

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

### **Spirit-Filled Music**

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18-19

Code: 90-377

Well, let's take the Word of God and open to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5 verses 18 and 19 tell us this, "And do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord."

This is Spirit-filled music. Certainly we're all aware that music dominates our culture, aren't we? Rarely is anyone away from it. If you're in the car, music is playing. If you're at home, music is playing, on the radio, the television, stereos, CD players, MP3s, Ipods, etc. If you go into a store, music is playing. If you go into a restaurant, music is playing. You see people walking down the street, riding bicycles, jogging with ear plugs listening to music. Music is a powerful emotional stimulator.

Truthfully, music is a gift from God. It's part of His creation. And what a wonderful gift it is. It is a common grace. That's an expression that theologians have used for centuries to describe things that are good gift from God given to everybody, common grace like the rain falling on the just and the unjust. Music is a common grace. It is a gift from God for everyone to enjoy. It is a benefit to mankind. It is a ready means to quiet the troubled soul, to settle the anxious heart, to give expression to strong feelings when words are not enough. It was music that calmed the troubled heart of Saul in 1 Samuel. In Ecclesiastes the troubled king looking at life and concluding that everything is vanity and nothing but vanity, says, "I gathered around me male and female singers." Music is a comfort. Music is an encouragement.

It can be high and noble. It can be beautiful and majestic. Music can elevate the soul and emotions that are honorable and pure and lofty and good. Or it can be base and crass, ugly, degrading, catapulting the soul downward into feelings that are dishonorable and impure, and just about anything in between.

But as the world gets worse, as evil men grow worse and worse, the world carries its music with it. As a fallen world catapults deeper and deeper into corruption, headed toward the day when the Lord comes back to destroy this world and to create a new heaven and a new earth, music degenerates with humanity. Therefore, music in our day is dominated by a more degenerate kind of society than years ago. The degenerate, in fact, seemingly, the more degenerate people are the more impact they have in music. Music has become a settling ground for degenerate people. Not just music, just about

all the arts, but certainly music has degenerated in our culture both in its composition and its performance and its personnel. And it seems that in most cases if you want music that is beautiful and noble and lofty and pure and good and intelligent and magnificent, you have to go back in time to a less sensual era, a less blatantly corrupt era.

If you were here 30 years ago you might have heard the choir sing what they sang today. If you were here 30 years ago you might have heard the congregation sing, "There is a fountain filled with blood." The music that the church sings is timeless and its truth is eternal. We go back even in the culture to the classics because we want a nobler, loftier, more elevated experience in music. The further we go forward in our culture, the more base it becomes.

And I submit to you that nothing that you do is more serious than worship...nothing. Worship is the highest expression of a believer's life and therefore the music that accompanies your worship should be the highest and the noblest and the loftiest and the best. In all cases with secular music, it reflects the attitude of the society in the time it was produced. But that's not true with our music. The music of the redeemed expresses the unchanging truth of the Word of God, that transcends culture. We don't succumb to the ever-increasing corruption of a fallen world displayed in its music. The music of the redeemed is different. It is reflective of the truth of God that never changes and I think it displays the elements that are true of God...order, design, intelligence. The music that is reflective of God is systematic, sequential, poetic, harmonic, rhythmic, possesses resolution. It expresses the unchangeable reality of God and His truth.

Salvation has given us a new song and it is a timeless song. I have the distinct feeling that when we get to heaven we're going to be singing the same things we're singing here. Salvation has given us God's truth and with it music consistent with that truth, consistent with His nature. It is for us more than a common grace, it is a spiritual blessing given only to the elect, only to the redeemed.

Now before we look at the verses that are the text for today, I just would like to comment on some misconceptions...maybe correct them. First of all, there is the misconception that music is worship. For a lot of people, you say we're going to worship, automatically that means music. But music is not worship. That is not true. Music is a means to express worship. It's not the only means, it's not even the most important means. The most important means to express worship is obedience. And even connected to that obedience is love. But music is a way to express worship. It gives wings to us. It elevates us. It lifts us when words are not enough. And it allows us to borrow somebody else's words when our own are not as prosaic as our hearts wish they were.

Another misconception is that music produces worship, motivates worship, induces worship. That is to say that worship is an emotional experience and the right kind of music will whip up that emotion. That is true. Music will play on your emotion. Music will stir your emotion. But that is not necessarily worship. Music will give expression to love, it will give expression to adoration, it will give expression

to honor, it will give expression to worship, but it doesn't produce it. What produces it is the truth in the heart and the work of the Spirit of God.

People sometimes ask me about musical preferences and I will just tell you this, I don't...I don't need music to that whips up my emotions. I am content with any kind of music that allows me to give expression to the truth that I believe. I want to think about what I'm singing.

Patricia and I visited a church recently where I was trying my best to worship but I was so blasted and bombarded by smoke and mirrors and flashing lights and spinning wheels and jumping people that it was impossible for me to worship. I was so distracted, I couldn't keep my attention in any direction. I don't need to have my senses blasted. My worship comes from the truth that I love and that I understand. I don't need emotion to induce that, I need emotion to respond to that.

Another misconception is that music must appeal to the non-believer, or they're going to get bored with our worship. That also is a misconception. I want to say this in a gracious way, but the music that you hear among the people of God is not designed for the unbeliever...not designed for the unbeliever. We're glad you're here, glad you're listening, don't expect you to like it particularly, we would assume that it's not your favorite kind of music and that you're probably fairly bored with it and if certainly you're not bored with the music, by now you're bored with me. I understand that. The songs of the redeemed belong to the redeemed. I don't say that in an unkind way, but you're on the outside looking in. The songs of the redeemed never in Scripture are said to be for any direct evangelistic purpose. There's an indirect effect, when you see a worshiping group of people who with all their heart love their God and love their Savior and are pouring out their hearts in praise, that has an impact, but it's the truth of the transformation demonstrated in the worship that has the impact. There's no mandate for the church to make its music appealing to the sons of Satan. It's our music.

So, music is not worship. Music does not induce worship. Music is never intended for the satisfaction of non-worshippers. It is the gift of God to believers to give expression to their love and their gratitude to the God of their salvation. That's why the Bible calls it a new song...a new song. The world, as I said, is filled with music, it's common grace. But we have a new song. In fact, if you go back to the Psalms, we talked about the Psalms being Israel's hymn book, the word "new" appears many times in the Psalms. More with the word "song" than any other substantive. As a new people, we have a new song. Our music has dramatically changed from the music of the world.

In Psalm 33 we read, verse 1, "Sing for joy in the Lord, O you righteous ones. Praise is becoming to the upright, give thanks to the Lord with a lyre, sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings, sing to Him a new song, play skillfully with a shout of joy." God wants music that is loud, skillful, joyous and expresses the new song. And what is the new song? It's the song of the redeemed, it's the song of the new life, it's the song of salvation.

Psalm 40, a personal testimony from the Psalmist, David, "I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm." This is basically a testimony of His salvation. "He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God." Ours is a new song.

Psalm 96:1, "Sing to the Lord a new song." Psalm 98:1, "O sing to the Lord a new song." Psalm 149:1, I read earlier, "Sing to the Lord a new song." Isaiah 42:10, the prophet says, "Sing to the Lord a new song."

We sing a new song because we are new creations. Our music is not like the old song. It's not like the songs that are the common grace songs. It's the song of joy and praise and thanks for the gift of salvation, the forgiveness of sin, and the promise of eternal life.

And it's always been a part of the worship of God's people. If you go all the way back, for example, in to 2 Chronicles chapter 29, the wonderful story there of Hezekiah, finally a good king in Judah, and Hezekiah comes back and the Lord uses him to bring a wonderful restoration of worship. In chapter 29 of 2 Chronicles and verse 20, "King Hezekiah arose early, assembled the princes of the city, went to the house of the Lord." Going to restore worship. And there are animals brought for sin offering, the slaughter of the bulls, verse 22, the priests took the blood, sprinkled it on the altar, slaughtered the rams, sprinkled the blood, slaughtered the lambs, sprinkled the blood. The same with the male goats, laid their hands on them, the priests slaughtered them, verse 24, purged the altar.

And then verse 25, "He stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with harps, with lyres according to the command of David and Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for the command was from the Lord through His prophets." The Lord commands music, music in response to the initiation of worship based upon forgiveness through a sacrifice. "The Levites...verse 26...stood with the musical instruments of David and the priests with the trumpets. Hezekiah gave the order to offer the burnt offering on the altar. When the burnt offering began, the song to the Lord also began with the trumpets accompanied by the instruments of David, king of Israel. While the whole assembly worshiped, the singers also sang and the trumpets sounded. All this continued until the burnt offering was finished. Now at the completion of the burnt offerings, the king and all who were present with him bowed down and worshiped. Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and Asaph, the seer, who both wrote Psalms. So they sang praises with joy and bowed down and worshiped."

Singing is not worship but it accompanies worship, it is a means of worship. This is the worship of the redeemed. Our music is not like the old song. And music was a critical part of Old Testament life. According to 1 Chronicles 23:5 there were about, I suppose, nearly 40 thousand people serving in the temple, four thousand of them were in the music department...one in ten. In Exodus 15 verses 20 and

21, Miriam, the sister of Moses, led a woman's chorus. In 1 Samuel 10:5, the prophets made up a male chorus with instruments. In 1 Chronicles 13:8 and 1 Chronicles 15:28, the congregation sang praise to God with instruments, it says with all their might, loudly, as the Lord likes it. First Chronicles 16, David made a tabernacle choir. There was a temple choir, as I said, of four thousand, according to 1 Chronicles 23:5. And when the children of Israel were taken into captivity in Babylon, the temple was destroyed, they came back, you remember, under Zerubbabel, they rebuilt the temple, Ezra 2:65 says that when the temple was rebuilt, they reconstituted the choir. Smaller temple this time, smaller choir, only 200 in the choir.

But the revival that came when they returned from captivity is recorded in Nehemiah, as you know, chapter 8 on through chapter 12, had a great revival. The Word of God was read. Restoration came and it tells us in the twelfth chapter of Nehemiah that the revival featured an antiphonal loud singing...antiphonal means people singing back and forth. This was the ultimate sort of consummational praise in response to the revival. The Old Testament talks about all kinds of stringed instruments, azore(?), dulcimer, harp, sakbut(?) which is like a lyre, drums, timbrel, bells, woodwinds, trumpets, clarinets, flutes, pipes, rams horns...music was a main means of expressing worship.

If we look forward, as we just looked back, to the Millennial Kingdom, Ezekiel gives us a description of worship in the Millennium in the time the thousand-year Kingdom when the Lord comes back and reigns on the earth, there is going to be a great time of worship in the rebuilt temple. It's going to be a monumental choir that is going to take place there. In fact, I'm not going to read it to you, but in the fortieth chapter of Ezekiel, verses 44 to 47, there is a choir loft that is described there that could hold four thousand people. So a four-thousand boy's choir in the Old Testament, a four-thousand boys choir to come in the great time of Millennium. In between, in this period of time, the New Testament, for example, makes much of music. Matthew 26:30, remember Jesus gathered with His disciples in the Upper Room for the final Passover, instituted the Lord's Table, and it says, "And after they had sung a hymn, He went out into the Mount of Olives. From there on the church sings. We have even some of the elements of the hymns they sung scattered throughout the epistles of the New Testament, they're illustrations of the music of the church in Acts 16...1 Corinthians 14.

And then you come to the book of Revelation, chapter 5, chapter 14, chapter 15, and you go to heaven in those scenes and there's music in heaven as the saints are singing, "Worthy is the Lamb." Music has always been a part, always will be a part of our worship. It is a wondrous blessing from God, a gift. And we will enjoy music throughout eternity, singing the songs of redemption.

Well, all of that leads us to our text, so let's look at it. Just three points I want to make. First, as a contrast...a contrast, verse 18, "Do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit." If that seems to you as a strange contrast, I understand that. Why would he contrast being filled with the Spirit with being drunk?

Well, the reason is because in the ancient pagan religions, they believed that the way you communed with the deities was through losing control. The idea was that you become drunk, you engage yourself in a kind of deep drunkenness and this will lift you, this will elevate you to commune with deities. You add to that indulgence at a gross level in terms of food, gluttony and vomiting in a pit in the middle of the floor and then going back and refilling yourself, and you add to that temple prostitutes with whom orgies are conducted and you have a description of the typical Gentile, pagan, religious experience.

It is total abandonment to all things sensual. Total abandonment of all control, to a substance that causes you to plunge deep into a stupor of unthinking, irresponsible evil. That, they taught, was how you worship. That's how you transcend the mundane. That's how you commune with the deities. In the sixties, Timothy Leary tried to sell that saying that drugs induced an elevated state of consciousness in which you could commune with God. That's a very old belief.

Peter faced it in his ministry and so he wrote in 1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 3, "For the time already passed is sufficient for you." In other words, you need to change your lives. "Now that you've come to Christ, no longer living for the lust of men, but the will of God," verse 2, "you've had enough of the desire of the Gentiles." You've had enough of the old life.

What was it like? "Having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries." All of that was one package deal. When you went to worship an idol, it involved sensuality, lust, drunkenness, carousing and of course the abomination of worshiping a false God. You've got to stop this. He says, "In all this, they...the Gentiles...are surprised that you do not run with them with the same excesses of dissipation." There's that same word dissipation that was in Ephesians. A drunkenness led to dissipation. They wanted the dissipation. They wanted the drunkenness to lead to the dissipation because the deception was this is how you commune with the supernatural. And the truth is, they did commune with the supernatural but the ones they were communing with were demons. That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians you can't come to the table of the Lord and go to the table of demons.

False religion was demonic. They did touch the supernatural, but they touched the supernatural at the demonic point. Frenzied immoral drunkenness, gluttony, corrupt sexual behavior, all supposedly inducing communion with deities, did nothing but plunge them deeper into Satanism. Paul says we don't do that. We don't do that. You're going to be controlled, not by substance like alcohol, you're going to be controlled by being filled with the Holy Spirit. There's a clear contrast between false religion and true religion, the religion of the flesh, the religion of the Spirit. The command is to be being, literally in the Greek, be being kept filled with the Spirit.

There's a lot of theology we could talk about with that but I won't take the time to do it at this point. Suffice it to say that being kept filled with the Spirit is a command for continuity. Some people think being filled with the Spirit is some kind of ecstatic experience that hits you here and there and hither and yon. Some people equate it with being slain in the Spirit, or launching off into some kind of tongues. That is not what this is talking about. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is compared to being filled with alcohol. When you're filled with alcohol, it controls you. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, He controls you. And this is not a some time experience, this is to be a way of life. If you were in a Gentile religion and involved in that kind of thing, you would drink yourself into oblivion and then you would eat yourself to the point where you would need to get rid of it and you would go and divest yourself of the food and the alcohol in your stomach and then you would go back again and fill up again and fill up again and fill up again and the history of these orgies is just unbelievable. And then you would engage in all kinds of corrupt immoral behavior because you were totally under the control of that substance.

We don't worship except under the control of the Holy Spirit. Being filled expresses the idea of permeation, being dominated to the point of control...that's the parallel. What fills, controls. And we are to be controlled in our worship by the Holy Spirit.

You know, the pagans were so used to seeing religion expressed in drunkenness and strange behavior that on the day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2 when the Spirit of God came, it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in languages. What was the response of the people around? Acts 2:13, "They said, they're drunk." Because the normal explanation for unusual religious behavior was that they were drunk. Of course, on the day of Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the basic spiritual reality that defines what it is to live your Christian life. This is not some once-in-a-while deal. This is not some repeatable, ecstatic experience in which you speak in tongues or fall over backwards. This is just how you live your life. Every Christian possesses the Holy Spirit. Every believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:19. If you have Christ, you have the Holy Spirit, Romans 8 and 9. The Spirit has come to dwell in you, 1 Corinthians 12:13. You've been sealed with the Spirit of God.

The point is, since He lives in you, you are to yield to His control. It doesn't mean having a wild, ecstatic experience, some kind of mystical trauma, some kind of ecstatic speech. It's very thoughtful, it's very controlled, it's very orderly, it's very reasonable. And it is to be a constant reality. Filled in the sense of permeation.

Now to better understand that, the word "filled" is used, pleroo, to speak of winds filling a sail that moves the ship. The word is used very often in the New Testament in a dominating sense, like in John 16:6, it says He was filled with sorrow which means that it just took over, no more balance, or Luke 5:26, filled with fear, or Luke 6:11, filled with madness, or Acts 6:5, filled with faith, or Acts 5:3, filled with Satan. It's talking about permeation and control. And the command of Scripture is that we

are to be filled, permeated, controlled by the Holy Spirit.

How do you do that? How do you do that? You...do you pray some prayer to the Holy Spirit to come? No, because He's already there. How do you do that?

Well the answer comes in a parallel passage in Colossians 3, so turn to Colossians 3. This is very practical. If you look at Colossians 3, in one verse, verse 16, the verse ends...I want you to see the back half of the verse to begin with. It says, "Admonishing one another with Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to the Lord." That's a direct parallel of Ephesians 5:19, right? We just read it. "Speaking to yourselves in Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with melody in your heart to the Lord." That's Ephesians 5:19. Here Colossians 3:16, "Be...same thing...Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your heart to the Lord."

So the results are the same in Ephesians and Colossians, but the means are different. In Ephesians it says, "Be filled with the Spirit." Here it says, "Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom." So you get the same results from two things. One, being filled with the Spirit...two, letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Conclusion, they're the same. To be filled with the Spirit, to be dominated by the Spirit, to be controlled by the Spirit means to be aware of what the Word says and obedient to it. We're not talking about a mystical experience here. We're talking about simply understanding richly, plousios, equal to abundantly the Word that has come from Christ. You want to be filled with the Spirit? That simple, you have to know what the Spirit wills. Right? If you want the Spirit to control your life, you have to know what is the Spirit's will. To know the Spirit's will, you need simply to know what the Spirit has revealed in Scripture.

We're commanded to live under the control of the Holy Spirit and the only way we can do that is to be obedient to the will of the Spirit. The only way we can be obedient to the will of the Spirit is to know what His will is. And so we turn to the Word. Worship is inseparable from holiness. Holiness is inseparable from obedience. Obedience is inseparable from knowledge. Knowledge is inseparable from Scripture. You know the Scripture, it leads to knowledge. Knowledge leads to obedience, obedience leads to holiness, and that's what it means to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. That's a life that worships, whether there's any music or not, that's a life that worships.

Now that brings us to the issue that's on our minds...back to Ephesians 5. The contrast and then the command to be filled with the Spirit, dominated by the Word, living in obedience to the Word, what are the consequences? How do you know when you're doing this?

The consequences, first of all, are given clearly in verse 19, "Speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." The first consequence is music...music.



There's a second consequence in verse 20, "Thankfulness." There's a third consequence in verse 21, "Submission to one another in the fear of Christ." But the first is music. There's a reason why Christians sing. We can't stop singing.

Now three words here carry the action, three verbs. Verbs always carry the action in any language, certainly that's true in Greek as well. Three verbs...speaking, singing, and making melody....speaking, singing and making melody. Speaking is a general word but it's the Greek word *laleo*. It actually means...it's an onomatopoeic word, that is its meaning is like its sound..la-la-la-la-leo. It's used of animals, it is used of the sounds of a baby, it is used of the chirping of birds primarily. Secondly it means to say or to speak. But it really could be simply translated "making sounds...making sounds." And further defining those sounds, we are making sounds to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs by singing and making melody.

And so what kind of sounds? The sounds of singing...we sing. We can't stop singing. The Greek verb is *ado*, to sing. Further defined, making melody from the verb *psallo* from which the word Psalm comes from. It literally means to sing to the accompaniment of an instrument, or to play an instrument. We play instruments, we sing to the accompaniment of those instruments. This is an expression of the Spirit-filled life. Vocal, instrumental music is the initial expression of the worship of a Spirit-filled believer.

How blessed have we been here, right? To come, filled with the Spirit, and to have one so gifted to lead us in the expression of that song. It's in our hearts to sing, we will sing forever around the throne of God. We have had a foretaste of that glory here in our church experience.

Now there are several features about our singing. Among whom do we sing? Verse 19, speaking to one another, to yourselves some translations put it, it refers to the believers. We sing to ourselves, we sing among ourselves is the best way to say it. It is a mutual ministry among the saints. It is not entertainment. It is not evangelistic. It is not for other people. It is among us. It is corporate worship.

By the way, the Roman Catholic Church robbed the church of this, of course, for a thousand years. And when the Reformers came back and rediscovered the gospel, they also started to write hymns, and even produced hymns for the people to sing for the first time in a thousand years.

In Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 12, there is a wonderful testimony given, "I will proclaim Your name to my brethren in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise." Our praise is sung in the midst of the congregation. It's for us, it's our music, it's our new song, it's our form, our means of worship.

From where does this song come? End of the verse. It says, "Singing and making melody with your heart," or "from your heart," or "in your heart." It comes from the heart. It's an overflow. It's a bubbling

over. Psalm 137 tells the story of the captivity of Israel. And Psalm 137 looks at their captivity from the musical perspective. Very interesting Psalm, listen... "By the rivers of Babylon, they're captive in Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion on the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps." No more singing. There was no song to sing. "For there our captives demanded of us songs. The Babylonians came and said, 'Sing.' Our tormentors said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion. We want to hear your music.' How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? They hung their harps on the tree limbs."

It has to come from the heart. They were not redeemed yet. Well, when they were redeemed and they went back to the land, as you remember, I said a little while ago, they had the great revival and the restoration of the land, the first thing they did was begin to sing. Amos 5, the prophet Amos said, "Stop your songs, your hearts aren't right." Sometimes Israel sang with an impure heart and sometimes they had no heart at all. But the kind of songs the Lord wants to hear are the songs that come from a pure heart.

To whom do we sing? To the Lord, end of verse 19, to the Lord. When you come to church, you've got to understand this, this is not a performance going on up here with the musicians and you're not the audience. God is the audience and we are all singing to Him. You understand that? When you sing a hymn, you sing it to Him. "O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come." Who you talking to? You're talking to God. When you're singing, "There's a fountain filled with blood," to whom are you singing that? You're singing that to the one who gave His blood for you. Whether you're singing it as a solo or a trio or a congregation, it's all directed at Him, He's the audience in the worship. It's to Him. Everything is, as Bach put it, solo deo gloria, for the glory of God. And so we ask the question about all music, will it honor God? Will it glorify God? If not, then we don't want to use it.

With what do we sing? Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. And I think while there's not a hard and fast difference between these, there are some distinctions in them and this is a way in which the Scripture...and it does it here and also in Colossians 3:16...can give us some breadth in our musical expression. Psalms, psalmos, could refer to the Old Testament Psalms, or any of those anthems that are directed at the greatness and the glory of the Trinity. Hymns, humnos, means a song of praise and generally related to salvation. So you have great anthems on the nature of God, and then you have songs of salvation.

And then you have spiritual songs, what are they? Likely referring to personal testimony. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me," that's a spiritual song. We sing great anthems about God. We sing the great songs of salvation and we give personal testimony to the spiritual work of God in our lives in songs of testimony.

What a privilege for us to have been doing this for the last 30 years because the Lord gave us Clayton to lead us, to lift us. Well, if you haven't read Pilgrim's Progress, it's not too late. Find an

edition of it and read it. Whenever John Bunyan describes Pilgrim coming out of a conflict, coming out of a dilemma, coming out of a disaster, coming out of desolation, being recovered, rescued from harm, it never says he was filled with the Spirit. It never says that. But 50 times in Pilgrim's Progress it says he went on his way singing...he went on his way singing.

We sing because we are filled with the Spirit and that's the immediate consequence.

Revelation 18:20 to 22 says that a day is coming when all music in the world will stop. Just think of that. That's Revelation 18. God says the music of the world will stop. Things will get so bad, so horrendous, so horrific that like the Jews who hung their harps on the willows in Babylon, the world's music will stop. That's an unbelievable thought. You just experienced the death of Michael Jackson and the bizarre outpouring of emotion in response to that and it wasn't because of him, because nobody could really understand him. It was because of the music. It's so seductive. There will come a time when all the music stops and just at the time when all the music of the world stops, the whole new heaven and new earth will be dominated by the new song, the song of the redeemed. Our will just be beginning when the world's comes to an end.

And when you get to heaven, I want to tell you a little about what's going to happen. Listen to Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God in your midst, the mighty one will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness." Isn't that amazing? We rejoice over Him with gladness? He's going to rejoice over us? He will rejoice over you with singing. Did you know that God is the ultimate soloist? Can you imagine getting to heaven and having God step up and sing a solo of joy to you? He will rejoice over you with singing because His own heart will be filled with joy to see you in His presence.

Spirit-filled music, not the music of the world, but the music that we will sing forever and one day God will even sing to us.

Father, we thank You again for another wonderful time this morning, thinking about all these things and many more things that come to mind. So grateful for the music that You've given us here in this church, grateful for all the wonderful good music, uplifting music. Our minds sweep back over Sundays and Sundays and Sundays, concerts and special events, our lives have been filled with the best of music. And You've given it to us as a gift through Your servant, Clayton Erb. We are deeply grateful and we express to You our gratitude. We even thank You for all the influences in his life, starting with his own parents and family and friends, and mostly the influence of the Spirit, for he being filled with Your Spirit could lead us by his own example. And so we thank You that we've even been able to worship You this morning and we thank You for what we look forward to ahead as we gather week in and week out and even in the middle of the week as we enjoy the wonderful expressions of music that give wings to our worship. We pray, Lord, for those who may not know the Savior, who are on the outside looking in for whom these songs are foreign songs. We would pray, Lord, that You would bring that person to the cross of Christ, that You would cause that sinner to repent and desire the salvation that only Christ can bring and that You would add one more voice to

the choir who sing the new song. We pray, Lord, that You would rescue those who are perishing as the hymn writer put it, that they would come to the Savior and receive salvation and sing the new song, the song of the redeemed that we will sing forever. This is an inexplicable gift of sovereign grace, we thank You for it. And all God's people said...Amen.

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