

GROWING in Praise & Thanksgiving

Pastor David Whitehead

"When I began to worship, I began to grow."

There is a big distinction between music and worship.

Worship: The heart's response to God's initiative.

Music: A vehicle that helps us focus our worship.



You started your worship when you got up this morning. The question is, what are we worshipping?

Psalm 95:1-11

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.

For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.

The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.
Today, if only you would hear his voice,
“Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,
where your ancestors tested me;
they tried me, though they had seen what I did.
For forty years I was angry with that generation;
I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they have not known my ways.’
So I declared on oath in my anger,
‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ”

The New International Version. (2011). (Ps 95:1–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Sound & Heart

Due to the streaming nature of our world, we have created a wallpaper of sound for ourselves. We see singing as a commodity, something to be done by professionals.

As a result, we are losing a pathway for God created to connect our hearts with worship.

Those who do not worship through song don't understand the role of music in developing our spiritual maturity. Music can cultivate our heart of worship.

If we think back to a story of Eli and Israel, there was a judgment rendered on Israel for their negligence in God's house. So, God allowed a vehicle of his presence, the ark of

the covenant, to be captured. Months later, it was returned to Israel, and on the processional back, Uzzah touched the ark and died. In fear, the ark was stored.

David then returned the ark to Jerusalem and stationed worshippers all around the ark. David saw the importance of worship in the life of Following God our King.

Today, we're looking at three important avenues that singing provides us:

1. Singing reminds us of God's reign over the earth
2. Singing is act of humility
3. Singing opens our heart to hear God

King Jesus

"...The sky over New York and the will of man made visible. What other religion do we need?... — Ayn Rand

Our cities, other gods, material possessions, communities, and people all desire our homage. Songs are a reminder that God loves our city so much and calls us to live in him. God doesn't want to leave Seattle to itself. He has a lordship to proclaim. When we sing songs together, we open the door to reminding ourselves that God is ultimately in charge. All other narratives fall away to the reign of the greater king.

Humility

Why do people raise their hands in church like a touchdown has been scored? Interestingly enough, raising our hands is an act of humility of us submitting to the King.

In America, that's like heresy — submitting to someone other than yourself — but in the kingdom, it's God's pathway for growth.

Hearing God

Our cities and its leaders, our ambitions, our plans, and our disappointments can often harden our hearts, and music is a way to soften our hearts again. Making a joyful noise, however we want to do it is a format of us softening our hard heart.

When we come together, lift our voice, we recognize that we are brothers and sisters to Jesus.

Hebrews 2:10-15

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says,

“I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the assembly I will sing your praises.”

And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again he says,

“Here am I, and the children God has given me.”

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

The New International Version. (2011). (Heb 2:10–15). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

It is through music that we can connect to the Spirit of Christ, which helps guides us. It can connect concepts in our heart that we don't understand in our minds. It helps us to realize our new identity as the righteousness of God.

We were made to worship. We have been commissioned to creators and responders of beauty. Singing becomes a counter-cultural pathway to that statement that reminds us that one day, Seattle will bend the knee and bow before King Jesus.

If you're willing to remind yourself of the gospel — that God's kingdom is in our midst — our hearts can soften and interact with God and cultivate our sensitivity to his Spirit and initiative.



You don't have to have your act together to do this. The message of Jesus is that he made the way for you. He made a way for you to experience his presence through the simple, humble act of singing songs.