

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Be Filled with the Spirit, Part 3

Scripture: Ephesians 5:19

Code: 1941

We want to continue in our wonderful and exciting study of Ephesians chapter 5 verses 18 to 21. We've been in this passage because we've gone a little off on a few tangents and divergencies for about six weeks but we're having a great time and we're going to be here for a while to come. I really feel this is a tremendous portion. It holds so many great and important truths for us that we've got to take our time in really comprehending it. Ephesians chapter 5 verses 18 to 21, I'm going to read it and you follow along as I read.

“And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Let's pray together as we begin.

Father, we ask this morning, Lord, that You would somehow quiet our hearts from the things about us, that You would help us to be able to come apart from all of the vicissitudes and struggles and parts of our lives that tend to fill up our thinking. Lord, as it were by a divine act, clear our minds so that we can draw into your presence without any preconceptions, without any predispositions, with a pure mind and a pure heart to receive at Your hand what it is that You have for us. And, oh, Lord, I pray that You would guide the one who speaks, that he might only be a vessel, that Christ might be the teacher, and the Spirit of God might be the One who communicates. That we might hear from You, that we might go from this place knowing we have met with You, and we'll praise You in Christ's name. Amen.

In Jesus' final night with His disciples recorded for us in John 13, 14, 15, and 16, He promised to them many things – many wonderful, incomparable, somewhat incredible things. But the key to all of them was the same one thing, and it was the coming of the Holy Spirit. Every promise Jesus ever gave in that last night before His betrayal and crucifixion, every promise Jesus ever gave that night found its fulfillment, in some sense, in the coming of the Holy Spirit. Now, we all know that God is one God: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,” says the Shema of the Old Testament. But we also are well aware that that one Lord, that one God, is in three distinct persons, and that's the mystery of the triune God. That God is one and yet God is individually God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And God often makes promises through Christ which are confirmed to us by the Holy Spirit. It is really God in His third person making good His original promises. And so the Spirit of God is none other than God Himself in the third person. And it is the coming of the Holy Spirit into

the life of the Christian that makes real all the promises of Jesus Christ. Look with me for a moment at the 14th chapter of John, and this will help us to get a setting for our thoughts.

In John chapter 14, particularly in this 14th chapter, maybe more so than in the 13th, the 15th, or even the 16th, our Lord promises them a great group of important things. Jesus is about to leave His disciples, and He does not want to leave them fearful. Several times He says, "Stop letting your heart be troubled," because they were very fearful about His leaving. And so to compensate for the vacuum and the absence that they were going to feel, He grants to them these amazing promises, all of which become fulfilled in the Holy Spirit's coming in some way or another. Look at verse 16, for example, and there you have the heart of the matter. "The Spirit of truth," He says, "whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you."

Now, there is one of the great dispensational statements of the Bible, there is one of the great statements about God's design for the New Testament era. The Holy Spirit has been with you, shall be in you. This is the promise that in the new covenant age, in the new era, after the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God would not be just with His people, that is alongside them, but He would be in them. That, then, becomes the thing which makes possible all the other promises. If the Spirit of God does not take up residence, then all of the things that Jesus is promising cannot come to their full fruition.

To show you what I mean, look at the first six verses of the 14th chapter, and here Jesus is essentially promising them heaven. There is a promise here in verse 2 that "in My Father's house are many rooms, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am, there ye may be also." Now, there is a great promise. Jesus said, "I'm going to go away, I'm going to make ready a place for you, I'm going to come back, and I'm going to take you to be with Me in that place."

Now, that's a wonderful promise. But if you're like I am, you like promises that have guarantees, right? If somebody makes a promise, you say, "It's fine, I appreciate your promise, have you got any way that you can provide some collateral for that? Can you verify that?" And God knows that He needs to verify His promise, so in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, it tells us – you don't need to look it up – it also tells us in Ephesians 1. He says, "He has given unto us the arrabn of the Spirit." It's called the earnest of the Spirit in the Old English. The word "arrabn" means guarantee, first installment, down payment, or engagement ring. In other words, Christ is saying here, "I am going to take you to heaven to be with me to inherit My kingdom. As the first installment or as the down payment, the guarantee, or the security, the engagement ring to prove I'm serious about the marriage, I'm going to give you the Holy Spirit." So you see, the Holy Spirit then becomes the guarantor of this promise of a heavenly inheritance. If there was no Holy Spirit in us, we would not have the security to know that Christ would fulfill His promise.

Later on in this chapter, look at verse 12, and here our Lord makes another magnanimous and amazing promise. He says, “Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto My Father.” Now, Jesus here is saying, “You will do greater works,” not greater in kind because you couldn’t do any greater in kind, but greater in extent, greater in breadth than even He did. He was confined to a very localized area. He is saying, “Because I go to the Father, you’ll do greater things.” How could that be possible – and especially in His absence? The answer is in Acts 1:8 where our Lord says, “You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” “And you shall be witnesses unto Me” – mou martures – My martyrs – watch – “in Jerusalem, Judea, and the uttermost part of the earth.” There is the fulfillment. Jesus did it in Jerusalem, Jesus did it in Judea, but you will do it in the uttermost part of the earth, places where Jesus never went, and you will be able to do it because of the Holy Spirit. So the very fulfillment here is dependent on the Spirit of God in us, else we cannot be witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth. We will not have the security and the guarantee of our inheritance in His kingdom unless we have the security and the guarantee of the presence of the Spirit of God.

Then thirdly, He says in verses 13 and 14, “I want to give you another promise.” It is this: “Whatever you shall ask in My name, that will I do.” Now, that’s an incredible promise. He repeats it in verse 14. “If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.” In other words, He’s saying, “I’m going to give you a resource, that resource is called prayer. You ask in My name, and I will do it.” But you know something? That’s hard to do. Very hard to do. You know why? Because Romans 8 says we know not what to pray for as we ought. We don’t know how to pray. But the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which are unutterable and He knows the mind of the Father. In other words, that verse wouldn’t be fully fulfilled if it were not for the indwelling Spirit’s continuous intercessory work before the throne of God. The fact, then, that we are secure in a heavenly inheritance, the fact that we will do greater things than our Lord, the fact that we can ask and receive is dependent upon the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Further, you will note that He says in verse 18: “I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world sees Me no more but you see Me.” Now, how is that going to happen? You’re going to go away? And the world isn’t going to see You anymore? What do You mean You’re going to come to us? Verse 20: “At that day you shall know that I am in My Father and ye in Me and I” – where? – “in you.” At what day did they know that God was in them? At what day did the people of God know that God had come to live within them? The Day of Pentecost. The Spirit of God descended and dwells in them. And that is exactly what He’s saying. Jesus says, “I am going to go away, but I’m going to come back, and in that day you will know that I am in you.” The fulfillment of that is the coming of the Holy Spirit. That is the guarantee that God lives in me.

Look at verse 27: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Now, wait a minute. Jesus promised

peace. And, by the way, look at chapter 15 verse 11: "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you." Jesus said, "I want you to have My peace," chapter 14. "I want you to have My joy," chapter 15. And He said, "I want you to have My love" in chapter 13. Remember that? Love, joy, peace. "Well," you say, "that's a wonderful promise but where do we get it?" Galatians 5:22: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." You see?

Everything that Jesus ever promises a believer comes to pass because of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God. This is so very important. We all have that potential resource, and that's why in chapter 16 verse 14, the Lord says, "When the Spirit comes, He shall glorify Me for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." In other words, the Spirit, then, becomes the channel through which the promises of Christ come to the believer. You understand that? Very essential. If it were not for the indwelling Spirit, the promises of Christ could not be fulfilled in your life.

But here's the key: All of this is yours by the indwelling Spirit, but it is only appropriated in your life, it is only functional in your life, when you are filled with the Spirit. You understand? You can possess the Spirit of God as all Christians do, you can be indwelt by the Spirit of God, you can have all of the potential for all of these fulfillments to the promises of Christ, but unless you are filled or controlled by the Spirit of God, unless you are guided by the Spirit of God, you will never know what it means to possess these tremendous promises. Promises unfulfilled are the equivalent of promises unmade or unkept. God has given you Christ and in Christ great and precious promises, Peter calls them. And they are yours, you possess them, but you will never realize them, you will never know what it is to have security for life and death, you will never know what it is to see things in your life beyond what you could dream possible, you will never know what it is to have prayers answered constantly, you will never know what it is to have the sense of God alive in you, you will never know what it is to have love, joy, and peace unless you know what it is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Even though you possess it, it won't be active in your life. And that's essentially what Paul is saying.

Now back to Ephesians 5. He's saying if you want to see the fruition of all of these things in your life, then it is absolutely necessary that you be filled with the Spirit. There is no other way. There is no other possibility for realization of these things. And all the way through the five chapters of Ephesians, Paul has been describing the tremendous power and the tremendous potential of a believer, but it all boils down to this one thing, people: You can fly through the first five chapters and seventeen verses, and if you get bogged down here, you're going to mess it all up. Because unless you're controlled by the Holy Spirit, all of that resource available to you, all of that potential for living a life of wisdom and love and light and uniqueness and humility and oneness, all of the potential is lost. And when you get into chapter 6 and you start your warfare with Satan, if you're not living controlled by the Holy Spirit, you're going to go right down the tubes. This is the heart of the matter. You ought to take your red pencil and draw a big box around verse 18; this is the heart of the issue.

Now, as we've looked at 18 to 21 – we've really only looked at verse 18 and a little bit of 19, but as we've looked at it, we noted three things that I want you to see: the contrast, the command, and the consequences. The contrast, the command, and the consequences. We studied in great detail the contrast: "Be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." In other words, our joy and our peace and our exhilaration and our communion with God and our fellowship and our power does not come, like the pagans, from getting drunk but from being filled with the Spirit. That's the contrast.

Then out of the contrast comes the command: "Be being kept filled with the Spirit." In other words, if all of our resources are bound up, if all of the realization of our potential is bound up in being filled with the Spirit, then keep on being filled with the Spirit or keep on being controlled. And it's a matter of moment by moment yielding your life to the will and the working of the Spirit of God. It's not some mystical, strange, divine zap; it is simply yielding one moment at a time to the Spirit of God. And that will only happen in your life when you are thinking thoughts about the Spirit of God, and that will only happen when you saturate your heart and mind and soul with the pages of the Word of God. And so as you do that, you will be controlled by the Spirit, filled by the Spirit, and, thirdly, consequences will happen.

And there are three that He speaks of in this text, and I'll probably add another one by the time we get there in a few weeks. But there are three. First of all, he says there will be a consequence within yourself: singing. Secondly, there will be a consequence toward God: saying thanks. Thirdly, there will be a consequence among the believers: submitting. And, fourthly, I'll probably add, there will be a consequence even to the unbelieving and that will be: service. And I'll show you what I mean by that as we go.

So that when you're filled with the Spirit, you see, all relationships are right. You're rightly related with yourself, you'll be a whole healthy person. You know, people go to counseling and they go see the psychiatrist and the psychologist and the analyst and the Christian counselor and so forth and so forth and so on, and they take Valium and Thorazine and Librium and all of that trying to be able to solve their problems, and they take long naps, you know, they want to play the Rip Van Winkle game and just forget it all. People try to run from their problems when the way to be at peace with yourself and have a song in your heart is to be filled with the Spirit, you see. That's rightly related to yourself.

Secondly, when you are rightly related to the Spirit of God, you're going to find yourself doing what verse 21 says, giving thanks always for all things unto God. Thirdly, you're going to find verse 21 a reality, you'll be submitting to everybody around you. There'll be a spirit of humility. There will be a spirit that says, "I don't seek my own thing but I seek to do what is best for you." All of the relationships become right. And the fourth one, the area of service, is way back in John 7, where our Lord there said, "When the Spirit of God fills you, out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water to everybody around you." So that all relationships are summed up in being filled with the Spirit. As He

controls your life, everything is right.

Now, we've been looking at number one: singing. This is the personal element. When you become a Christian and the Spirit of God comes to live in you and the Spirit of God fills you, you become joyous on the inside. A Spirit-filled Christian is going to be happy, it doesn't matter what's going on. He may be in jail in stocks, like Paul and Silas – and by the way, the stocks weren't like the Pilgrims had where you hang your hands like this and you hang your feet through like this, they were stocks with graduated holes extending further and further and wider and wider so that your legs were pulled as far apart as they could go without splitting and then they were locked in that position and kept there for weeks on end. And it was in the midst of that circumstance that they were spending all night doing what? Singing. Why? Because the circumstances are not the issue; the filling of the Spirit is the issue that brings the song. And when I am right with myself and when I am at peace in my own heart and when I am filled with His Spirit, a song breaks forth. At the end of the sermon this morning, you'll see why in what I think is a very exciting climax to all of our thoughts.

So the thing we've been looking at, then, is the fact that Spirit-filled people sing because something is right in their heart. Jerry Mitchell, who is a pastor in our church to the homebuilder area and also works in our evangelism ministry, just returned from two weeks in Israel. He went over there with a group of Jewish people from the United States and he was the first Gentile to ever go with that particular group. None of them were Christians and he was staying in the home of an Israeli general, a secular Israeli general. And he's not used to two weeks without any Christians. He's not used to having no fellowship and when he came back – and he wasn't here last Sunday to hear me preach, he got in on Monday – he came into our staff meeting and the first thing he said was, "You know? It's so good to be back in the fellowship of the brothers." He said, "It's so great to be here." He said, "You know? I found myself just so frustrated by being around these non-Christians all the time and I – when I'd get in to take a shower, I would just break forth and sing." And I just kind of chuckled and so did everybody else, see.

He didn't hear what I said, but that's what Spirit-filled people do. And when a Christian is bottled up and he can't sing, something wrong, he'll find a shower where he can just sing about Christ all he wants without – you know, you can't do that in some hotels in Israel without getting in a lot of trouble. He said he used to lock himself in his room just to read the New Testament. But there needs to be that release of the joy of the Spirit.

You know, in Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan has written a masterful picture of the Christian life, and as he goes through following Pilgrim's walk, he says that all along the way, Pilgrim gets off the way, doesn't he? He falls into the Slough of Despond and then he gets off and goes into Doubting Castle and then he gets off on the wrong road and somebody leads him into Vanity Fair and he has all of these problems and he keeps falling off the path and off the way and then he comes back on the way all the time and finally gets back on the way and finally gets back and finally crosses the river and

ascends the hill and enters the Celestial City. John Bunyan never ever mentions the filling of the Spirit. In the entire Pilgrim's Progress, he never talks about the filling of the Spirit. But about 50 times, you know what he says? Pilgrim got back on the way and went on his way what? Singing. That's John Bunyan's way of saying the same thing. He went on his way singing. Why? Because the singing is the expression of what God is doing in the heart.

Spirit-filled people have a song and he is saying, in effect, when the pagans get together in their orgies and their Satanic liturgy, they do their certain things with drunkenness. When we get together, we sing because the Spirit of God has born a song in our hearts. So it's basic. In Ephesians 5:18, it says if you are filled with the Spirit, you'll sing. In Colossians 3:16, it says if the Word of Christ dwells in you richly, you'll sing. In James 5:13, it says if your heart is filled with joy, you'll sing. And that is true. God has given us song as an expression of joy.

Now, we've asked several questions. Let's look at them again. First little question is: Among whom do we sing? Among whom do we sing? Simply says in verse 19: "Speaking among yourselves." We sing among ourselves. It's our songs. And I realize that people have insisted on the use of music as an evangelistic tool. I've spoken in different places and certain music groups are there and they'll perform a certain kind of music and I'll say, "You know, why do you do that kind of music?" "Well," they'll say, "you know, if you're going to reach the world for Christ through music, you got to do the kind of music the world is listening to." And my question is always the same: "Well, where in the Bible does it say you're supposed to reach the world through music?" And no one ever thinks of it. And they'll invariably say, "I don't know." You want to know something? No place in the Bible does it ever say sing the gospel of Christ; says preach it.

Music was never intended by God to be an evangelistic tool. I mean music has been around a long time, and I'm sure that there are times when songs and hymns and spiritual songs have pricked the heart and the conscience of an unbeliever, and maybe because the gospel truth is already known, they can kind of get them over the edge and come to Christ but that's like a residual benefit, much as you living the Christian life becomes a testimony to somebody. But the heart of the matter of evangelism is to preach the gospel and to live the gospel and to teach the gospel. We are not told that the world is to be won by music groups. Now, I don't want to be too hard about this, but I do think that if we really examined again what the Bible is saying here, we could eliminate a lot of pretty bad stuff that goes on in the name of Christian music under the guise that we got to reach the world. We were never told to reach the world by singing at them. And I think we need to keep it in mind.

The gospel is to be preached as the power of God unto salvation. And I'm sure that God wanted to be sure, because of the power of music to act upon the emotions, that we not confuse the issue in the presentation of the gospel by playing to the emotions rather than to the decision-making faculties. And so I think it's very important that the Bible says the church uses music to address itself, to speak among itself. That's where the music is to be.

Now, I think it's wonderful for unsaved people to come and hear the music, and I hope that they love the music, but they won't understand it the way we understand it, and they need the gospel of Jesus Christ to be brought to Christ; they need more than just the songs. And I really fear that today, music, with its emotional power and impact, is used as a device. And if you make the music so much like the music of the world, then the world thinks becoming a Christian isn't so different than being in the world anyway. And that's why it's very difficult to get any kind of commitment out of them. Well, I don't want to beg the point, I just want you to understand that Paul says Spirit-filled people sing to themselves, speak to themselves. In Israel of old the music of Israel was the music of Israel. It was their music, it was their music and their expression among themselves.

Secondly: From where does it originate? Where is our music to come from? Verse 19 says – it says at the end of the verse, “in your heart” and literally means from your heart, from out of an internal source. The point of origination is the heart, and last week I told you that in Amos chapter 5, the prophet Amos, as the voice of God, said to the people of God, “Stop singing because your hearts are not right. I do not want to hear your songs.” And in the 6th chapter he says, “You people are acting foolishly, you lie upon your couches of ivory, you lie upon your fancy beds, you drink your wine out of bowls because cups are too small, you are drunken, you are indulgent, you are covered with sweet-smelling ointment, you've got jewelry hanging over you, and you're playing all these songs and you're chanting all this music and you're inventing new and sophisticated instruments and I don't want to hear any of it,” he says. “Stop it all.”

And then in chapter 8, he says in verse 3, “Your singing shall turn to wailing when I'm through with you.” In other words, music in and of itself is not the issue; it is the heart of the one singing that is the issue. That's the issue before God. And you can sing the most beautiful song in the world, you can sing the most God-glorifying words in the world, but if your heart is not right before God, whether you are singing it up here or singing it there or singing it at your house, that is the issue with God. If your heart isn't right, the song doesn't please Him, no matter how well you sing it. On the other hand, no matter how lousy you are, no matter how bad you are at keeping the tune, if your heart is right the song, is sweet music to the ears of God. It's the heart that is the issue.

People, I'm telling you, today in the church, we have lost sight of that. We have piled up in Christianity a stack of musicians and singers and so forth whose hearts are not right before God who are constantly being promoted and pushed and portrayed across the Christian scene. And God is not interested in their songs, if their hearts are not right. I'm not trying to eliminate all these people from ministry, I just think maybe they ought to back up and get their life right before they claim to represent God's music because He's interested in the heart.

In fact, the music of the world, you know, you don't want to identify with that anyway. Our music ought to be different. The music of the world is going to stop someday. Do you know that? Every radio

station that plays music is going to stop, all the instruments are going to stop, no more world's music at all. You say, "When's that?" Revelation chapter 18, if you want to read it, I'll show you verses 20 to 22. In Revelation 18, God has brought judgment on the world's system, and here the world's system is called Mystery Babylon. Babylon was the origination of the evil world system and it'll be the consummation of it. And so this final form of the antichrist's world's system is called by the term Babylon.

And he tells here how Babylon in chapter 18 is going to be wiped out at the end of the tribulation. And when it's wiped out, then Christ will return and set up His kingdom. And one of the things that's going to take place is this: Verse 21, it says, "An angel takes like a stone, like a great millstone, casts it into the sea and says, 'With that kind of violence shall the great city Babylon be thrown down.'" And when the whole system goes, look what goes first. Verse 22: "And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee." That is the end of the world's music. That's the end of it. It's over. God says, "That is enough, it is gone." All non-spirit-filled music will halt immediately. You know, it's almost as if God has given music to mankind. It's a wonderful blessing, but man has corrupted that gift of God like he corrupts every other gift of God and so the day is coming when God will remove it.

Can you imagine a world without music? Can you imagine? People in our society can't make it from their house to their car to get the radio on. And from their car back to their house to get the stereo on. The music plays at work, the music plays at the factory, it plays at the shop, it plays at the half-time of the football game, music plays constantly. People don't want to face life without the music because the music plants the thought in their minds, the words in their minds to keep them from thinking about the stuff that matters. The world without music will be a very frustrating place. But that's what God says.

Ezekiel 26:13, God says, "I will cause the noise of your songs to cease and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more." He said that to Tyre and then they came in and they wiped that city out, and that was a little microcosm of what's going to happen when God comes in judgment against the world. There'll never be a song in hell. People will live forever in hell without a note of music, without a song to sing, without anything to relieve the unmitigated judgment that they will endure. And the only songs that will ever be sung after God stops the music of the world will be the song of the hearts of the Spirit-filled saints of God that fill the kingdom and go on into eternity, the eternal song of the redeemed. Listen, our song is to come from our hearts and to be distinct and unique.

Thirdly: To whom is our song sung? Well, that's clear, isn't it? Chapter 5 verse 19, the end of the verse, it says, "to the Lord." We sing to the Lord and that's why I said this morning, you know, it isn't necessary to clap or applaud, and I appreciate that, it's all right. I don't want to make you feel bad for being thankful, if that's what is in your heart, but you don't have to express your thanks in that way because we're really offering it to the Lord. If anybody should clap, it should be the Lord. And last

night He was clapping a lot as the thunder was cracking in places, but I don't think that had anything to do with what we're talking about. I don't think the Lord responds in that manner.

What I'm trying to say is that when we offer something to the Lord, we don't treat it as entertainment. If the choir sings or someone plays, as Rufus did this morning, or someone sings, they are endeavoring, really, not to perform for you but to have your thoughts gathered up with their thoughts and lifted up as praise to the Lord, so it is not an entertainment response. We are all together in one united way being led by the singers and led by the players to praise the Lord Himself. And that's where the praise is to go. It is unto the Lord. All music is to be offered to Him. And you know, you ought to have a checkpoint on your singing at that point. And there are some people who say, "Well, you know So-and-so gets up there and sings all the time but I think she's doing it for herself." Well, you know, all the people who sing for themselves aren't up here.

There are even people in the congregation who, when it comes time for congregational singing, knock out everybody for five rows around. So people will turn around and say, "Oh, who is – wonderful," you know. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says there's probably more of that in the pew than there is in the choir loft. I don't know if that's true or not, but I think all of us has to be aware that if we're truly singing from a Spirit-filled heart, it is offered to the Lord, not for everybody around to say how wonderful your voice – see.

In 2 Chronicles chapter 5, it's a pretty practical illustration here. This is a fantastic scripture. The great temple has been built. What a glorious day in Israel. And in 2 Chronicles chapter 5 and verse 12, the Levites, who were the singers, all gathered around for the dedication of the temple and they got there and they were arrayed with white linen. They had cymbals and psalteries and harps, and there were 120 priests playing the trumpet. Can you imagine a 4,000-voice choir with 120 trumpets? Man, what a tremendous experience. "And it came to pass as the trumpeters and the singers were as one" – what way were they one? – "to make one sound." They were one in that they all played the same tune, the same way, and saying the same.

In other words, they were good, they were excellent musically. But beyond that, they were one in praising and thanking the Lord, you see. In other words, they were right musically and they were right in their hearts. And it says, "And lifted up their voice" – singular, one voice – "with trumpets and cymbals and instruments and praised the Lord and said, 'He is good, His mercy endures forever.'" And God was so pleased, it says, the cloud, the Shekinah glory came down and filled the temple so that the priests could not minister for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. What a beautiful picture. Music glorifying God and God responding by His presence appearing so that they couldn't even minister because His glory blinded them and filled the whole place.

And in Revelation, when you hear the great choir sing in the future, they sing unto the Lord, "Worthy is the Lamb, praise to God." All music was offered to God. Johann Sebastian Bach, really the father in

many sense of modern music, said this centuries ago: “The aim of all music is the glory of God.” End quote, he’s right. And so when we sing, we must keep in mind that it’s a gift of praise to the Lord. That means that the words that we sing, whatever words of whatever song, should be biblical, right? They should rightly reflect God’s thoughts and God’s attitudes and God’s revelation. And there’s a lot of music that just misses it altogether. It’s theological mish-mash. It’s doctrinally wrong. Our words need to be right. Not only that, but the tune should be honoring, the vehicle, the method with which we sing. I think sometimes songs are offered to God in a vernacular that is so much of the world that God wouldn’t particularly want to be identified with that style because of what it connotes in the system we live in. There ought to be a beauty and a distinctiveness and a set-apartness so that it’s clear that this is offered to God.

Now you say, “John, are you saying that it shouldn’t have any effect on us and it’s just an offering to God and we don’t think about us?” Well, you know what is so wonderful, as you’re filled with the Spirit and you offer that music to God, it has a fantastic effect on you, doesn’t it? I’ll tell you, for me when I sit and listen to music and my heart is Spirit-filled and I sing and I praise the Lord and I hear singers and players doing that, I just – I go everywhere from goose bumps to tears. It has a fantastic effect on me. You know, if I have come home sometimes and I’m feeling a little depressed or saddened and there’s certain music that I want to place on the record player and listen to that, it can just change my spirit. It just kind of lifts me out of myself and I begin to sing with the singers or with the players and I begin to think about it and I begin to kind of lift my heart toward God and it has a healing effect in my own heart.

My wife always tells me that it’s the greatest thing in – for giving her a quiet spirit with four little children in the house and one husband who’s very busy and everything going whish-whish-whish like this all day long, that music, the Lord’s kind of music, has a quieting effect upon her spirit. I think there is that residual part of music and I think God intended it to be that way.

Let me show you a great verse. 1 Samuel 16:23, and here you meet David, and David, of course, was a tremendous musician. Among everything else that he did so well, he was a great musician, he was a skillful player, a skillful singer, and a great, great writer of hymns as the Psalms would witness. But in 1 Samuel 16 verse 23, we find David called on by Saul. Whenever Saul got upset, Saul got troubled, Saul got into some real difficult times, he would call David to come and play for him. And just starting in the middle of the verse it says, “David took a harp” – we won’t give you the whole picture but “David took a harp and he played with his hand.” There isn’t even any vocalizing, apparently, at this point, David just plays the harp. And what happened? I know one thing, I know David played it unto the Lord if David was in the right heart attitude that he was usually in. David was playing his harp to the Lord. But there was a residual benefit to Saul. Look at this, three things happened: Saul was refreshed, he was made well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

You see three things there? Mental, physical, spiritual. Music affected him, first of all, mentally. He was refreshed. He was apparently in a time of tremendous anxiety, his mind was distressed, his mind was distraught, and yet there was in the music, even though David offered it to God, a refreshment to his troubled mind. In the 17th and 18th century, physicians used to recommend music for mental patients. They had different kinds of music for different varieties of mental illness and today even some of that same kind of treatment goes on. Music has a tremendous effect. You have always heard the statement, “Music has the power to soothe the savage breast,” and that’s true in sense. It can quiet a troubled mind.

There is a corporation in America known as Muzak, and Muzak provides what is called non-entertainment music for industry. For example, when you go to the dentist’s office, you wonder why you choose one dentist over another dentist, it isn’t his drill, it isn’t his smile, it could be his music. The music has a tremendous ability to induce within you a quietness of mind. That is a studied thing. The people in the Muzak Corporation are not primarily musicians, they are behavioral scientists, and they have determined what makes you feel comfortable in the dentist’s chair. Same thing is true in the doctor’s office. The same thing is true in a factory or a plant. They will guarantee to an employer that if he puts Muzak music into his assembly plant, they will produce more products in less time. There are even percentage figures they can prove.

Additionally, they have found that in stores where they play it, there is a measurable increase in purchasing because of the music. Your mind is literally untroubled or unscrambled by certain kinds of music. Many of you when you get on the freeway after work and you get into all of that mish-mash will turn on something like KBIG because it is absolutely soothing music as opposed to the madhouse going on around you. And if you just listen to rock music today, you’ll know why we have so many psychologically ill people. That kind of music has a direct effect upon upsetting you, scrambling you.

Dr. Jay Keenan, the president of Muzak, says this, and I quote: “Unlike drugs, music affects us psychologically and physiologically without invading the blood stream. Research has indicated the inherent quality of music to influence” – listen to this – “our metabolism, our heartbeat, and our pulse. Muzak Corporation has made a unique specialization in non-entertainment applications of music as it relates to behavioral sciences. The subtle influence of music has been harnessed in programs providing a controlled stimulus for people at work” end quote. They know what they’re doing to people’s minds. It has a very obvious effect on productivity, better sales, makes happier people. Music affects our thinking.

In the 17th century, there was a very famous German scientist and doctor by the name of Athanasius Kircher who studied how music affects us physically, and he was the one who discovered if you put water on the rim of a glass and run your finger around, you can make different sounds. He did further study to find out that music causes a reverberation of the air around the body and can cause a variation in the flow of the body fluids whether blood, saliva, lymph fluid, or whatever. You can

actually affect with consonance, dissonance, he said, tempo and pitch. You can affect nerves, muscles, and so forth, as well as the pulse, the heartbeat, the whole thing.

You might be interested to know – if you've ever heard, there's a musically piece called the Tarantella. The Tarantella was originally written under the idea that because of the way it was constructed, it would have the effect of extracting the poison of a tarantula from somebody who'd been bitten. Now, they actually believed that that's what the Tarantella would do. You get somebody bitten by a tarantula, play that, and it would affect him by having the poison leave his body. I'm not too sure I buy that, but it just gives you an idea of through the ages how people have seen the impact of music. They are using music now in direct application to certain recovery processes in hospitals. Two patients, same disease, same basic diagnosis, same basic prognosis, one put into a music kind of program, the other not. The one with music will recover faster, better than the other, under certain circumstances. Music affects the physical body.

And then it can have a spiritual effect. Saul was not only refreshed and made well, but it says "and the evil spirit departed from him," and I think that says it can have a spiritual effect, too. And I'm not saying that if you've got evil spirits, play the right tune and they'll leave. I'm not trying to advocate that, but what I am saying is I believe music can have a spiritual ministry in healing somebody's spiritual hurt, don't you? Oh, I've known it to do that in my life many times. You know, I may be down in the dumps about something and I'll sit down and listen to some beautiful rendition of "I'd Rather Have Jesus Than Anything," and it has a tremendous effect upon my spiritual thoughts. So though music is offered to God, it has a tremendous residual effect to us. God has given it as a wonderful gift. And when it's used properly, it can be refreshment to the mind and healing to the body and restoration to the spirit.

All right, so it's important. Let's go back to Ephesians. Now we've got a fourth question to ask: If we are to make this kind of music and if it's so wonderful as it's offered to God and has a wonderful effect to us, with what do we do it? What is acceptable? I remember when somebody wrote an article about our church and criticized us because we had a guitar played in the church. We actually went that far to have a guitar played in the church. Somebody plucked a string. And I remember that this was a big article and everybody was upset about it, saying we were definitely a liberal church because we had a guitar. Well, who says what we can do? Who says what are the acceptable things? Watch this, this is really, really fabulous.

First, there's a general statement in verse 19. The first word is what? Speaking. You know what that word is in Greek? Lale. You know what it comes from? La-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la, just la-de-da. It's an onomatopoeic word in that sense; it sounds like what it means, la-la-la-la, it's just sound, that's all. Lale, just the tongue, la-la-la, see. It's just the movement of the tongue. When the tongue moves, it goes la-la-la-la, see, that's it. That's what the word means. It is any sound. In fact, you know, originally, the earliest meaning we can find for it is to chirp. And it is used frequently in classical Greek

to speak of the chatter of birds. It is also used of the babble of small children.

The other night we had a little guy at our house and I was home, sitting there and kind of watching him for an hour or so, and he was sitting on the floor and it was really kind of funny. He was just going la-la-la-la-la-la just la-la-la. Well, that's what the word lale basically comes from, the babble of small children, the chatter of birds. It is even used of the sounds of animals, the grunts and the groans of the animals and the little noises they make. It is used of the noise of a grasshopper and a cricket in classical Greek. In other words, it means sounds.

Have you ever seen a little children's group come up and one kid's got sandpaper and one kid's got two sticks and somebody else got a little triangle and somebody else got a little shaker and they just make noise, that's just sounds. Well, that's the way the word lale would be used. For example, it's used in Revelation 4:1 where it says, "the trumpet speaks" It's the sound of a trumpet. It is used often in classical Greek of the sound of musical instruments, harps, horns, drums, everything. It is used in Revelation 10:4 of thunder, "the voice of thunder" and "thunder makes a sound." Now, watch this: What he's saying is, "Spirit-filled people make noise." And that's right what it says in the Old Testament. "Make a joyful" – what? – "noise to the Lord." It's a very broad category.

The point is this: any sound offered to the Lord from a Spirit-filled heart in the right context, you see. Could be a guitar, could be a violin, could even be a drum, could be a harp, could be a horn, could be a clarinet, a flute, a reed instrument, could be all these things. And tonight when you come, there'll be 45 or 50 of them up here, all playing all these things and all speaking among ourselves unto the Lord. All the sounds. Have you ever thought how God has invented all these incredible sounds? What would it be, a world without music? What would it be? I mean can you imagine if we couldn't sing, if the human voice was exactly like this and it went like this all the time and we talked like R2D2, or whatever that thing is, and we just talked like a computer-talk all the time. It's so impersonal and nobody would bother to hear us for more than ten minutes or their ears would be ringing. But God has made us able to go up and down and all over the scale to keep people's interest in that way, see.

The point is sounds can glorify God, all kinds of sounds. We are to make sounds from our hearts to His praise. And for a little child, you know – and I don't like to use our own family as an illustration but little Melinda just – she makes me laugh because she's got this habit of getting up in the morning before everybody else. We all get up about 6:00 or 6:15 but Melinda gets up about 5:30. She does the same thing almost every morning: gets out of bed, sit in the middle of the floor, turns her little light on and gets her books. She has a whole lot of Bible story books, that's all she knows. We've read them to her since she was born practically and she starts through the books.

And she reads herself the stories. She can't read a word but she makes up a story according to the pictures, which is better because she can make up a different story every day from the same pictures and it keeps her interested. So she just makes up stories and invariably she'll sing little songs. And

she'll chirp and she'll kind of make noises and hum. And one morning she came in and she said, "Dad, dad, listen," and she whistled. And I said, "Honey, you can whistle." She said, "Yeah." And now she has a new way of making sounds. And I think the Lord is honored when a little child sits on a floor and tells himself or herself a story about Jesus and hums and chirps and whistles. I think God is involved in being praised when out of our hearts rise the sounds, whatever they are, that are to His praise.

But He gets very specific. Look at verse 19. What kind of sounds? Two kinds. First, singing – at the end of verse 19, we'll come back to the other part – singing. Secondly, making melody. Now, these are the two ways. I want to show you what they are. Singing is from the word *ad* in Greek; it means to sing with the voice. That's one way to make music, sing with your voice. Nothing wrong with somebody singing with a voice. It's wonderful. Somebody stands here and sings a solo from their heart unto the Lord, that's a wonderful thing. There's nothing wrong with that. I know some places that believe a choir is wrong, you shouldn't have a choir. Why? There were choirs all through the Bible. For those people who sing skillfully to sing as unto the Lord is a wonderful thing. He says we are to sing with our voice. And you may not have a very good one, that doesn't matter, you are still to sing with your voice. Or you may have a very good one, you are still to sing with your voice as unto the Lord.

I really believe and I don't know about – some of you know more about music than I do, but I believe the human voice is the most beautiful instrument ever made. It has the most flexibility. I mean there's nothing like it. It's just incredible. The human voice with this glorious flexibility. Maybe the violin comes as close to it as anything can. But the human voice with the highs and the lows and all of the things that it can do and the flexibilities and the glory of that human voice. God has given us an incredible tool for praising Him.

And, you know, you don't have to stand up here to do it, you can do it anywhere you are. And God can be more glorified in that little song you sing to the Lord out of your voice than the voice of the greatest basso profundo in the world who's not singing out of a Spirit-filled heart. Some people think, "Well, if you don't come across the platform, you don't get a chance to use your singing for the Lord." People have said to me, you know – good people, but they say, "You know, I have a voice and the Lord has given me a wonderful talent and I feel like I should be singing in church." Well, my response to that is, "Is your gift in order for you to sing at us or to glorify God?"

If you glorify God with your talent then just glorify God all you want, sing till your heart's content and let God be praised. You don't have to do it here any more than all of you that are good carpenters have to bring across a bench and say, "Look what I do" and walk down the other side. You don't have to do that. Some of you make great pie. We don't have 18 mothers up here showing off pies saying, "Look what I can do." You don't have to do that. Just make your pie, let your family enjoy it, and thank the Lord for the talent. If you have ability to sing, get in your shower and sing till your heart's content.

Sing with a group of people in a Bible study. Sing with your family. Just sing unto the Lord.

It isn't – you know, I remember Dr. Criswell saying he had so many people in his church wanting to sing solos, he didn't know what to do with them all so he figured he'd have solo night. And he said, "Anybody who wants to sing a solo can sing one verse of anything they want this one night" and he just paraded them by the platform, every one of them, got rid of all of it in one shot. You don't have to sing in front of everybody, but if you're filled with the Spirit, you have a right to sing.

Secondly, making melody, and I just want to just mention this briefly. "Making melody" is an unfortunate translation because there's something rich here. We have some churches in America who have taught that musical instruments are sinful and there are not to be musical instruments in the New Testament church. But this verse really sets that aside because the word making melody is psall. Psall or p-sall, from which we get "psalm." It's here psallontes. But what it means is to pluck. The root meaning is to pluck and it was even used of plucking a bow string when you shot an arrow, you know, you take it with two fingers and pluck it, fire it. It's to pluck. Later it came to pluck a harp. Psall meant to pluck a harp.

Down through the years, then, the word came to mean to play a musical what? Instrument. So you know what he's saying? There's two ways to make sounds: with the voice and with what? Instruments. That's what he is saying – it's beautiful, psall, to play an instrument. The piano is a stringed instrument. The organ used to be a wind instrument; now it's electronic to reproduce the sounds of the wind instrument at a lot cheaper price. There are horns, like you heard Rufus this morning. Tonight you'll hear them all. Listen, God can be praised in instrumental music. God can be glorified if the heart is right, even though there are no words, even though there is no particular message, as we call it in a song. Just the melody in its beauty in its magnificence and its harmony and its meter and its rhythm and all of the wonder of how God has created music can be to Him a great praise.

By the way, there's going to be instrumental music at the Rapture, a trumpet solo. There is going to be instrumental music all through the tribulation. The trumpets are going to – God really loves trumpets. Oh, when I hear Rufus play that trumpet this morning and play it loud like that, God loves that stuff. I'm just going to suggest to the Lord that Rufus and Johnny Zell would be good guys to use when everything sort of comes toward the end. But God is pleased with music that comes from instruments that are played by people in their hearts. You can whistle to the Lord, you can hum, the littlest noises of a child. The other time, Wednesday, two Wednesdays ago, I think, we had the children up here singing. Those things were praises to the Lord. And here were the children ringing their little bells to the Lord. You see, all of this is praise to God musically. How wonderful it is that God has given us this tremendous expression.

And how, finally, how are we to frame our music? Three ways, he says: psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Now, these are simple, I'm not going to take any time with them. Psalms, simply from psalmos, refers mainly to the Old Testament Psalms. The word is used of other things. It sometimes is used of anthems to God. It uses itself in broad categories, but it's interesting to me that Luke uses it exclusively to refer to the Psalms. So whenever you run across it in Luke's writings, he has in mind the Psalms, which tends to indicate to me that that was its predominant significance, the idea of psalming, singing the Old Testament songs. Now, we don't sing as many Psalms as we ought to today. I think something the church has lost with the advent of the hymnal and all of the things where people want copyright and they want to write songs and so forth and so on, we've kind of left out a lot of the Psalms. And I've really been encouraged lately to talk with Jack and to really kind of ask the Lord to help us to get more and more. Now, we sing some. On Sunday nights we sing Psalm 19 or Psalm 5 and we hear and sing Psalm 23, you know, and many other things like that. The choir sings many anthems that are right out of the Psalms. But maybe we ought to sing the Psalms more often. You know, there are many groups that sing the Psalms. I have some hymnals of nothing but the Psalms. That's what the early church sang, the Psalms.

Now, let me just tell you that the Psalms basically spoke of the nature and the work of God. We have many hymns that do that. We have sort of new Psalms, they're not the inspired Psalms of the Hebrew text but those that lift up and glorify God. The Psalms were those things that praised the nature and the work of God.

Then there were hymns, humnos. It literally means a song of praise. But if we are to make a distinction, it seems to me that this concept of hymn is frequently connected with the work of Jesus Christ. In Colossians 1, we have a great hymn. I believe that that whole section of Colossians 1 is a hymn where it says, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who's made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints and light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, who's translated us to the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sin. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation, for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible and invisible." There are many scholars that believe that's an early church hymn. And it is a hymn raised to Jesus Christ. There are others who believe that Philipians also, in chapter 2, is a hymn to Christ. Hymns were then, especially, it seems, suited to be directed at the redemptive work of Christ.

So psalms, to the character and work of God, hymns, to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. And finally, spiritual songs were like testimonies. Songs – simply a broad term, songs, but songs spiritual, about spiritual things. Let me show you what I mean. A psalm, that would be to hear a great rendition of the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord Is My Shepherd." That would be a Psalm. Or maybe even a modern-day hymn like "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" would be a more modern kind of psalm. And then there would be hymns. Hymns such as "The Old Rugged Cross," which speaks of the redemptive work of Christ. And then there would be spiritual songs such as "O How He Loves You and Me" or "I'd Rather

Have Jesus Than Anything,” something that speaks of a personal response of testimony.

All of these things, whether they're great hymns about God or whether they're the songs of the cross and the redemption of Christ or whether they're the great recitations of testimony, all of them are the expressions of a Spirit-filled heart, and beloved, listen: Whether it's played or sung, if the heart is right, it pleases God. And again I say, when you're Spirit-filled, there's going to be a joy that breaks forth in song, a joy that breaks forth in music.

You know, we face a real crisis in Christian music today. Many people are using music with Jesus' name to make money. Many people are using music with Jesus' name to get famous. Many are singing whose hearts are not right. Many are writing songs using unbiblical thoughts and untrue theology. Many are using modes of music that are so obviously expressions of the world's life that they drag Jesus down to the level of the world. They are sort of like Simon Magus, you know. They try to get the Holy Spirit for personal gain but they just wind up being corrupters. But on the other hand, don't ever think for a minute that there isn't the real and the true music. Wherever there is a counterfeit, there'll always be a real, right? People don't counterfeit things that aren't valuable. If there's a counterfeit, there's a real.

And I want to close with this thought: As we sing the real music out of really Spirit-filled hearts, you know what we're doing? And this is incredible. Look with me at Hebrews 2:12, just this one word and we're done. Hebrews 2:12 says this – and this is Jesus talking, this is Jesus talking to the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ speaking to the Father – listen to what He said – absolutely incredible – He says, “I” – He's talking to the Father now – “I will declare thy name unto my brethren” – and there He refers to the church, the believers – “in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” Do you know who the greatest solo singer in the universe is? Who is it? Jesus. And you know what just knocks me over – I can't believe it – He says, “In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.” The point is this: When my heart is filled with the Spirit and I am singing with a Spirit-filled heart, Jesus says, “It will really be Me singing My praise to the Father through you.” That tremendous?

You know, that's just another way that God has chosen to use us as channels for Christ to do His work. I know Christ loves the Father and I know Christ would sing the Father's praises from the beginning of eternity throughout eternity. I know Christ would praise the Father at all times, and here He says, “And Father, I will sing that praise through Your people.” And so as my heart is filled with the Spirit, as the joy of the Spirit wells up within me and I offer my songs of praise and thanks to God, as I sing out of the joy of my heart, it is Jesus Christ, the living reality of Christ, singing through me. What a thought. What a thought. And what a responsibility. For when I quench the Spirit, I quench the song of Christ to the Father in my life. Let's pray.

Lord, it's so good to know that You use us in this most wonderful way. Use us, Lord, today this way. May our hearts be filled with song. And tonight as we sing and play and as we join in, may we hear

the voice of Jesus singing and playing His praise to the Father through us, for His glory. Amen.

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