

Eph 5.18-21 Spirit-Filled Living

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- [0 : 0 0] If you've been to a variety of different churches, you've probably noticed that some churches do things in ways that are very different than other churches.
- And some churches, when you talk to them, they'll say that their focus is on worship. They say it's the worship that they're all about. So they're indicating that there's this particular part of the service that is their focus or that is worship.
- But in a worship service, is it just one section that's worship? Or is the singing of the word worship? Is the praying of the word worship? Is the preaching of the word worship?
- Is the administration of the sacraments worship? And so some churches will worship in ways that are very different than other churches. For example, let's take the singing of the word.
- Some will not have singing. Some will have singing but not to any instrumental accompaniment. Some will follow the Reformed who follow the practice of confessions, will follow the regulative principle of worship where they determine that it's what God's word says.
- [1 : 1 0] Others, the Lutherans, would follow the regulative principle of worship that worship according to whatever God's word doesn't say.
- So if God's word... Sorry, I'm mixing up. But not doing what God's word commands not to do. Others will not even really have any concern about what God's word says about how they worship.
- Some will, as parts of worship, have Harleys and zip lines and lights and large performances. And don't get me wrong, I don't have anything against motorcycles or zip lines, but there's a time and place for those things.
- And the worship of God is not the time and place for those things. So I want to ask you a couple of questions before we start to get that thought process in your mind to be thinking about.
- The first one is, who is the object of worship? And the second one is, who sets the terms of corporate worship?
- [2 : 1 8] So we're in Ephesians chapter 5, and keep your finger here. Our text, our focus this morning will be verses 18 to 21, and we'll engage this text and work through it.
- We'll read chapters 1 to 21, but again, our particular focus will be verses 18 to 21. Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.
- But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
- For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words.

For because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

[3 : 38] Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light. For whatever makes manifest is light.

Therefore, he says, Awake, you who sleep. Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

Speaking to one another in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father.

[4 : 44] In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submitting to one another in the fear of God. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the time that we have to consider the things in your word.

And I pray that you would illuminate your word to us. Help us to have a right understanding. A spiritually discerned understanding. I pray that you would speak to us.

I pray that you would use even me. That you would attend the preaching of your word by your Spirit. And make it effectual to the hearers. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So as I said, our focus this morning is going to be verses 18 to 21.

And our text before us, what this text is saying, is that Christians walking in wisdom manifest spirit-filled responses aligned to God's will.

Now, of course, as I'm sure you've probably memorized by now from hearing it so much, is the book of Ephesians, the first three chapters, is on orthodoxy or what you ought to believe. And then the last half, chapters 4 to 6, is on orthopraxy or right conduct.

[5 : 48] And as the Apostle Paul transitions from what you ought to believe to what you ought to do, he starts by saying walk worthy. And that walk worthy theme is picked up again in chapter 5.

Verses 3 to 7 is walk in love. Verses 8 to 14 is walk in light. And then verses 15 to 21 is walk in wisdom.

So our text, the section that we're in, is walk in wisdom. Now, our text, we can draw nine particular things out of it.

Those nine things is, there's a prohibition, illumination, meditation, edification, exaltation, adoration, gratitude, submission, and reverence.

Now, those three things, we can break into three main categories. The first one being controlling influence. The second being expressions of praise. And the third being orderly posture.

[6 : 57] So that's how we're going to examine our text and break it apart. So first of all, controlling influence. Controlling influence being a prohibition, illumination, and meditation.

So first of all, prohibition. Now notice in verse 18, it says, And do not be drunk with wine. Notice, this is not a prohibition against wine.

It's not saying, do not drink wine. It's not a prohibition of wine, but it's a prohibition of the abuse of the use of wine.

It's a prohibition against drunkenness, against intoxication. Now again, remembering that the context of our text is to walk in wisdom.

And wisdom matters, require the use and application of wisdom. And in the use of wisdom, not every circumstance is always the same. Different people have different personal decisions and different circumstances, whether it's based on past or family members.

[7 : 58] Different people will decide in the application of wisdom, different things. But what's important in every decision is that wisdom, the application of wisdom, or to walk in wisdom, is not trying to see how close I can get to sin without actually crossing the line.

It's not trying to find out where the line is for sin and seeing how close I can get to the line without actually going over it. That is not walking in wisdom. That is not seeking to do the will of the Lord.

Consider, for example, as a similarity, the young man in Proverbs 7, just happened to be hanging out at night down the street that leads to the adulterous woman's house.

So is the person who sets out to have as much to drink without officially being drunk. And then after drinking that much, having lowered inhibitions, saying, well, I'll just have one more.

Again, lowered inhibitions, and then I'll just have one more. One more drink, lowered inhibitions, one more drink. The issue in this case here is not the wine. It's not a prohibition against wine.

[9 : 08] The issue is the person's lack of a sense of the evil of sin. God's word prohibits drunkenness. Drunkenness is sin. Sin is evil.

Therefore, to commit sin is evil. So to be drunken is evil. And those who are regenerate, who are repentant, are to hate that which is evil, to hate sin.

Therefore, to have a hatred of that which is sin and to see it as such. It is a detestation of drunkenness and seeing it as evil. Instead of seeing it as good and trying to see how close I can get to it, it's seeing it as evil and living wisely.

So the problem is not the wine. The problem is in the heart that abuses the right use of wine. So two main things. The Christians have liberty to use wine in moderation.

But Christians are prohibited from being drunk. Now, substance abuse controls the mind and our sense of propriety.

[10 : 15] And leads to dissipation, squandering, and debauchery. You're probably familiar with the prodigal son in Luke 15, starting in verse 11. And the prodigal son, of course, he takes his inheritance and he goes away.

And the word that's used for what he does with his inheritance is the same word that's used here in our text for dissipation. Except in the prodigal son, the word that it uses is squandering.

Dissipation is squandering. So in the case of the prodigal son, he squandered or he wasted his inheritance in reckless living.

Or I might say in riotous living. So dissipation is reckless living that squanders, in the case of the prodigal son, his father's wealth.

And then also in the prodigal son later on, when he returns, you remember what his brother says when his brother sees what is happening. His brother describes the way in which the prodigal son has wasted or squandered his wealth in reckless living.

[11 : 19] He says in verse 30, 31, that he devoured his father's livelihood with harlots. Devouring.

So squandering, wasting, reckless living, devouring. The dissipation leads to squandering and debauchery, which is a stark contrast to being filled in the spirit.

Or to being filled with the triune God's presence in the spirit, which leads to self-control. And the other fruit of the spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness.

So let's do a quick comparison of being filled with wine to drunkenness and being filled in the spirit. Drunkenness or inebriation is disorderly, a squandered life, ingratitude, numbness, given to indulgence, and gratifying the flesh.

It is also a sign of those who are under judgment and condemnation. Christians, however, are to be well-ordered, make the best use of the time, giving thanks to God, sober-minded, self-controlled, and walking by the spirit.

[12 : 39] Christians are redeemed and set apart. Drunkenness darkens and brings disorder, confusion, and disorientates.

But the spirit illuminates and brings order, clarity, and reorientation, or reorientates. Drunkenness brings instability and sorrow, whereas the spirit brings self-control and joy.

So from the prohibition, we then see, do not be drunk. And then we have illumination, be filled with the spirit or be filled in the spirit.

Now, in our kind of post-modern age, we might hear that phrase being used in a way which is not intended by Scripture, in the context of charismatic chaos, where charismatics, hyper-charismatics, which typically is accompanied with health, wealth, and prosperity gospel, or new apostolic reformation, where there's this public charismatic, chaotic display, which they term or associate as being filled with the spirit, as though it's some secondary phase of spirituality, which sets those people apart as being more spiritual.

That is not what is in view. That is not what our text means by being filled in the spirit. What our text does mean is it means don't be under the influence of alcohol, but seek to be under the influence, presence, and power of the spirit.

[14 : 18] Not only that, but to have, to seek it with a greater thirst for the spirit, with a greater thirst than the drunkard thirsts for another drink. And being filled with the spirit comes to expression or manifestation in, as we see from our text, corporate edification in 19a, songs of adoration in 19b, thanksgiving in 20, and mutual submission in 20, 21.

Now, the church, in the spirit, as the new temple and priesthood in God's presence, so when we read the Old Testament and we see their visible understanding of what the temple is and God's particular dwelling with his people, when we understand the application of the New Testament, particularly in Ephesians 2, when we work through it about the spiritual temple, not a physical geographical temple, but the spiritual temple, with Christ as the cornerstone built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, namely the word of God, and built on top of that is living stones, that is, the believers filled in the spirit.

The living stones of the temple, believers filled with the spirit, manifest being filled in the spirit, corporately, so to one another, or horizontally, speaking to one another, doctrinally rich edification, as well as, so to one another, and to God, directed to God, vertically, so both horizontally and vertically, and praise and thanksgiving.

Now, God made us to praise him. We were made to praise God, but fallen mankind does not praise God. Fallen mankind does not naturally seek to praise God, but to praise self, or to seek worship and praise and things other than God.

But, being regenerated, being made new, we are given new natures, and enabled to praise God, but, yet, praising God is still not entirely natural, or second nature to us, is it?

[16 : 35] And the reason why is because our present expression of praise is still in the shadow of fallenness and corruption. It is not presently perfect and free because we are sinners learning to praise God.

Now, in light of this, praise involves intentionality. It's not just going to happen by second nature. It's not just going to happen naturally.

It requires intentionality. It involves toil. It involves mortification of will worship. And it involves conformity to divine stipulations because we still do have remaining corruption.

This isn't the end result. We are not yet made perfect with redeemed bodies. Now, Israel wanted to worship God the way the nations around them worship their idols.

They looked around at the nations. They saw how they worshiped their idols, and they wanted to incorporate the nation's way of worship into their ways of worshiping God. But God was very specific.

[17 : 43] God, who is a consuming fire, who is holy, was very specific about how he was to be worshipped. And interestingly, and in connection to what we will follow next in verses 22 and following, is that God analogically referred to himself as a husband to Israel, and referred to Israel as committing adultery based on their idolatry of seeking to worship not God the way that he the way that he prescribed.

And churches today, so Israel, that's what Israel did. Israel wanted to worship God the way in which they saw the nations around them worshiping idols. The churches today are tempted to conform worship to the ways that the world is around them.

They look around and see how the world does things, and they're tempted to incorporate that in the ways in which they worship God. If you remember, again, Ephesians 2, the church is a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

It's not just an assembly, it's not just a people who have things in common who gather together to discuss those things in common. The church is a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

And then in 1 Peter, it refers to it as a spiritual house, offering spiritual sacrifices in song and thanksgiving.

[19 : 15] So there is something very particular, something very specific, something very different that is going on in church as a holy temple in the Lord. So the prohibition, then illumination, being filled with the Spirit, and thirdly, meditation.

Controlling influence, the third controlling influence, meditation. Now you might be looking at the text and say, where does it say meditation? It says, do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another.

Now, how do we get to speaking to one another from being filled with the Spirit? There's a bit of implicit details to draw out of this, as well as referring to parallel passages that greater draw out how you get from the one to the next.

But our text says, be filled. So, understand the context as this is specifically speaking of believers. It's not everyone in the world, but believers. Remember, even going back to two, and you he made alive, those who have been regenerated, those who have been born again, those who have been predestined by the Father, who have been purchased by the Son, who have been claimed and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

So, this is specifically believers sealed with the Spirit, be filled, but with the Spirit, or in the Spirit, and the result of believers being filled by the Spirit is what follows next.

[20 : 49] That is, speaking. Now, what does that mean, speaking? What has to happen in order to speak? Our family recently read historical fiction on the Scottish Covenanters, and there was a young boy in it who took a young raven and kept it as a pet, and ravens are known to be smart and able to emulate or mimic sounds that they hear, so he taught the raven to say King and Kirk, and the raven was able to sense when it was time to perform, and it would say King and Kirk, and everyone was impressed, and that plays into a part of the story, but that's not what is in mind in our text when it says speaking.

It's not just emulating words without the knowledge of what those words mean or the thought process that leads to it. So, as rational creatures made in the image of God, when it says speaking, it's not a mindless trance or an unknown language, which brings up other issues in corporate worship of chanting in unknown languages, although it's speaking, there's not actually a rational thought process behind what's being chanted.

But, in this case, rational creatures, God made humans as rational creatures to think thoughts after God and thinking those thoughts to proclaim his excellencies and wondrous works.

So, it's not mindless, rather, spiritual meditation that produces exaltation and thanksgiving. To narrow it down even more specifically, it's articulate speech proceeding from rational thought.

The rational thought, the meditation, that produces articulate speech. Now, Ephesians 5, 17, which is directly before what we, our text today, our text starts in 18.

[22 : 56] So, what's fresh in our minds, if we were to read straight through it, what's fresh in our minds is 17, which says, therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Now, if you remember a previous sermon, how does one understand what the will of the Lord is?

By diligent study of the word of God. So, a diligent study of the word of God and meditation on it, which produces rational thought proceeding to articulate speech.

Also, Colossians 3, 16, is a parallel text, with Ephesians 5, really 19. And it says, so, in 5, in our text, it says, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to our heart and the Lord.

Now, the parallel text, which is in Colossians 3, 16, it says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, and psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

So, this parallel verse has a little bit more before it, namely, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. And we see throughout scripture that we are to be meditating on the word of Christ.

[24 : 13] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. So, being filled in the spirit, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

So, the word of Christ dwells richly in believers, that the gospel of Christ permeate their thinking, the rational thought, and responses that arise from such thoughts and express the truth of the gospel of Christ.

It's not pointless noise, it's not songs about self, it's intentional, rational thought on the word of God dwelling in you richly, which produces articulate speech, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into marvelous light.

Which leads us to our next point, that being filled with the spirit manifests expressions of horizontal and vertical praise. So, secondly, expressions of praise.

Expressions of praise being edification, exaltation, and adoration. Notice in our text, so, with edification, it says, speaking to one another.

[25 : 33] one another. So, now, here we go from what is internal illumination and meditation to corporate, speaking to one another. This is for mutual help and edification.

Now, some people who claim to be Christians will not attend church, and instead, they say, feel closest to God when they're in the mountains, and so, their worship is going into the mountains instead of going to church.

Now, it is true that God's creation declares that God exists and his eternal attributes. So, yes, it is true that when we're in nature, whether that be in the forest or in the mountains, we are confronted with the fact that there is a God, and it brings us in awe, or it ought to bring us in God.

Indeed, if you've been in the mountains, you know what it's like to feel small in comparison to the grandeur of the mountains around you, and thus, also, the greatness of the one who has created all of this.

So, yes, it is true that nature, the mountains, the bush, nature, ought to draw awe for God, but that is not what is in view here, nor is that a replacement for corporate worship, because, the ways in which we worship God by seeing how nature declares the glory of God is being in awe of God as creator, but it doesn't bring us to awe of God as redeemer.

[27 : 11] This is corporate worship in awe of God's wondrous works as redeemer, and as such, flowing from it, there's horizontal expressions of God's redeeming greatness.

So, from edification to one another to exaltation, our text says, making melody in your hearts to the Lord.

Speaking to one another, and then moving to exaltation, making melody in your hearts to the Lord. God's glory is the chief aim of what is going on here.

People oftentimes try to make singing in worship about ourselves, or about self, and this will worship is contrary to what Paul writes.

I remember one time I was at a service and there was a song that was sung, and in the chorus, there was a line in the chorus that was waterfall on me, and that line in the chorus, they kept playing over and over and over and over again, and I remember thinking, I don't even know what I'm singing, I don't even know what this is about, what does that even mean, waterfall on me, what are we singing?

[28 : 35] and I even realized that I wasn't even conscious of the words that I was, that were coming into my mind and out of my mouth, and that line was the focus for a very long time of what was being sung, and I'm sure the other parts of the song had good things in it, which, of course, is why I didn't seem suspicious from the get-go, but singing waterfall on me over and over and over again, what is, what is being worshipped here?

What is going on? Rather, expressions of the word of Christ dwelling in you richly, the word of Christ dwelling in you richly, and the illumination of the spirit.

Now, we're going to touch briefly on the saying new song, we're going to come back to that later, so we're just going to touch on it briefly, but in the Bible, there's a couple times where it says, sing a new song, in the Psalms, and the Revelation.

So, when it says, sing a new song, and again, we're going to come back to it to see why that doesn't mean always be singing new songs only and don't sing old songs, but for now, let it suffice to say that what it means when it says, sing a new song, is a song celebrating God's redemptive victory, sung afresh.

so, turn to Revelation 5, 9-12, keep your finger here in Ephesians 5, we'll be coming back to it, and even leave a finger here in Revelation 5 as well, because we're going to be coming back to that later on, but sing a new song in reference to a song celebrating God's redemptive victory, sung afresh, Ephesians 5, 9-12, if you follow with me, and they sang a new song saying, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals.

[30 : 48] Now, note as I read this, note, who's being worshipped? Is this a song about self, worshipping self? Or is this a song worshipping God, his excellencies and wondrous works?

They sang a new song saying, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and have made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the earth.

Then I looked and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing and every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them, I heard saying, blessing and honor and glory and power be to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever.

Back to our text. It says, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Now, first reading of this, we might think, oh, maybe that's why we have here, we've got a psalter, we've got a psalm book, and we've got a duotang, perhaps it's one for each category, we've got the book of psalms, the book of hymns, and the book of spiritual songs.

But, when was Ephesians written? What century was it written in? It was written in the first century. This was well before William Cooper, Augustus Toplady, John Newton, Samuel Rutherford, and others had yet to put pen to paper when Paul wrote Ephesians.

[32 : 49] So, here in Ephesians 5, when he says to speak to one another in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, he's not referring to William Cooper or Augustus Toplady.

So, what exactly is he referring to here? Now, there are three types of compositions in the Hebrew titles in the Psalter.

The superscriptions in the Psalms frequently refer to the titles Psalms or hymns or spiritual songs. Or sometimes all three of them, as in the case of Psalm 76, which says, for the end among the hymns, a psalm for Asaph, a psalm for the Assyrian.

And old, when I say old, I mean pre-modern, so really pre- 19th century, so pre-modern commentaries see these three titles as synonymous for the Psalter.

So, what do these three words mean? The Hebrew use of them as titles in the Psalms, what do those three words actually mean?

[34 : 08] Psalms is a song of praise sung to a stringed instrument. And here we have positive law of inspired words with positive law of musical instruments sent to them in the book of Psalms.

Hymns, which also means to him, is a song of praise to God. And spiritual songs is spirit-inspired odes or spirit-inspired songs of praise to God, for example, the songs of Zion.

Now, the general view of biblical scholars is that spiritual here refers to all three nouns. So, that would be read as spirit-inspired psalms, spirit-inspired hymns, and spirit-inspired songs.

Now, the hymns are the word of God. The word of God is inspired by the spirit of God, so certainly the psalms are spirit-inspired. And the text directly says spiritual songs, or spirit-inspired songs.

But it's a general view of scholars that spiritual refers to all three nouns. Now, what about the history? What about the history of corporate singing of the psalter?

[35 : 27] They sang the psalms in the Old Testament, and in the Bible, the church is prescribed to sing the psalms in the church.

So what has happened in history from that point, from where in the first century they're prescribed to sing the psalms to where we are now? What has occurred in history?

In the first century, the church sang the psalms in corporate worship. So my reference through history is going to be corporate worship, not what people do in their homes or in family worship, but specifically to corporate worship.

The first century church sang the psalms. The patristics sang the psalms. The medieval era lost corporate worship, sorry, they lost corporate singing.

They didn't sing, so there was no singing. However, the music of the monastery and cathedral was dominated by the psalms, which included chanting the entire psalter each week.

- [36 : 35] So there was a large use of the psalms, even when there was no corporate singing. The reformers restored congregational psalmody. In fact, John Calvin arranged the psalms to meter so that his church could corporately sing the psalms.

The Puritan era sang the psalms in corporate worship. The Puritans also introduced doctrinally rich hymns into corporate worship. The spiritual era, of course, is, sorry, the Puritan era is when we have, for example, Samuel Rutherford, who wrote *The Sands of Time Are Sinking*, which is the first hymn that we sang this morning.

So the Puritans introduced into corporate worship the use of singing hymns, hymns being doctrinally rich, the introduction of doctrinally rich hymns.

And then hymns progressively became more and more popular for the use in corporate worship. And then after the Enlightenment period, which the Enlightenment period sought to reject any tradition, anything of the old way of doing things.

So after the Enlightenment period, of course, hymns became, were more popular, and the singing of the Psalms became a foreign concept. So it's really, in the span of history, it's really only been quite recently that the churches haven't sung Psalms in corporate worship.

- [38 : 12] So what about the argument that people bring up about Psalm 33 3, which says, sing a new song. They use that as though it's to mean that we must always be writing new songs and not to be singing old songs, and of course, the Psalms are old.

So does Psalm 33 3, does that mean that we don't sing old songs like the Psalm? Or what exactly does that reference mean?

Those texts, particularly in Psalms, Psalms 33 3, when it says, sing a new song, to draw out the meaning of it concisely, it means sung afresh to God's new saving action of redemption.

Scripture's redemptive history throughout time, newly celebrated. Now, what's interesting is when it says, sing a new song, for example, Psalm 33 3, it's always used in reference to that song.

It's, sing a new song, here's the song set before you, this psalm. It's not meaning go and compose your own new song, rather, sing this inspired psalm here before you in the newness of God's redemptive victory.

- [39 : 36] So, new means afresh with renewed adoration, renewed gratitude, and renewed delight. So, sing a new song is to sing afresh God's saving action of redemption with renewed adoration, renewed gratitude, and renewed delight.

Third is adoration. the third expression of praise is adoration. Making melody in your heart, which means with your heart, making heartfelt melody, unlike the monotonous repetition and emotional manipulation, where you see that in Rome with the monotonous chanting in Latin, which the people did not speak, or we see that in hyper-charismatic churches, or, for example, new apostolic reformation churches, where long drawn-out monotonous repetition for the purpose of emotional manipulation.

Unlike that, unlike the Romish chanting in Latin, and an unknown tongue to the people, rather, from the heart, making melody in your heart, with your heart, or heartfelt, is from the heart and not lip service alone, which is doxological.

So I had you turn to Revelation 5, flip back there, and we'll continue reading. I actually started to read further, but we'll pick up at verse 13 and 14.

So this adoration, this heartfelt making melody with your heart, is doxological. And we see in Revelation 5, verse 13 and 14, And every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them, I heard saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever.

[41 : 44] Then the four living creatures said Amen, and the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped him who lives forever and ever. So here we see this is not monotonous emotional manipulation, being unaware of what's being sung, but this is rational creatures with the word of Christ dwelling in them richly.

the exaltation of praise, heartfelt doxology, and obviously they did understand and comprehend as they said Amen in their agreement to it.

So that brings us to our third point that spiritual influences, sorry, spirit-influenced thoughts lead to spirit-influenced praise and spirit-influenced posture.

So our third point here is orderly posture. The orderly posture entails gratitude, submission, and reverence. So the first orderly posture is gratitude.

Our text says giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[42 : 55] Now, spirit-filled living is in service. Filled, spirit-filled to serve. And that service is in thanksgiving.

Now consider the implications of what thanksgiving means. If we were to go out fishing together and we brought our own lunches and I pulled out a bag of moose jerky and I said this is what I brought that I'm going to have for lunch, it's not appropriate to say thank you.

That's not the right thing to say. However, if I was to pull out a bag of moose jerky and I say I brought you for this so you can have this with your lunch, then the appropriate thing to say is thank you because now it has been made your own.

It's something that you've received as a free gift. Being thankful means that it is a free gift and that it has become one's own or has become personal.

So gratitude, giving thanks always, is because the free gift of the gospel, the free gift of salvation, has become one's own. It has become personal.

[44 : 04] Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is the gospel of free grace something you have not yet made your own?

The gospel of free grace, of course, involves the fact that God is holy and that we, his creatures, are fallen sinful. We do not seek after God. And the wages of sin is death.

That because of sin, there's condemnation and the wrath of God. But as we mentioned earlier, the second person of the Trinity took to himself a body, assumed our nature, because sinful mankind cannot pay the debt and cannot be in a right standing before God.

If sinful mankind stands alone, self-represented, will be found sinful, will be found condemned, and will be condemned to the wrath of God for eternity.

So, the word of God, the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, took to himself a body and in our nature did what we could not do. He perfected obedience. He obeyed the law with perfect, exact, entire, perpetual obedience.

[45 : 14] And lived a positive righteousness, the positive righteousness that is required to be in a right standing before God. So, did what we could not do with his active obedience.

Not only that, but he fixed our problem. He did what we needed to be done that we could not do, and that is pay the debt that we owed, paying the debt due for sin, for our sin, for the sins of the elect.

He suffered and died on the cross, endured the curse in our place, paying our debt. So, God does not set aside his holiness, God does not set aside his justice, but Christ satisfied the justice of God on the behalf of the elect.

Christ not only suffered and died, but he raised from the dead victorious over sin and death. The forces of darkness have been triumphed over by Christ.

He has ascended on high and is seated at the right hand of the Father, so that those whom are in Christ, he is their mediator. We do not stand self-represented before a holy and just God, but Christ is our mediator, and we are in a right relationship before God.

[46 : 30] And being united to Christ as a redeemer and as our mediator is to look to God for salvation, to look to Christ alone for salvation, to repent of sin and turn to Christ, to lay hold of Christ and make Christ's mediation and promises and merits one's own.

And now is the time, now is the day of salvation. Christ will return to judge the living and the dead. Now, the structure of the Heidelberg Catechism is guilt, grace, and gratitude.

So it explains man's guilt, God's grace in the gospel, and the redeemed's gratitude to God. So, contrary to drunken squandering, a spirit-filled life of thankfulness will find expression in edification and exaltation and adoration.

It will find expression in psalms, hymns, and spiritual psalms. Now, if you notice in verse 20, when it speaks of gratitude, what does it say? It says, giving thanks always for all things.

This is very important and key to the application of spirit-filled living and gratitude. It's not just gratitude when we have a life of comfort.

[48 : 01] It's not just gratitude with a life of prosperity. It's not just gratitude in a life of ease. It's not limited to these times.

Rather, it's cheerful singing of thanks to God and our deepest miseries, pain, sorrows, and grief. And next, in the orderly posture, we see submission.

It says, submitting to one another. So, this will be a brief examination of that, but really, the verses that follow after 21, so 22 and onward, break that down more specifically.

However, for now, service and submission is to subject oneself. It's deference or orderliness or ordering oneself under God's delegated authority.

Now, why does it have to say this? it says we are to submit to one another because it doesn't happen naturally.

[49 : 02] We have remaining corruption. And so, we have a desire for self-autonomy, and that's truly what sin is. Sin is a desire for self-autonomy, that God can't tell me what to do.

I'm going to do things my own way. I am autonomous of God. So, this self-autonomy is rooted in sinful nature, and there's remaining corruption and a carnal desire for self-autonomy from God and the ways and order of God.

And really, that's what God is a God of order, and he calls Christians to lives of order. So, a couple of notes is that submission is not agreement.

And we see the different roles, per se, of husband and wife, parents and children, for example. But submission is not agreement. Submission is not as I will submit for as long as I agree with the decision that's been made.

We are not called to submit when an authority tells us to do something that God forbids, and we are not to submit when an authority tells us not to do what God commands.

[50 : 11] However, merely our disagreeing is not a reason to not submit.

Submission is when there is not agreement. That is when submission is a requirement, is when there is not agreement. So, again, we'll flesh this out much further, particularly in the next sermon, in regards to husbands and wives.

I think probably the following one of children to parents, it's probably pretty clear that submission is not a matter of agreement that children are still required to submit even when they disagree with what their parents say.

Submission is not passive obedience. Submission is not just stepping back and saying, fine, do things your way. It's intentionally aligning under God's ordained authority.

Submission to proper authority is obedience to God. And Luther wrote something which translated to English is the first commandment includes the other nine. So, our duty to God as true God includes our duty to man.

[51 : 27] So, that brings to mind the moral principle of the fifth commandment. The moral principle of the fifth commandment is explained very well in the Baptist Catechism, which I think you're all very familiar with it. It asks the question, what is required in the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor and performing the duties belonging to everyone in their several places and relations as superiors, inferiors, or equals. And then asks the question, what is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment forbids the neglect of or doing anything against the honor and duty which belongs pretty heavily.

It's not merely a passive allowing things to occur. And finally, reverence. Our text says, in the fear of God. God, making a distinction between terror of judgment.

So, when our text says, in the fear of God, it's not a matter of being in terror of judgment. Certainly, those who are under judgment, certainly those who are not in Christ ought to be in terror of judgment, but that's not the fear which is in mind when it says submitting to one another in the fear of God.

[52 : 39] Rather, seeing the evils and the dangers of sin and fleeing from it to God as a refuge, a holy awe due to the divine.

The fear of God motivates willing submission to proper authorities. Fleeing that which brings condemnation, fleeing to God ought to motivate willing submission to proper authorities.

And the fear of God, it's a frame of heart. It's a posture of ready and regular submission according to God's will. So, a few concluding uses.

We need prompting. We need prompting to meditate. We need prompting to praise. And we need prompting to pray in thankfulness.

Because we get tired, don't we? Even when we come to service at conferences where there's multiple sessions, we get tired. We need breaks.

[53 : 42] We need naps. We need snacks. We need food. And we get tired in what we were made to do. We were made to think upon God, to praise God, to commune with God.

That's what we were made to do, but yet we get tired in doing these things. That is now, but in glory, with perfected bodies and souls, the joy of the presence of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will erupt from us in heartfelt expression forever.

forever. And the blood bought redeemed will never grow weary of it. Until then, because we are not there yet, we are on our way, so until then, the means of grace help prepare us for the week ahead as foreigners traveling through a wilderness.

Corporate singing of the word is not excluded. So how should the singing of the word match what is experienced in the week ahead and consequently help you live it out?

Now, the songs that is sung at churches of the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel and about me and I, how is that going to prepare somebody for the challenges ahead of various pains that are experiences or injustices or grief or injuries or turmoil?

[55 : 01] How should the singing of the word match what is experienced in the week ahead? Shouldn't be songs about I and me and my current feelings. My current feelings are subjective.

We need objective truth, the truth revealed by God's word. Now, the psalms deal with applicable responses to the entire range of human experience.

The songs deal with lament, thanksgiving, praise, imprecation, wisdom. They address times of need, times of testing, times of failure, times of injustice, times of woe, times of victory, and times of posterity.

So I ask the question, do you experience these? Do you experience any of these things? Or do you ever wonder, how does this particular circumstance that I'm in, how does this make sense?

And what should my response be when I don't understand how it makes sense? Or do you ever ask, how does my life make sense? What purpose can there be in my pain?

[56 : 10] How is God good in this anguish and in this grief? Now, the world will give us navel-gazing self-help protocols, and this is unhelpful.

Our remaining corruption gives us self-pity tendencies, and this is unhelpful. Rome will give us work-based crushing burdens, and illusory hope, this is unhelpful.

And worldly churches of will-worship gives worldly entertainment, which also is unhelpful. The word of God gives us the Psalms, which are exactly what God's pilgrims need.

John Calvin, as I mentioned before, he arranged the Psalms to meter so that his congregation could sing the Psalms, and John Calvin on the Psalms wrote, I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, an anatomy of all the parts of the soul.

Also, the Scottish Covenanters, the foundations Psalter which we use, I don't know if you've noticed on it, it says the 1650 Psalter, that's the year, 1650, Scottish Covenanters, sang the Psalms, and even in their persecution, they were persecuted quite fiercely.

[57 : 34] And I would like to, in closing, draw your attention to, if you've heard the story of Margaret Wilson and Margaret McLaughlin, now, in the era of the 17th century, in the 1600s, without going into too much detail in the history, which is kind of important and makes it quite important, so Scottish, Scotland became Presbyterian, and England, without going into the history, there was the Church of England, and Parliament sat together and determined what the appropriate doctrine and practice should be, and that was Presbyterian, it was namely the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1643, and that wasn't just English theologians, but also Scottish theologians, Samuel Rutherford, who I mentioned before, Samuel Rutherford, who wrote the hymn that we sang this morning,

The Sands of Time Are Sinking, was one of the members of the Westminster Assembly in 1643. So, England, the Church of England was Presbyterian and Scotland became Presbyterian and confessionally followed the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Now, fast forward a while, and Charles II, who, the Scottish Covenanters actually supported monarchy and supported the reinstating of monarchy.

And Charles II, when he was in power, then betrayed them, and with a tendency to Catholicism, tried to forcefully determine, or forcefully tell them where they were to worship, how they were to worship, and it was contrary to their Presbyterian convictions.

and there was the Great Ejection of 1662, where all the faithful ministers, Presbyterian ministers, were ejected from their pulpits and were forced to illegally hold services and preaching in fields, and they were persecuted and killed for it.

[59 : 50] And Scotland, the Scottish Covenanters were those who would not give allegiance to the king as head of the church and worship as he determined and where he determined, and as a result, they were fiercely persecuted by the king's soldiers.

So amongst them, there was a family, the Wilson family, and the father, Gilbert Wilson, he did worship according to the king's demands, but his children, he had three children who could not, they could not in good consciences swear allegiance to the king and worship as he said, so they ended up fleeing, and they fled to the home of Margaret MacLachlan, who was a Scottish covenanter, who refused allegiance to the king as the head of the church and to worship accordingly, but instead attended field services, Presbyterian field services.

So they found that they fled to her house, but they were betrayed by her neighbors. Her neighbors turned them in, and the king's soldiers came and took them and put them in prison.

Of the three Wilson children, the youngest, the boy, there's no record of what happened to him, he wasn't heard of, but the two daughters were taken and imprisoned with Margaret MacLachlan and locked up, and in the interim, the father, Gilbert Wilson, he was able to raise enough money to purchase the freedom of one of his daughters, which was the youngest.

So Margaret was the elder, and she remained in prison with Margaret MacLachlan. And they were given the chance to swear allegiance to the king as head of the church to determine how and where they were to worship, which they refused.

[61 : 39] So Margaret MacLachlan was a widow, and they were tied to stakes below the floodline while the tide was out, and the widow, Margaret MacLachlan, would have been furthest down, so she would have drowned first, and Margaret Wilson would have had to have watched her drown and wait for the water to come up and snuff out her life.

And as she died, she died singing a psalm. The psalm that she died singing was Psalm 25 7. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.

According to your mercy, remember me, for your goodness sake, O Lord. Do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Dear Lord, we thank you again for your word. We thank you for all of your purposes, even when there's persecution, even when there's various trials, and when there's turmoil, and grief. We thank you that you can trust you because you are good.

Thank you that you do not change. We thank you for your redeeming goodness, and we thank you, Lord, for the blessings of your providential provisions for the redeemed.

[63 : 08] Lord, I pray, Lord, that you would indeed help us to meditate on the word of Christ, that it may dwell in us richly, and as such, illuminated by the Spirit, that we would indeed edify, exalt, and adore you in worship, and praise.

Lord, I thank you for the Psalms, and thank you how the Psalms speak of Christ, and how even the New Testament references the Psalms of speaking to Christ, and how there is much by way of analogy, which is of great encouragement and use to us in this life.

I pray that you would help us to indeed, not only be encouraged and comforted by this and edified, but also, Lord, to be equipped to better handle that which we experience in the week ahead, that it would be for your glory.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, we're going to close by saying the dexology, now, blessed be the Lord our God. But before we do, pick up your hymnal and turn to page seven, which is where it is.

Page seven is now, blessed be the Lord our God. And at the top left corner of the hymns is typically, if it's known who wrote it, that's listed in the date.

[64 : 27] Now, in this, in number seven, you'll see that this is Psalm 72, verses 18 to 19.

And the way in which it's arranged comes from the Scottish Psalter, which is the Psalter which we use, and it is the Psalter which the Scottish Covenanters and, of course, Margaret Wilson would have been very familiar with.

So this is what they would have used in their response to persecution and the various experiences which they had. So this morning, we're going to conclude by singing Psalm 72, 18 to 19, as arranged in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 72, Psalm 73, Psalm 73, Psalm 73, Psalm 73, Psalm 73, blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone does wondrous works in glory that excel.

And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity. The whole earth let his glory fill, amen, so let it be.

[66 : 00] Amen. Amen.