

Music in Worship – Lesson 8

Three Kinds of Song

- Ephesians 5:18-19 & Colossians 2:16
 - And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. . .
 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
- We are told to sing three distinct things.
 - Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs
- We will look at each of these, but first what are the three broad options?
 - All three refer to songs in the Jewish Psalter
 - All three refer to religious songs generally
 - Each refers to a different category of song
- Psalms
 - I have argued that “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” do not refer exclusively to portions of the Psalms.
 - Three possible meanings of *psalms*:
 - A song played on a stringed instrument (i.e. an instrumental-only song)
 - Any sacred or pious song
 - The Old Testament Psalms
 - Option 1 - A song played on a stringed instrument
 - This definition does not work with the immediate context. We cannot sing an instrumental song.
 - Therefore, this cannot be a reference to instrumental-only music.
 - Option 2 – Any sacred or pious song
 - First, the context argues against this understanding. Just as it would be redundant in these contexts to refer to the Psalms by *psalms*, *hymns*, and *spiritual songs*, so it would be redundant for Paul to simply intend any sacred or pious song by *psalms*.
 - If one holds that all three words mean the same thing, that singular thing would naturally be the Psalms (because these words are used internally in the Book of Psalms to refer to itself).
 - Second, the scriptural use of the word strongly suggests that it refers to the songs of the Jewish Psalter.
 - The Greek word, *psalmos*, occurs 7 times in the NT. Our passages are 2 of the occurrences.
 - The other 5 are Luke 20:42, 24:44; Acts 1:20, 13:33; 1 Cor 14:26.
 - Every passage where the meaning of the word is definite, it refers to the OT Psalter. Everywhere else, where the meaning is not immediately certain, a reference to the songs of the Psalter is a natural reading.
 - Therefore, *psalms* does not simply refer to any sacred or pious song.
 - Option 3 – Old Testament Psalms
 - Based on the evidence we have just looked at, Paul’s command to sing *psalms* is a command to sing the songs contained in the canonical Book of Psalms.
 - This does not require *psalms* to be exclusively a reference to the Book of Psalms; there are other songs in the OT that are also referred to as *psalms*.

- Therefore, our repertoire of songs that we sing as part of our worship must include the Old Testament Psalms.
- Hymns
 - What does Paul mean by hymns?
 - Unlike with *psalms* (psalms), we cannot look to other New Testament usage of *hymnos* (hymn) since this Greek word only occurs in our two passages.
 - Strong's Greek Lexicon – “apparently from a simpler (obsolete) form of ὑδέω *hudēō* (to celebrate. . .); a ‘hymn’ or religious ode. . .”
 - The scriptural context does not inform us what is meant by this word. We must look beyond the scriptural usage to the broader context of the contemporary usage. This decision is supported by the context of who Paul is writing to – believers in Ephesus and Colossae who would have understood Paul's words primarily in the context of their culture.
 - Thayer's Greek Lexicon – “a song in praise of gods, heroes, conquerors . . .”
 - Vine's Expository Dictionary – “a song of praise addressed to God”
 - Pliny the Younger – wrote that he had discovered it was the custom of Christians to meet on a particular day and to sing “a hymn among themselves to Christ, as though he were a god . . .”
 - The Ephesians and Colossians would have known immediately what Paul meant by hymns; they were the kinds of songs that were regularly sung in both everyday life and in the pagan temples praising the pagan gods as well as various popular heroes. Obviously, not the exact same songs being used in pagan worship, but the same form of songs.
 - A hymn is a song of praise to God, usually one that directly addresses Him.
- Spiritual Songs
 - What does Paul mean by spiritual *songs*?
 - *Ōdē* (song) occurs in 3 passages besides the 2 we are considering – Rev 5:9, 14:3, 15:3
 - It appears from these passages that Paul's *song* is exactly what we understand by the word – a generic word for something that is sung.
 - Strong's Greek Lexicon – “a chant or ‘ode’ (the general term for any words sung. . .)”
 - Thayer's Greek Lexicon – “a song, lay, ode”
 - Vine's Expository Dictionary – “an ode, song. . . the word in itself is generic. . .”
 - The word *song* then is simply words that are sung.
 - But Paul qualifies *songs* with *spiritual*. We are not told simply to use any songs in our worship but songs that are spiritual in nature.
 - What does Paul mean by *spiritual* songs?
 - Rather than surveying every instance of *pneumatikos*, we'll just look at the definitions given in the lexicons & dictionaries.
 - Vine's Expository Dictionary – “always connotes the ideas of invisibility and of power. . . . Is used as follows. . . things that have their origin with God, and which, therefore, are in harmony with His character. . . the purposes of God revealed in the gospel by the Holy Spirit. . . men in Christ who walk so as to please God are 'spiritual,' . . . the activities Godward of regenerate men are 'spiritual sacrifices,' . . . all that is produced and maintained among men by the operations of the Spirit of God is 'spiritual,' . . . The spiritual man is one who walks by the Spirit. . .”
 - Thayer's Greek Lexicon – “relating to the human spirit, or rational soul. . . belonging to a spirit. . . belonging to the Divine Spirit. . .”
 - Strong's Greek Lexicon – “non-carnal, i.e. (humanly) ethereal (as opposed to gross), or (dæmoniacally) a spirit (concretely), or (divinely) supernatural, regenerate, religious. . .”

- *Spiritual songs* then are words set to music and which are religious in nature, pleasing to God and having to do with the things and power of God, as opposed to carnal or contrary to God's nature.
- Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs
 - We are commanded to sing three separate kinds or categories of songs in our gathered worship.
 - Psalms – primarily those songs found in the Book of Psalms
 - Hymns – songs of praise to God, especially those that directly address him
 - Spiritual songs – religious songs which have to do with the things of God
 - There is overlap between these three categories, yet, each category is distinct from the others.

Latin Hymnody in the Middle Ages, part 1 – AD 814-1400

- We ended last time at the end of the dominance of Latin Plainsong & the death of Charlemagne.
- The Sequence
 - First formed circa the 9th century (800s)
 - Initially, a song with a single opening line followed by pairs of unrhymed, non-metrical phrases and ending with another single line. Each paired phrase was sung to the same music (the music would repeat for each phrase in a pair).
 - Later (around 1000), the paired phrases began to take meter & rhyme though this was inconsistent until about 1200.
- Notker Balbus (840-912)
 - Also known as “The Stammerer”
 - A Benedictine monk at St. Gall in Switzerland. He was a poet, teacher, historian, and composer.
 - Possibly invented the sequence; certainly among the first to use it. Supposedly invented the sequence to help him remember long melodies.
 - Compiled a collection of early sequences – a *Liber Hymnorum*
- Wipo of Burgundy (ca late 900s - early 1000s)
 - Chaplain to Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II (and possibly others)
 - A priest and writer
 - Wrote “Christians, to the Paschal Victim” (*Victimae paschali laudes*)
- *Stabat mater*
 - Anonymous sequence from the 13th century
 - Originally a rhymed prayer intended for private devotions
 - “At the cross her station keeping, Stood the mournful mother weeping, Where he hung, the dying Lord;”
- *Dies irae*
 - 13th century sequence attributed to Thomas of Celano (died ca. 1250).
 - Opening line is taken directly from the Vulgate translation of Zechariah 1:15.
 - “Day of wrath! O day of mourning! See fulfilled the prophets' warning, Heaven and earth in ashes burning!”
 - Tune was used by many 19th & 20th century composers as a symbol of death and judgment
- The Trope
 - A form contemporary with the sequence
 - A textual and/or musical addition to a Latin chant other than the *Alleluia*

- Took one of three forms
 - Adding a melisma to a chant
 - Adding text to a chant melisma
 - Adding both new music and text to a chant
- Often served as a commentary on the chant
- Thousands of tropes were produced prior to the 1500s.
- Permanent Division of the Western Church from the Eastern (1054)
 - The Eastern and Western churches officially broke from each other over the Filioque Controversy, though there were many other contributing problems in addition to the political and cultural splits that had already taken place.
- DIVINUM MYSTERIUM
 - A melody trope from the 13th century
 - We use it with “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” though this was not its original text.
- By the late Middle Ages, only the monks, other clergy, and the wealthy were literate. Latin was no longer the vulgar or common language. Because of these and other reasons, congregational singing was almost extinct; religious music was primarily the domain of monks and choirs.
- Adam of Saint Victor (ca 12th century)
 - Official at Notre Dame
 - Influential in replacing the early, non-metrical, unrhymed sequence with its later metrical, rhymed form.
- Peter Abelard (1079-1142)
 - Popular theologian, teacher, and philosopher
 - Accused twice of heresy. Convicted once in an irregular trial after the 1st accusation and excommunicated by Pope Innocent II after the 2nd accusation. The excommunication was lifted shortly after and the pope cleared him of the charges following his death.
 - Authored The Hymnal for the Convent of the Paraclete
 - “Alone Thou Goest Forth, O Lord”
 - “O What Their Joy and Glory Must Be”
- Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153)
 - Founded a monastery in Clairvaux which became Clairvaux Abbey
 - Reformed the Benedictine Order
 - A genuine believer – “Christ is the sinner’s only hope” – and highly regarded by the 16th century reformers
 - Called the “Uncrowned Pope”
 - Author of *Jesu, Dulcis Memoria*
 - “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee”
 - “Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts”
 - Credited with writing *Salve mundi salutare* the Latin source for “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”
- Bernard of Cluny (1122-1153)
 - Benedictine monk at Cluny Abbey in eastern France which was known for its wealth and luxuries
 - Disillusioned by the worldliness of the monastery
 - Wrote *De Contemptu Mundi*, a 3,000 line satire that contrasted the glory of heaven with the corruption of the world.
 - *De Contemptu Mundi* is the source of at least 4 English hymns, including “Jerusalem, the Golden”