

# THEN SINGS MY SOUL | *Capturing the spirit of worship from the Psalms for Today*

## Lesson 1

*"A psalm is the blessing of the people, the praise of God, the commendation of the multitude, the applause of all, the speech of every man, the voice of the Church, the sonorous profession of faith, devotion full of authority, the joy of liberty, the noise of good cheer, and the echo of gladness. It softens anger, it gives release from anxiety, it alleviates sorrow; it is protection at night, instruction by day, a shield in time of fear, a feast of holiness, the image of tranquility, a pledge of peace and harmony." - Ambrose (ca. 339-397)\**

After an introductory study of Psalms, we recognize these truths:

1. The Psalter was a songbook for worship among the Jews.
2. The Psalter was a collection of differing song forms along with differing subjects.
3. But the Psalter covered the full scale of human experiences and emotions living faith in the world.

And these pattern for us a usable collection of prayers and songs we can use today to capture the same spirit of worship in the New Testament age.

Thoughts on psalmody and why it matters for Christians today. Psalmody is using Psalms for singing together in worship. Just as the body needs a nutritious diet, the body of Christ needs a steady diet of psalms in our worship.

1. First, the Psalms are the Word of God, "living and active" with power beyond our ability to see them working.
2. Second, Jesus was a psalm-soaked man. Jesus quoted the Psalms more than any other book in the Old Testament, which means: they're important.
3. As noted above, the Psalms cover every range of human experience and emotion in a fallen world. Why does that matter? Because we're all numb. From Netflix, to The Bachelor, to pornography, we have managed to feed ourselves junk food that tastes good...for the moment. It helps mitigate our pain, disappointment, anger, sadness, and contempt. It helps us escape the reality of our broken world and forget for an empty moment. But in the end, it leaves us hungry. Jesus didn't go numb on the cross and he didn't bury anything he was feeling, even his neediness. He cried out with the Psalms and teaches us to do the same.
4. Often, we avoid the power of this application. We want "peppy" songs when our hearts are crushed. We want "up-tunes" when our hearts are low. The modern approach to worship seems to think that the best way to deal with trials is to sing positively. Well, that's not what the Psalms teach us at all. In fact, about 70 percent of the psalms in the Psalter are laments. Yet zero percent of the Top 150 songs on CCLI are laments! And what song can you recall was indeed a lament? Jesus promised that we will have trials in this life. It stands to reason then that we must go through them for sanctification. There's a correlation here with the Psalms. The psalmists walked through lament to get to praise. The Psalter as a whole and individual psalms move from lament to praise. The psalmists do this to show us how they got to praise. They didn't start there but they ended there.

## Ephesians 5: Be filled with the Spirit

<sup>15</sup> Therefore **be careful how you walk**, not as unwise men but as wise, <sup>16</sup> **making the most of your time**, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So then **do not be foolish** but *understand what the will of the Lord is*. <sup>18</sup> And **do not get drunk with wine**, for that is dissipation, but *be filled with the Spirit*, <sup>19</sup> **speaking** to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and **making melody** with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup> always **giving thanks** for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; <sup>21</sup> and **be subject** to one another in the fear of Christ.

Notes:

1. In the walk we walk in love (5:2), we are to make the most of our time.
2. In understanding the will of the Lord, we are not to be foolish.
3. In the heart that controls us, we are to be filled with the Spirit – and not in drunkenness.

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- a. But note that three of the five participles that manifest this filling of the Spirit involve singing. The last two express the heart in prayer to God and the heart in connection with others.
- b. Sing with the whole being “with your heart” to the Lord.

## Colossians 3

<sup>12</sup> So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart** of **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness** and **patience**; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and **forgiving** each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. <sup>14</sup> Beyond all these things **put on love**, which is **the perfect bond of unity**. <sup>15</sup> **Let the peace of Christ** **rule in your hearts**, to which **indeed** you were called in one body; and **be thankful**. <sup>16</sup> **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you**, with all wisdom *teaching and admonishing* one another with **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing** with thankfulness **in your hearts** to God. <sup>17</sup> Whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

### Notes:

1. As the chosen of God, (3:12), we are given several commands:
  - a. Put on a heart
    - i. Of compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience (manifested by bearing with and forgiving others).
    - ii. Of love – the perfect bond that unites.
  - b. Let Christ’s word dwell richly in you – in your hearts.
    - i. By singing.
      1. With all wisdom, teaching and admonishing with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
      2. With thankfulness.
  - c. Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.
1. So, when the Psalmists moved from lament to praise, how did they get there with their “heart”?
2. Is there a reason that in the gospel age “hymns and spiritual songs” may be more directed at praise?

Look at 1Timothy 3:16 as an example of a hymn:

### It reflected Jesus’ Chronology:

He appeared (revealed) – His incarnation  
He was vindicated – His earthly life,  
He was seen by angels – His resurrection  
He was proclaimed – His commission to the 12  
He was believed – His validation  
He was taken – His Completed Work

By common confession, great is the  
mystery of godliness:

He who was revealed in the flesh,  
Was vindicated in the Spirit,  
Seen by angels,  
Proclaimed among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Taken up in glory.

We have others in our hymnal that reflect this approach to hymns of praise: “Crown Him with Many Crowns” (#263, PHSS) or “At the Name of Jesus” (#203, PHSS).

Using these words at the end of chapter three, Paul reminds believers, through Timothy and the shepherds who will be appointed, about the foundation of the church – that cannot be destroyed by false teachers. – for ‘the Lord knows who are His.’