. The average Psalm has about three hundred words, with very little repetition. Our average song has under one hundred, with plenty of repetition. And once again, this is the advantage of the great hymns.

You could give someone an excellent theological foundation just by taking them through all four verses of How Great Thou Art or Immortal Invisible or O Worship the King. You would not be able to teach much from the average song on KLOVE. It is a huge benefit to have the great truths of the gospel set to music in your heart.

Celebration Songs

Does that mean we should only use songs that give lots of theological detail? No. Scripture is full of examples of celebratory exclamations of praise that include no detail at all. In fact, that is exactly what we see with the four living creatures. Their song is not fourteen verses. It is one sentence: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, God Almighty, who was and is and is to come. That is it. Why so short? Why are the Psalms so long and this praise so short? It is short because it is an exclamation. There is no need for an extended description of God's glory because this is all taking place right in front of His throne. Everyone there can see His glory. The first part of worship is already done - they have seen God's glory. All that remains now is to give voice to their joy. So what we see is their celebration. This is like the word, "hurray!" This is the, "Yes!" of the heart to the glory they are seeing.

A guy is watching a big game, his team scores in the final seconds and wins the game, and he jumps out of his chair and shouts, "Yeah!" (or, "Hurray!" or whatever he says when he is excited). The *basis* of his celebration - the thing that made him happy, was the victory that he witnessed. Jumping up and shouting, "Hurray!" was an expression of that excitement.

But what if the next day he is sitting in his living room, and he is bored to tears because there are no games that day. And he gets to thinking about the day before when he was so happy and so excited and it was so much fun that moment he jumped out of his chair and shouted. And he wants to experience that again, so he jumps of out of his chair and shouts as loud as he can, "YEAH!!!! Whoohooo!!!" And he pumps his fists. But he still does not feel quite as happy as yesterday, so he tries pumping them a little harder.

If you walked in on all that you would say he has lost his mind. Why? Because celebration is not the *cause* of happiness; it is the *result*. In the illustration, the basis for the happiness and celebration was the exciting victory. And in our praise, the basis of our enthusiasm is the glory of God. So when we see that glory, it is appropriate to celebrate with loud shouts and songs and clapping and even dancing. And that is where upbeat, musically exciting, celebratory songs come in. They do not have the theological depth, because they are more of a response than a stimulus. The theology stimulates joy and praise, and the celebratory songs express joy and praise.

And we really need to have both. If we follow the examples of praise we have in Scripture, we will have songs that give us a clear look at the details of the excellencies of God's nature so we have something to get excited about, and then we will actually get excited and celebrate with exclamatory kinds of praises. So we need two kinds of songs - instructive songs and celebrative songs. A church that has only celebrative little choruses are like the guy jumping around his living room cheering when there is no game. And a church that has only heavy, detailed, doctrinal hymns with no celebratory exclamations and shouts of joy is like an analyst who gets paid to study every detail about the game, but is not even a fan. Neither one glorifies the game, right? The one who makes you think much of the game itself - the thing supposedly being cheered, is the one who actually watches it, and then celebrates what he sees.

We desperately need the deep, rich, theological hymns and spiritual songs and the reading of Scripture and the teaching from the worship leader to show us the glory. And we need the exciting,

energizing, loud, celebratory choruses to help us celebrate the glory that we see.

Conclusion

That is how we use the different kinds of songs. But no song - no matter how wonderful the lyrics are or how exciting the music is - no song automatically gives God glory. God receives glory when we make much of Him - in our words, in our affections, or emotions, and our responses to seeing His attributes.

Benediction: Ephesians 3:20,21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever

1:25 Application Questions:

- 1) In what area do you feel your life glorifies God (increases the greatness of God in the eyes of others) the most?
- 2) What do you feel is the biggest obstacle in your life preventing you from glorifying God more?
- 3) Which accomplishes its purpose the most in your life - instructive songs or celebratory songs? Can you think of a way you could take more advantage of both instructive and celebratory songs?