

MS. A. 1. 1
9/25/60

Spiritual Songs Eph. 5: 8 - 21

In this: Our text this morning tells us, at least in part, what happens to a person who is Spirit-filled. And it is interesting to compare this passage with its companion verse in Col. 3: 16.

To be Spirit-filled is to let the Word of God dwell richly (largely, abundantly) in our hearts, and to let the Word dwell richly in our hearts is to be Spirit-filled.

Or to say it another way... To be filled with the Spirit is to be pervaded with the influence of or to be brought under the control of the Spirit, to be possessed fully by the Spirit... and the same can be said about the Word... he is possessed by, influenced by, controlled by THE WORD.

Read the book of Acts and see the intimate relationship between the Spirit and the Word. "... and they were all filled with the Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31 f). If you

were to take the scripture quotations out of the messages which are recorded in the book of Acts, there wouldn't be much of anything left. AND THESE HAD TO BE QUOTATIONS. It shows how the apostles had been feeding on the Word.

To be filled with the Spirit is a command, and so we cannot treat this truth lightly.

But my purpose this morning is not to deal primarily with the fullness of the Spirit, but rather to consider the first evidence of being Spirit-filled which Paul mentions -- SINGING.

It forever explodes the idea that the Christian life is a life of joy, and the more we abandon ourselves to the Spirit of God and to the Word of God, the deeper our joy will be. "The fruit of the Spirit is ... joy" (Gal 5:22).

Now I do not pretend to be an authority on music. But I do want to consider with you what the Word has to say about music and singing because this is vitally related to the spiritual life.

I. What are we to sing? Spiritual songs. And spiritual songs have to do with the Spirit and the Spirit has His primary concern.

Spiritual songs are those which are the musical expression of the Word.

It seems that the best way to distinguish between these three terms is that

- (1) Psalms are the OT Psalms, or similar compositions
- (2) Hymns, are songs of praise to God.
- (3) And that ~~these~~^{together} constitute what Paul calls Spiritual Songs.

Take the Psalms for example, written out of deep, precious experiences with the Lord, and expressing the deepest confidence in the Lord and His power.

Contrast that with ~~the~~ some of the light, frothy stuff we call Christian music today. As far as I can see there is no place in the church to use Christian music just to let off steam. Sing something else for that.

Even young people will come back to the old hymns. Ill. Front Creek + the Inter-Varsity Hymnal.

II. Why are we to sing? Our text gives us three reasons which are born out by the Word.

- A. To express your joy. James says, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." (Jas. 5:13 b).

What do you sing when you are happy? What a tragedy that we often know more popular dance music than we do about spiritual songs! To listen to popular music and to dwell on that is going to affect you spiritually.

- B. To edify other Christians -- "speaking to yourselves". Cf Eph. 4:12, 16, 29.

This is done in congregational singing. What a blessing it is to all of us to sing together.

And this should be the purpose of sole work -- not to display our talents, but to minister to the saints. Ill. George Anderson at MCC. There is no place in scripture for parading our gifts.

And this leads me to my third point as to why we should sing.

- C. To glorify the Lord.

What is the first spiritual song in scripture? Exodus 15. What was the occasion? What is its outstanding characteristic? Praise to God. Moses is not even mentioned.

See also the song in Rev. 5:9.

Do I dare try to take the glory to myself when all of the glory belongs to the Lord?

III. How are we to sing? In our hearts, from our hearts, with our hearts.

The Lord is not half as concerned about what it sounds like, as where it comes from. Be the best singer you can, and get all the training you can get, but remember that it has to come from your heart or God will not hear it, nor will others be blessed by it.

Col. 3:16 says, "singing with the grace in your hearts to the Lord."

If you will begin now to let the word dwell nicely in your hearts it is going to have a radical effect on the songs that come out of their hearts.

Concl. And now let us sing.
We have had the word.
Let us worship the Lord
in song - a hymn of
worship
"and Can It Be", no.