

Principles of Godly Music

by Alan Ives

The sermon explores the definition and application of music according to the Bible, highlighting its role in stirring our memory, reflecting on God's works, and inspiring creativity and worship.

Duration: 1:39:52

Scripture: Psalm 126:5

Topics: "Godly Music"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of music in praising the Lord. He mentions the joy and beauty of hearing others sing and play instruments to worship God. The preacher also discusses the significance of walking with the Lord and seeking His guidance in our lives. He plans to explore the definition of music according to the Bible and the three parts of music in future sessions.

Transcript

Thank you again for the music. That's a wonderful event for us just to hear others praising the Lord. We hear us all the time and it's just wonderful to in this day and age hear people who still sing tunes in praise of the Lord, sing melodies, work with the harmonies and so forth.

Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Well, I need to put a guitar on here and we're glad to be with you. I think the preacher say four years and I think that it is June of 2005, so not quite four years.

We're going to look at a definition of music according to the Bible tonight in Psalm 143 and then we're going to look at a definition of the three parts of music in Ephesians and in the book of John and we may not get any further than that tonight. We have some things yet to bring tomorrow and everything else is going to go unsaid, but we will teach as much as we can. I'm glad God has much to say about those things in the Bible.

We're going to go ahead and sing a song that we have sung for years. Our choir sang it. A lot of the music we sing is men's quartets that we've whittled down to two parts and ladies trios that we've whittled down to two parts and things that our choir did that we've whittled down to two parts.

We couldn't get them to travel with us or we would have taken them with us, but this is a song that reminds us never to get over the wonder that God would love sinners such as we are and we have just sung this song for years, so filled with wonder am I. God could love such as I, a soul unworthy, yet raised in power,

to live with him on high. The price that he paid, my soul from bondage to save, and through the ages I'll sing his praises, so filled with wonder am I. I can't explain the mystery of love divine that lifted me. I only know my heart rejoices to think of his love for me.

But this I know, I'm new, I'm different because of his love for me, for me. God could love such as I, a soul unworthy, yet raised in power, to live with him on high. How great the price that he paid, my soul from bondage to save, and through the ages I'll sing his praises, so filled with wonder am I. No matter how hard we may try to work for the Lord and to run in his strength and in his power, when we get to heaven we'll wish we'd been more consistent, more efficient, more useful, more filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and a lady actually wrote the tune and the poem and captured this thought and this truth.

I wish I had given him more. I trust it'll make us consider our ways as we're down here more often and be more careful and filled with the Spirit in our life. I wish I had given him more.

By and by when I look on his face, beautiful face, thorn-shadowed face, by and by when I look on his face, I'll wish I had given him more, more, so much more, more, more of my life than I ever gave before. When I look on his face, I'll wish I had given him, by and by a ribbon hand, by and by his hand, I'll wish I had given him so much more. His hand, I'll wish I had given him, in the light of that heavenly place, light from his face, beautiful face, in the light of that heavenly place, I'll wish I had given him more, so much more, treasures unbounded for him.

By and by when I look on his face, beautiful face, I'll wish I had given him more, more, so much more. Everywhere we go, we have the blessed privilege of taking the Word of God and giving it out to someone, and if we pray, God opens doors for us to speak for him, and it is marvelous, and we never know when the meetings are short with other people sometimes, we never know what the Word of God will do, but we know it will not return void to our Lord. He promised it would not, and I remember one night in particular, we were going up around northern Michigan, and it was the middle of the night, and I thought this is no time to do any talking at all, and yet the Lord was prompting me, and there was a young man that was taking care of the gas station in the middle of the night, the middle of the night, and I don't know how long it was, but we took a long time there.

After we spoke to him for this great length of time, he said, you know, you're talking just like my friend. He told me I had to be saved too. Someone else had already planted the seed, and we were just doing a little bit of watering, and I said, I have to leave, and I may never see you again, but you better go back and talk to your friend again.

God is trying to get a hold of you. I said, do you realize this is the middle of the night, and we don't ever come this way, at least not very often, and I said, I appreciate you listening to the Word of God, but you still must call upon the Lord and do this of your own free will. He had just gotten married and been married a year or two, and already had a child, and I said, boy, you need the Lord more than ever, if for nothing else, just to hold your family together and to learn to be the husband you need to be and the dad you've never been either until just a little while ago, and I said, most of all, you and your family need to be saved, but it's a blessed privilege to scatter the Word of God.

We know everyone doesn't listen, and everyone does not receive it. Some of it falls on poor ground, but some of it falls on good ground. Let's sing the song, Scattering Precious Seed.

Scattering precious seed by the wayside, scattering precious seed by the hillside, scattering precious seed for the fields wide, scattering precious seed by the way, sowing in the morning, bearing the precious seed, sowing at the new precious time, sowing in the evening, sowing the precious seed by the way of the day, scattering precious seed for the growing, scattering precious seed freely sowing, scattering precious seed trusting knowing, surely the Lord will send it the way, sowing in the morning, bearing the precious seed, sowing at the new precious time, bearing the precious seed, sowing the precious seed by the way of the day, scattering precious seed doubting never, scattering precious seed trusting ever, sowing the word with prayer and endeavor, trusting the Lord for growth and for years, sowing in the morning, bearing the precious seed, sowing at the new precious time, sowing in the evening, bearing the precious seed, sowing the precious seed by the way of the day, they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, for God is on His throne, for God is on His throne, we must dream, till our hearts will break, they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, precious seed, we are saved after we are saved. After we're saved the most, the smartest thing, the wisest thing that we can do is simply to walk with our Lord day by day. The first thing the Apostle Paul said after he was saved was, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And that's good for every day that we live.

We may assume sometimes, especially if we're in a good work, we may just assume that we're doing what the Lord wants, but we ought to ask. And then if the Lord has something that's a surprise for us or something different for us to do, we will still be ready to do that. I am looking.

We're going to go ahead and play the old hymn, He Leadeth Me. And the songwriter said that that was a blessed thought, he leadeth me, oh blessed thought, of words with heavenly comfort fraught. And he ended the poem, his faithful follower, I would be for by his hand he leadeth me.

And so we have that blessed privilege. If you're wondering which hand it is he holds us by, it's the right hand. But there's a verse in Psalms that indicates that I'm looking for a different pick than I have in my hand.

We'll do a harp and guitar duet here. The best thing that ever happened to Chopsticks was someone wrote some Christian words to it. And of course, that's that little piece, you know, on the piano.

Starts out with a dissonance that resolves. That's a nice thing to have happen. But someone did write some Christian words to it.

It seems like a children's song in many ways. I'm sure it is. And yet the message of this song is quite profound because it's an invitation for others to come to the Savior.

And that's always a good thing to do is invite others to come to the Lord. God won't force anyone to be saved, and we can't force anyone to be saved, but we can persuade men, can't we? And I'm glad we have the word of God to help with that and to use actually to put them in a place where they'll be under conviction now just because. So we have to have some kind of a keyboard.

So my wife has two keyboards here. Show them that one. That looks a little bit like a piano that's been shrunk and the bells aren't much different here, but we'll use those and we'll say Chopsticks for Christ.

Until I reach heaven's bright shore. Oh won't you come and go with me and be God's good judge for eternity. He'll save your soul and bring you home if you'd only trust him just now.

Jesus my Savior will keep me forever. He'll never forsake me, no never. And someday with angels in glory we'll all sing the story forever around the bright world.

Oh won't you come and go with me and be God's good judge for eternity. He'll save your soul and bring you home if you'd only trust him just now. So last time we were here we played Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul and we're going to play it again and try to use some of these other instruments more moderately.

If you're missing your instrument tomorrow, you can pick that up. But this is Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul. So last time we were here we played Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul and we're going to play it again and try to use some of these other instruments more moderately.

If you're missing your instrument tomorrow, you can pick that up. The preacher's five daughters sang seven guitar lines. But they usually sang trios.

One day the oldest daughter Peggy played the piano with her first kid. Then the soloist. That was a wonderful song.

Songs of salvation always are. Those that are saved are reminded of the day that they gave to the Lord and the ones that have been saved. And for those that have never been saved, it's a great reminder that we must be one with him.

This is a song called Now I'm Saved. All this struggle trying to find God and trying to figure life out and finally understanding salvation is a gift of God. The gift of God is what he raised.

The gift of righteousness. The pre-gift of righteousness. This is a song called Now I'm Saved.

And since Peggy's not here to play it, she'll sing it tonight. I came broken hearted to the Lord, some tears, not expecting anything except just remorse for being a sinner, and here the Lord along with free salvation gave me joy and happiness way beyond what I was looking for. And once I became disentangled from the music of this world, I joyfully praised the Lord.

As a matter of fact, I joyfully praised him before that, but once I got free of pop music, I was able to live for the Lord with much greater victory and have effectiveness in witnessing, a genuine burden for souls, a greater understanding in the word of God. It's almost like all of a sudden I woke up. I was saved for two years and didn't really see much of anything.

I think we're getting a little bit of a ring there. I think you can get rid of that. I'm going to try to stay relatively short.

You can see I'm 5'6". I'll try to stay a little short tonight, but I did want to give you some Bible definitions. The definitions of these things just in and of themselves are marvelous.

Man has got everything backwards, everything turned upside down, everything twisted around. None of it is right. God's ways are certainly not man's ways.

And when it comes to music, this is no exception, of course. Remember when the disciples began to witness in the New Testament times, and they accused them of turning the world upside down? They were just turning it back the way it was supposed to be. That's what we're trying to do with music.

We want it back the way God intends it to be. What did someone say? They turned the world upside right? If you've ever heard that phrase before, that was kind of a new one for me one day. Upside right.

But anyway, we want to go to Psalm 143, as I said, and then we'll go to the New Testament. And I love the Word of God because it gives to us the answers that we need. And it should not, it should not be a surprise to any Christian that our final authority, our final answer for everything is in the Bible.

And an application, of course, a scriptural application of it. Do you know that escapes a lot of people today? I would hope not at this church. I don't think so.

You've probably been taught better. But we can rest our cause, we can rest our soul, our life, everything on this Bible. We can trust it.

It has the answers for everything. It is God's Word. And so, let's go to Psalm 143.

Let's stand together and we're going to read one verse. And this is a verse with three parts and David defines music in these three parts in one verse. Psalm 143 and verse 5. So, let's read it.

Psalm 143 and verse 5 out loud together. There's our word, music. As short as we can get it in English.

M-U-S-E. Muse. Let's pray.

Dear Father, make this message a blessing and help it not to be long. We have a wonderful day ahead of us tomorrow. But Lord, may it be filled with information that will answer some questions for people here.

And be a blessing. May saints go home encouraged tonight. And Lord, we are.

Just to hear Thy praises sung. When I can read my title clear from the brass. And so many other songs tonight.

Just a blessing to our hearts. And to see young people too. Praising Thee.

Willing to praise Thee. Wanting to praise Thee. And doing so well at it.

Dear Lord, help us to be found when You come. With faith on the earth and a heart full of joy. Singing Thy praises, Lord.

Lord, Thou hast lightened our footsteps. And given us what others are looking for and trying to have. And though life can be rough, Lord, with Thee.

It is a, what did Thou say? My burden is light. And oh Lord, it is. Thank You for taking away.

The things that would weigh us down. We cannot bear them ourselves. And most of all, our sins.

Dear Lord, honor Thy name and Thyself. And help me preach it with Holy Spirit power. Blessed now in Jesus precious name.

We ask it. Amen. Be seated then.

And we'll look at these three parts. This is a Bible definition of music. The Word of God defining it for us.

And as I said, there's our word muse in the third phrase. But let's take a look and see what music is all about according to this verse. And then we're going to run to the New Testament.

And break music up into its three parts. And hope to give you some help with that too. Here we find it says, first of all, I remember the days of old.

Good music, really all music. But good music is meant to stir our memory. I would have to admit it's kind of hard to stir our memory of things that haven't taken place yet.

Now that's real deep, think about it for a while. But all music is really a look back at something that already took place before. And it so impressed the poet and the musician that they wrote the experience.

Or they wrote the wisdom that they got. Or the information, the help from God, whatever it was. They wrote it into a song.

They may have worked together or they may have worked separately. Or one person, as in that last, or one of the songs we sang may have, I wish I'd given them more, written all by the same person. Memory.

David says, I remember the days of old. That's not just the good old days. Guys are always, you know, you get to be 40 years old and you talk about the past because you probably got more past than you got future left.

Unless you're a Christian, I guess. Then we have lots of time in heaven. But you get more memories than you can remember as you get older.

And life on this earth, as we know it, gets shorter at the forward end. We call a practice with the choir a rehearsal. Rehearsal.

We rehear it and see it. Whatever happened to this Christian who went before, they left a little message for us in that song. And when we sing the song, we are reminded of what God did for them.

And we know that God is no respecter of persons. If he answered their prayer, if he protected them, if he provided for them, he can take care of us in the same way. If he blessed them, he can bless us.

And we gain strength from looking back at what God did for someone else and singing it. And we get this little picture. Music paints pictures, you know.

And in the case of God's music, it paints a picture of something he's promised to do and did for someone. And they said he did. And they wrote it down.

So that we could see it again. So that we could hear it again. So that it would not be forgotten.

And that's a blessed event. Now he's not just talking about the days of old. He's talking about the things God has done.

But we won't know that for sure until we get to the second phrase. But songs stir our memory. You know, even when it comes to worldly music, there's a lot of songs that people like because it stirs up a good memory in them.

Now there's plenty of them that can stir up bad memories. But there are songs that are coupled with family or home. Or even with your wife or your spouse.

Couples always used to say, that's our song. And they called that their love song forever. You know, just thrilled with that song.

Might not have been much at all. But they picked one out. And the remembrances were sweet.

You know, when it comes to God, the remembrances are good and they are sweet. And that's what Christians have written down for us. With the world's music, you're not really sure.

Boy, a song will come up and you go, oh boy, that reminds me of... You know, fill in the blank. But might not be a good memory. With God's music, it's always going to be a good memory that's stirred up.

I remember the days of old. The second part of our definition is, I meditate on all thy works. Now we know it's not just the good old days, but it's the things that God has done in history.

By the way, I did not... Well, let's be honest. I hated history when I was a boy. It seemed like, well, that's all done and gone.

I got my life to live now. But you know what? What's gone on before has a whole lot to do with what's going on right now. And where it came from and where it's going to still has a lot to do with now.

But once I got saved and I saw that God indeed has worked down through the ages in nations, in people's lives. I said, how many of my ancestors trusted Christ? I want to know who else got saved. I was up a little bit north of here and a preacher said to me that it was Reuben Archatori, the evangelist, went to the little town of Lawsville, Pennsylvania and he won 85% of that town to the Lord.

Well, I know the people in that town. That's where we came from. There's only 100 people there.

If Reuben Torrey won 85 of them, he won some of my cousins. This is a long time ago now, you know. But that's exciting.

All of a sudden, history is exciting. God has worked down through the ages. I don't have it with me, but I wrote a poem called God in the Affairs of Men.

And what God has done down through the centuries, he's affected people. You've probably heard the stories. Many of the men who discovered things and invented things had the help of God.

Thomas Edison's mother sent him to the Baptist church when he was a boy in Ohio. I don't know Thomas Edison's testimony, but I know where he got the wisdom to think some of his things through. And I know what his mother was trying to do for him.

Exciting, exciting things. Colleges that have gone way liberal were started once upon a time to train young men for the ministry. Even Yale.

That's my family's school. God has worked down through history. It's marvelous.

And all of a sudden, history comes alive. Wars even. He may be judging a nation or several nations, but it's marvelous.

God has done something. And that's what we need to find. He says, I meditate on all thy works.

What has God done? And David says, I'm thinking about it. I'm meditating. You know what meditation is? We were talking about Eastern meditation.

How they just empty out their head and the next thing that flies by, they accept. And think they've had an inspiration. Real Bible meditation is half like what the Easterners call meditation.

They empty themselves of everything and they stay empty. A smart Christian says, I need to empty my brain of my thoughts. But then, we fill them with God's thoughts.

We get rid of our opinions and we get the law of God. God's opinion, if we can call it that. We compare Scripture with Scripture and we have wisdom instead of just our own ideas about something.

That's meditation. Then we apply it to our life. How does this fit in my life? What does it mean for me? What does it have to do with the choices that I make or the places I go or what I say or what I'm thinking? And we put it in our life and it's real and it's living.

That's meditation. That's real Bible meditation. And I guess the best description of musical meditation is the Handel's Messiah.

Handel took 75 verses. I think his friend gave them to him to try and win him to the Savior. He gave him the verse and said, here, do something with these.

Well, George sat with his music manuscript and I don't know if he had a keyboard or not, but he shut himself in his room for 24 days and he looked at those 75 verses out of the Bible and he turned them this way and that way and this way and that way and then he wrote a slow song and then he wrote a fast song and then the choir sang then the bass soloist sang and then the trumpet played a solo and then the alto had a little recitative and then the choir came in again and then the orchestra played something slow and somber and serious and then there was something light and fast and lively and happy and boy, he just did everything he could to look at those 75 verses. Now, it doesn't take four hours to read them. He turned that into three and a half to four hours of music.

They've never done all of the Messiah in one sitting, I don't think. Not in the recording studio. They do a little bit each day, you know.

That's meditation. Handel said, what does it mean? What should I say about it? Is this a frightening passage? A happy passage? Is this a serious passage? Should I picture joy or what should it be? He spent 24 days alone with those verses and God. When he was done, I wish it had been a clearer testimony but he said, I did see the great God.

I think he saw him in the scriptures. I think the Lord found him. As he read over those verses his friend gave him, he discovered that he needed the Lord.

I wish we had a better testimony than that but I know this, he was meditating. You can't spend that. He scarcely slept and ate and would not see anybody.

He was totally taken up in those Bible verses and I don't think that God has to change a note of that music. When we get to heaven we'll all be able to sing all those things, you know, that nobody can on earth. Meditation.

Bible meditation. Thinking about everything that God has done. Our thoughts are supposed to be stayed on Christ.

When things in life interfere that's not part of God's plan. You can mark it down. It's really part of the devil's plan.

If you're distracted from thinking about the God who made you and bought you with his blood that's too much distraction. And we work as Christians, don't we? I hope we do. To clear those extra things out of our life that God may have a fuller, a larger room in our heart, in our thoughts.

When the Lord write a book of remembrance there's a book of remembrance in heaven for those that thought upon his name. Just thinking on the name Jesus. That's what a lot of our music is.

Jesus, oh how sweet the name. Jesus, every day the same. Jesus, let all saints proclaim.

That worthy name of Jesus. The songwriter just thinking about the name Jesus. There's no other name like it.

He's our savior. Remembering the days of old. Meditating on God's works.

And then he says muse. And by the way, the root for music is muse. And it means to think.

If you go to the fair or the circus or whatever you call it when it comes to town and you get on those rides, you know, the Ferris wheel and the bullet and the scrambler and all the rest of those things. Roller coaster rides. And I'll tell you, for me it's six flags over nausea.

After you're 40, you can watch those things from the ground. You don't need to get on them anymore. You don't know where gravity is.

It's just a crazy thing to do. But kids, you know, they do that and they scream their heads off. They ride until they get sick and then they ride some more and they don't care.

They just get sick and keep going. That is what we call amusement. No thinking.

You just get on the ride and you go whoo. You know, and if you let go, it's supposed to be more exciting. I'll tell you what.

If I thought that that made it any more possible to fall out, that would not be exciting. Hanging on or letting go. I'm assuming those things are going to hold me in there or I'm not going to begin with.

But we don't think on the ride. We don't get on the roller coaster and go, I am going to contemplate the theory of relativity on this ride. I don't think so.

You might think about gravity, but you probably don't think about anything except how you feel. It's just a physical thrill. That is amusement.

It's not thinking. And how much amusement we want in our life is a real big question that we can put on that. But music means to think.

And from what David said, it means to think about what God has done before, everything that he's done, and to think on it, turn it every which way, comparing one scripture with another scripture, and to be thinking about everything that God has done from creation to Calvary. And that's what music is for. Do you know how many musicians in this world are playing music and you ask them what for? And they go, I want to make people happy.

And do they? No. I played for the crowds that wanted to be happy and I never made anybody happy. Some of them were so drunk that they didn't know what happy was.

They didn't know what we were playing either. They weren't listening. When I played that pop music, I was just ambience for their night of evil.

They didn't care if I played it well or not. They didn't care if I could sing it right or not. They didn't care if I got the right chords.

They didn't care what the song was about, just so long as they could dance. They didn't care what I was all about. And here I was trying to make people happy and it didn't even make me happy.

That's not the purpose of music. I got a neighbor, well he moved away now, his name is Jim. And he just kept asking me and asking me and asking me and asking me.

Doesn't God want me to be happy? And I hemmed and hawed for a long time and finally I said, No! Jim, God wants you to be obedient and then you will be happy. But he wants you to obey him first. Classic case of a man that says, I've trusted Christ but I've not given him my life for service.

What a waste. What a sad thing. But he can't be happy because he won't serve.

I said, Jim, you've got to give your life over to the Lord. You won't be happy otherwise. But the business of being happy, musicians think they're playing to make people happy and there might be a moment of entertainment involved but oh, what a much higher calling to take music and minister to the needs of men.

People have hurting hearts. People have great needs in their life. People need to know more of God.

It isn't anything else we need to find out in this world. We need to know the Lord better. We need to get his wisdom.

We need to get a hold of him and have his love in our hearts. We need to have his comfort. We need to have his strength.

And people all the time are looking for the help that they can get from God and we can do that ministering in music. People get just a glimpse of a God who cares for them. A God who wants to straighten their life out and bless them.

A God who can take care of all of our problems. And so real music, when the song starts, whether there's any lyrics or not, turns everybody's heart and soul and spirit to the God of our comfort. To the God who is our helper.

A very present help in time of trouble. To the only place they can get an answer from the God of the Bible, from the Lord Jesus Christ. There's no greater calling for music.

I know this. You can read stories of so-and-so. You know, there's some famous singer somewhere.

Well, I started in church when I was a little boy and then I went to the big time. Can I say something? And I don't mean it in a wrong way, but singing in the church with the Lord as your audience, even if it's for a handful of people, that is the big time. Singing for the Lord.

Singing as before the Lord. Singing unto the Lord. There's no higher calling.

I sang for the drunks for eight years. There was no pleasure in that. I sang for the crowd that didn't care about music and they didn't care what the subject of my music was.

I'd much rather sing for the Lord. He cares about what I'm singing. And if there's five Christians there or ten Christians there or twenty Christians there, they care what's being sung.

Even if it's just because they care about the Savior and they don't really care about me or my instruments or anything else. I know there's no higher calling than singing for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It's not so easy to learn to make Him your audience because we can't see Him.

Whom having not seen, yet ye love with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But if you learn that, you will never, and you know what the word is? When you sell out for money, when you head for the world, whether it's in music or any other talent that you have, when you give it to the world instead of to the Lord, that's called prostituting your gift. That's pretty low terminology, isn't it? I'd rather sing unto the Lord and be poor and get rich using music for the world.

I'm going to be in heaven and praising the Lord forevermore. Now is a good time for me to get started. So music means to remember everything God has done and encourage other people with it.

It means to think about it, what God has done and what it means in my life. What should I be doing because I know this about God or that about God. And then to be thinking.

Music is, you know, that headbanger stuff that people isn't... That's so they can shut off their thoughts because they have painful thoughts and they don't know what to do with them. And they just zap themselves out of reality. It's a drug.

Music is a drug when it's like that. They just disappear into a vortex of sound. God means for us to think about Him when the music starts.

And if, by the way, the music keeps you from thinking about the Lord or won't help you think about the Lord, that might be good music to turn off and just leave it alone. And there's plenty of that that we don't need. But let's go to the New Testament.

I said a definition of the parts of music. And this is so important too. Do you realize I don't need harmony and I don't need rhythm.

Those are just a little bit extra things that God gave us but I do need melody. And we'll see why in just a moment. Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. And here we find melody.

It's the same word that we use for the word Psalms. In Ephesians chapter 5, verse 18, of course, gives us that admonition to be filled with the Spirit. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess but be filled with the Spirit.

That's a speaking to yourselves. Music is for us. In some ways, you might say music is a selfish thing for everyone.

It does something to us. It talks to us. By the way, don't ever forget that.

If you let a piece of music in your life, you let it in your ears, you let it in your heart. If I let it in my life, it might just decide to take up residence and stay there for 40 years. Music talks to us.

It's going to say something to you and not just today. You go, well, I listened to it today but I don't want it tomorrow. Or you might say, well, it was worldly music today and yeah, it wasn't very good but you know, I'll forget it.

Oh boy, it'll pop up 10 years later when you don't want it. When I don't want it, music talks. What is the music you're storing away saying to you? You got to live with it.

I'm in some ways like the Apostle Paul. What I did most of the years in the rock band, I did ignorantly. Had I known what I know today, I never would have been there.

I can remember songs from 40 years ago. I can remember songs before I was in the band from 50 years ago. Things mother played on the radio.

Things my parents sang to me. But this verse says, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, not carnal songs, by the way, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. There's another thing that's wrong with rap, by the way.

You can see the way music is going. The first thing that we're supposed to have in our heart to the Lord when it comes to anything musical is a melody. None of this droning, you know, tease in the middle with a pickle on top or whatever the rappers are saying.

They're complaining in the streets is what they are. And in that same chapter that says happy is that people whose God is the Lord is a verse that says when there is no complaining in the streets. That's what the hippies did.

That's what the beatniks before them did. That's what the rappers are doing now and they're cussing while they do it. They're mad, but they don't have a solution.

They're just angry. The hippies were mad, but they didn't have a solution. We had a solution.

It was peace, man. They never had it. They never got it.

It was a satanic imitation. They were calling peace. Making melody in your heart to the Lord.

You're supposed to have a tune. When we're happy, God made us so that a melody strikes up even if we're not a singer. I know people that can't sing that write songs.

It's horrible trying to figure out what notes they mean when they sing them to you and it's all kind of droney, you know, but you can hear it. You can hear something is giving them joy and they've got a smile on their face and they sing this with the poor voice that they have, but you go, whoa, there's something there. It's a melody.

Melody is the most important part of music. With it, you and I commune with God. Because I do pray it, I think of this song almost always first.

Jesus, keep me near the cross. There a precious fountain. Why? Because I'm no good when I get far away from the Lord Jesus.

But oh, and the Lord keeps me close to him. Life is wonderful. And I can be a blessing to someone.

I need my life to count for God. I need my life to count in helping somebody else or my life has no meaning. So we sing that song.

It doesn't have to be fast or slow or any particular rhythm. I can sing Jesus, keep me near the cross or Jesus, keep me near the cross or Jesus, keep me near the cross. The rhythm doesn't matter at all.

I don't need rhythm. I just need a melody and I can pray to the Lord. All I need is a tune and I can sing my prayer unto the Lord.

That's what David did. That's what his psalms are. And the word for psalms and the word for melody are the same word.

And in the concordance, it tells us that that word means to celebrate the divine worship with instruments and accompanying odes. A melody is to have instruments with it. Yes, in New Testament times too.

Just like the psalms did in the Old Testament. There are some people that teach that the instruments are wrong and they are very wrong. I'm sorry that they think it.

We, in short, worship God. We praise God. Maybe that's a better word and they don't mean the same thing.

Praise and worship are two different things. But music, melody, means to praise God. So I don't need to have any particular accompaniment here.

We'll put a little harmony to our melody. It's not the same note, but it matches. It blends.

So if I sing, Jesus, keep me near the cross. There a precious fountain free to all a healing stream flows from Calvary's mountain. Harmony is a funny thing.

It matches. I played a single note there, like another voice, but I can play full chords. Jesus, keep me near the cross.

There a precious fountain. And so forth. Harmony works in different ways.

But we'll see what that is in just a moment. But the definition of melody is to pick up an instrument and ode, a poem. Pick up a poem and an instrument and sing that musical tune, whatever it is, a melody, to the Lord, to praise God.

I can think of lots of music written in this world, because the world is twisted and turned upside down. Lots of music that was never written to bring praise to God. You know where worldly music comes from? It comes from someone thinking that somehow he likes a bottle of liquor.

And so he writes a song about getting drunk. And that's his God, whether he wants it to be after a while or not. People write about the flings that they have and the affairs, adultery and fornication, God calls it, and they brag about it and they boast about it, because that is their God.

They live for illicit sex. There are people that write songs about fast cars. People that write songs about smoking cigarettes.

Can you believe that? There's been half a dozen of them for sure. There are people who write about getting away from the law. And there's people that write about getting caught by the law.

And there's people that write about brawling and fighting, because that is their God. And they write about all the fun they're going to have and the thrills they're going to have, because those are their gods. That's where music comes from.

Something stirs in our heart and we like it so much that we sing about it. That's where worldly music comes from. We sing about the Lord because we found out what? He first loved us.

Do you know how many songs have been written from 1 John 4, 19? I'm sure dozens and dozens of them. We love Him because He first loved us. Oh, how I love Jesus because He first loved me.

Lots of those. I'm so glad we can sing unto the living and the true God with our melodies. And that's what God meant for tunes to be all about.

If we don't do the world's music, we'll make beautiful melodies. Well, if it's beautiful enough, then it ought to be used in praise of God. And some of them have.

There have been some beautiful folk songs that have been turned into gospel songs. And they work because the music is decent. But oh my, what a sad thing for a person to write a song and doesn't even write it to point people to the God who made us and bought us with His blood.

Melody means to praise God. When our tunes are not directed toward God, they really don't fulfill the Bible description of what a tune is. We praise God because He's worthy to be praised.

Whether we're doing well financially, whether we're doing well spiritually or emotionally, whether we're doing well physically, whether things look good or not, God is worthy to be praised. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised, David said. That's what we're to do with our melodies.

Our heart will be lifted to heaven. Our prayers will be heard. His ears are open unto our prayers.

And our tunes will be what they're supposed to be if we follow the Bible. What about that harmony? We played a little bit of it there in Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross. It's just extra.

Harmony's extra. It's a backdrop for the melody. But we need to see a picture of it.

The word is not even in our English Bible. Just a picture of it. So I've got two little pictures in Ephesians chapter 4. It says in verse 16, a verse about the local church from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

That's a whole bunch of words. And they say this. God set up the solitary in families.

He took us out of the world, took us out of the life of sin and put us in a Christian family with others that were born into the kingdom of God. And said, now, I want you to find your place and I want you to be in your place and stay in your place and that's your job and that's my job, by the way. You find your place in the local church, it's never right to get so mad at sister so-and-so and brother so-and-so that you go, I'm never going to knock on the doors of that church again.

That's not right. You don't come to church because brother so-and-so is so nice and such a good Christian. And you don't come to church because sister so-and-so is so sweet and so godly.

You come to church to honor the Lord Jesus Christ who is always good to you and always good to me. You come to honor the Lord because He saved your soul and His word is truth and we need it and it doesn't matter. If you're not getting along with someone, do you ever stop thinking it might not be their fault, it might be yours? Me? Let's just make sure it's not.

But I know that I got so mad one day, like one fella said, I'm leaving the Baptist church. The worst things that ever happened to me happened in the Baptist church. Well, buddy, when you're a Baptist, that's all you are is in church pretty much.

And everything that happens to you, whether it's good or bad, happens in the Baptist church. So that's no argument at all. But I got so mad.

I was like that guy one day and I said, this guy did this and he said that and he cheated me and these people... I'm not going to be a Baptist. But when I read my Bible, I am one already. Is one.

Am one. And I finally said, those people can leave if they want. I'm staying here.

That's the picture. Well, not quite. That's not a good picture.

The picture of harmony is, I need to stay in my place. Okay? And if I'm right next to that brother, I need to love him in the Lord anyway. And if he really did me wrong, I need to forgive him as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven me.

For Jesus' sake, I need to get along with the worst rotten scoundrel that calls themselves a Christian for the honor and glory of God. Harmony. It says the building is fitly joined together.

It's talking about blocks. In a church building, you've got concrete blocks. And you put a little mortar between the sides and the bottom.

There's a little space between us. Now, if I get right in here, I'm in his face, right? That's not harmony. It's mortar between.

There's a little space. You've got to have that space between brothers and sisters. There's a too close and there's a too far away.

You don't say, Oh, I'm never coming back. That's like a divorce, isn't it? You don't want that. So, someone's got to say, I'm sorry.

Someone's got to say, forgive me. And then you have harmony. Here's a musical conflict.

Two brothers that can't stand each other. Rotten brother so and so and the other rotten brother so and so. Here they are, arguing.

You like that? Do that for half an hour. You get a headache and an upset stomach. Somebody's wrong.

That's too much clashing. That happens in marriages. That happens at work.

It happens in families. It happens everywhere. It happens in churches, unfortunately.

Conflict. I can't stand it. We're just butting heads all the time.

We just don't have any peace. You know what's got to happen? If this guy will quit hollering over here and just move back a little bit, you'll have peace. A right relationship.

Harmony. Now they're fitly joined together. There's that space with the mortar in between.

If we ever get that figured out, our marriages will stay together. This is a miracle of God. She's east, I'm west.

She's south, I'm north. I'm hot, she's cold. It just doesn't fail.

Not ever. How long have we been married? Seventy years? Seventy years. Thirty-five for her and thirty-five for me.

That's seventy. Don't laugh. I got my math right.

It's because God is... I will be honest. God is teaching us. We keep learning new things all the time.

God is teaching us that if it's not life or death, if it's not Bible doctrine, I can say I'm sorry. I can walk away and quit arguing. I can give her the space that she needs.

She's a person too. Look at her. You're a person.

You needed to know that, right? With the word of God, with prayer, with the grace of God, that's what harmony is all about. You get a clash. You get a conflict.

And then you resolve it with God. With the Bible. With the Holy Spirit.

And you have peace. The sinner says, I'm not a sinner. I'm not a sinner.

I don't have to get saved. There's no such thing as sin. The Bible's not true.

All the sinner has to do is say I'm an ungodly sinner. And I don't even deserve to go to heaven. But Lord, be gracious to me.

God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And save me. Peace with God.

Harmony is a picture of peace with God. Let me give you one other demonstration. I know you might say, what if that other guy's wrong? They're arguing still.

There they go again. They ought to quit it. Move the other one up out of the way.

And then we have harmony. For instance, if I play a, this is a real original piece. It came to rest, didn't it? Even a mild suspension, dissonance.

Like chopsticks. There has to be a resolution. And that's what harmonious music teaches us.

You got a problem? Solve it with God. You don't end the song. Can you imagine pop music, you know, with all their chords? Always with dissonance in it.

Never seems to come to rest. Never seems to come to an end. The jazz musicians, they're even worse.

They use these hot chords, you know. And you're just supposed to take it, you know. Dissonance.

Conflict. And God means for us to be in the right place. And it'll take the grace of God to hold a marriage together, to hold the church people together, to keep peace at a workplace, even at school.

But that's what harmony is all about. That's the picture of harmony there. Fitly joined together.

And then the church can grow. Then the family can grow. Then the marriage can grow.

And so forth. The other picture is for a carpenter. It's in chapter 2 of Ephesians.

And it says in verse 21, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. We grow up to be a holy temple in the Lord when we all know our place. Now, I'm not a builder, but they build those things, I don't know, what, 14, 15, 16 inches apart? The studs, they call them, those 2x4s that aren't really 2x4 because they want to save money and they're less.

They make them smaller than they used to. But anyway, they're in a certain spot and then there's space in between them. And that's fitly framed together.

Everyone has a place. And my job isn't to put my brother in his place. My job is for me to get in my place.

You and I got enough to do to keep ourselves in the right place. And if we stay in the right place, I told my children too. And I tell myself, I talk to me sometimes.

I like me, mostly. I said, you can walk with God if nobody else does. You can do right if nobody else does.

That's peace with God. I want to stay right with God. I had a heart attack 2 years ago.

I know more than I ever knew and I've known it since I've been saved. But I might just meet God tonight or tomorrow. I want to meet Him right with Him.

I know I'm saved. I'm not worried about hell. But I'm worried about answering to God for not living for Him and not being right and not keeping my sin confessed.

And I don't want to go to heaven that way. I want to be right with God. I want to keep my sin confessed.

And I want to have a happy, victorious, fruitful, Christian life. Harmony with God first. Then I'll know how to make that harmony with other people and get rid of the dissonance.

But the definition of harmony shows us that there's a right place for notes. The end result. When you listen to some music and it leaves you all ruffled and rattled inside, something's wrong with the way that thing was written.

It ought to be satisfying. It ought to be peaceful. It ought to make you think about having a right relationship with God and with your spouse and with your parents and with your children and with your neighbors and with your friends in church and so forth.

Anyway, we need to go on and finish up here tonight. But that's the picture of harmony. It means to join.

To join. Harmony joins the melody to the rhythm. And harmony joins itself to the melody.

It does it in various ways and I played them just real quickly for you. But let's look at rhythm. We did preach something on it last time but I just want to say something again.

Here these things about music have to do with peace with God and having a right relationship to God. They have to do with praising God. They have to do with thinking about God.

They're all related to the Lord because He made music and gave it to us to be a blessing. But John chapter 7 in here he's going to talk about rhythm and guess what? It has to do with living water. It has to do with drinking that water from God where you never thirst again.

Have you drunk the water from God where you'll never thirst again? That living water that He says we need. He told the woman at the well she needed it. That's what rhythm is all about.

It says in the last day in John 7 37 and 38 that great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried saying if any man thirsts let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as the scriptureth said out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. We drink this and we thirst again.

I drank the whole glass now tonight and I still am thirsty after it's all done. But Jesus has living water and yet that's the picture that water just flowing when I swallow it. It says he that believeth on me as the scriptureth said out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

When we get saved the life giving spirit of God however He does it flows through the Christian and God means it to be that way unless we get out of fellowship with God and we shut off the blessings the Lord's hand is not certain that He cannot save neither is His ear heavy that He will not hear but your iniquities have hit His face from you. We can shut off the blessings but God doesn't give us jolts in life it's not a 220 zap from the socket. His Holy Spirit would supply and supply and supply like a river of water running.

Oh that thou hadst hearken to my commandments Isaiah 48 in verse 18 I think it is or 42 18 Oh that thou hadst hearken to my commandments then had thy peace been as a river.

God gives peace when we follow what He tells us to do when we follow His word and that peace is a picture of rhythm it's a river flowing rhythm means to run like water when the director directs do you know what this is? he's waving his arms these are ripples of water this is a river his hands don't stop they don't go like this they're not robotic they're not stiff they flow they're fluid because the picture of rhythm is that it flows and if the director could it would be like this I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus but you couldn't get a choir to run along with him either for I found in him a friend so strong it's a river running rivers are beautiful rivers are powerful they're unstoppable you gotta bend in the road the river just takes it you got a tree branch here the river

goes through it you got a rock there it goes around it over it sometimes it's deep sometimes it's shallow sometimes it's wide sometimes it's narrow the river just keeps on going that's how you and I as Christians are supposed to be and the picture of rhythm isn't the pulsating it's like the blood flowing as the heart beats you don't hear the beats you just the blood flows in truth it kind of goes but it flows when we witness to someone out of our belly is flowing rivers of living water words of truth that people need and when the Lord is helping us we remember where the verses are and we know which ones to use and God uses us and so that same help from the Holy Spirit that flow is supposed to be in our life and so when we sing as Christians we sing and we talked about it earlier but we

sing in long flowing lines like a river and I like to sing that song it's one of my favorite songs but I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus since I found in him a friend so strong and true it's just a river flowing we just let that tone pour out and roll out and it's not supposed to stop and that's the important thing is that

the music moves forward with a pretty much irresistible force but it's not pounding all the way through that ruins the flow can you imagine you know I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus since I found in him a friend so strong and true that ruins the whole thing that's not flowing at all I'm just chopping chopping chopping chopping all the way through well we'll be here all night if I don't quit somewhere but I wanted you to see that rhythm has to

do with a flow of water running and so we work to make our our music move forward powerfully but it doesn't have to pound and pulsate I suppose it would in a march more than in any in anything but even there the most important thing is all the music happening in that space of time keeping a steady beat so a soldier could march to it but we don't have to pound like what we hear from modern music today definition of music to think about God and all that he's done definition of melody to praise God definition of harmony to have a right relationship especially and first with God definition of rhythm to run like water and it's living water it's the spirit of God flowing and working through us and that's the picture that we're supposed to gain wisdom from to guide our music so it's the right

kind of music I'm not going to go any further than that I could ask you a couple questions preacher why don't you come and musicians will close as he sees fit here but have you drunk from that fountain of living water where you don't thirst again do you have a right relationship to God and to your fellow man are you praising God and walking with the Lord are you thinking about the Lord all the day long where we fail that's where we need to ask for help maybe you're even here tonight and I don't know you all and you've never trusted the Lord you don't have that living water flowing through you you don't have the forgiveness of sins you don't have the hope and assurance of heaven Jesus is the only one who can give it to you he's died for your sins shed his blood for the remission of your

sins but he invites you to come to him and receive that gift of eternal life let's stand to our feet I'm going to pray with you and then turn this service over to pastor Hargett tonight he may know you all better than I do but with heads bowed and eyes closed can I just ask is there anybody here tonight you say I'm not even sure I'm a Christian and you'd let me know just slip your hand up and put it down real quick and I would know there's someone to pray for to be saved tonight you say I don't have that living water I don't know what it is I don't know that heaven is my home I don't have that peace with God nothing that you're talking about anyone like that could you just slip up your hand all right maybe then I'm talking to Christians and we'll pray in a moment but would you have to say

tonight I do need prayer I'm saved but things aren't right between me and God I don't have that harmonious peace like I ought to have I've got some sins to confess or I've got to make some things right with a brother or sister in church I tell you what it's a miracle for a church to stay together too it needs the spirit of God and the help of God but anyone like that I need God to help me there I want prayer just slip up your hand maybe you'd have to say I'm not the kind of witness where the living water just flows out of me and I want prayer for that anyone like that just slip up your hand amen amen you need to ask the Lord for that help thank you anyone have to say you know what a lot of days I'm not thinking about the Lord a lot of time I'm not thinking about the Lord I just want God

to help me with my thought life my thought life and you want prayer for that slip up your hand and we'll pray here in a moment and then we'll let preacher close amen amen thank God always for tender hearts dear father we do need help from thee may these verses be a help tonight may thy word be a help may the fellowship that we give to others as Christians be a help may preachers preaching and this council be a help Lord may thy Holy Spirit help us that we would be what thou would have us to be help us to set our

mind and heart to it and keep us from wandering keep us from straying keep us from being ever in a place where we are worthless now Lord we went longer tonight than we thought we would and we pray that when everyone goes home they'd be refreshed and have good sleep and be rested

for tomorrow but Lord before we go home maybe there's some that just need to bring their needs to thee and Lord we prayed together but maybe they need to talk to thee by themselves so Lord send that help from heaven and may we know it's thee and praise thee and thank thee for it we know we don't have our own strength and we cannot run in that so dear Lord send help and may we have the testimony that we have victory because of thy help in Jesus name Amen I'm going to let Pastor Hargit close you come talk to the Lord at the altar if there's still some things on your heart

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