

(Youth Bible School 2007) Christ Is the Believer's Song

by John D. Martin

John D. Martin's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of song in the life of a believer, illustrating its biblical significance and practical application.

Duration: 1:08:40

Topics: "Effective Communication", "Gods Message"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the principles of effective expression in public speaking, writing, and music composition. He emphasizes the importance of repetition in order for the audience to remember the message. However, he also highlights the need for variety in the way the message is presented, such as through stories, quotes, and analogies. The speaker also mentions the significance of having a conclusion to bring the message to a satisfying end. He relates these principles to the concept of God's new song, emphasizing the need for repetition, variety, and a conclusion in order to have maximum effectiveness in expressing God's message.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, it's a delight to be here again for this session.

I will be leaving immediately after this session because I have two talks tomorrow and one on Sunday morning somewhere else. And I'm sorry I can't be here for the weekend, but I'm telling you this so that you pray for me. I'm going to a little church that's struggling to keep a Christ-like standard.

And they asked me to come and give a talk on Anabaptist history, Anabaptist beliefs, and Sunday morning nonresistance. I'd like to take Dean Taylor along with me, but he won't go. So that's what I'll be doing, but I'll be thinking about you folks.

I might be back Sunday evening, but there's a dear young man who's going to try to give a talk or going to give a talk on a case for a careful lifestyle. And I really want to hear his message, a dear young man that I think needs our encouragement. So you pray for us this weekend.

I think there's some victories that need to be won there. But I want to thank you for your excellent attention, for the blessing you've been to me. I'm going to go back home knowing that there's 500 and some young people that are going to go out there and live for the Lord with a passionate burning heart.

You know what I look for in the life of a Christian? I look for their passion for Jesus. That's what I look for. That zeal that we were talking about the other day.

I think the Jews were on to something. I think the zeal is the dividing line between those who are in it for real and the whole way to the end and those who are half-hearted. Well, I have been asked to give my messages on music today.

And I know some of you have heard these. That's fine. I hope I can bless you again.

The title of this is going to be Christ the Believer's Song to fit in with the titles that I had for my Ephesians lessons. Christ the Believer's Song. And I want you, after we pray, to turn to 280 in the hymnal.

And we'll start there with that. But before that, let's bow our heads for prayer. Father, we thank you so much that you're a God who loves to hear our praise.

And we thank you that you're a God who is kind and benevolent and a God that has done everything, from your standpoint, for our welfare and to redeem us and to change us and to make us your children and to have us finally dwell with you and share everything that you have. Father, we don't understand. We're lost in wonder, love, and praise, as the songwriter said.

Why you would want us to be part of your family and share everything that you have, I don't know, but we just know it must be a love that we don't completely understand. But help us to give back to you what you deserve by the fruit of our lips. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Would you turn now to 280. I want you to sing this song, and then I want to talk a little bit about how this song came to be.

Two verses. O soul, guide me, O thou great Jehovah pilgrim, through this barren land. I am weak, but thou art mighty.

Hold me with thy powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more. Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain whence the healing streams do flow. Let the fiery, cloudy pillar lead me on my journey through. Strong deliver, strong deliver, be thou still my strength and shield.

Be thou still my strength and shield. Now, if you would go back in history 200 years to the little area of the British Isles known as Wales, you probably would have seen streams of workers walking to work, a lot of

them to work in the mines. And as they were going, you would be hearing this song sung.

Because this song for many years, and I think even still to a certain extent, is the most popular song, practically the national anthem of the country of Wales. Now, the reason for that is because there was a man who lived there who you probably have not heard much of. He actually was a contemporary with John and Charles Wesley and traveled about half as much distance as what John Wesley did and did a notable work that many people are not aware of.

How many have ever heard? If you notice here, you can look at the top of the hymn and see who the hymn writer of the words were. And the man who wrote the melody of the music also was Welsh, but he wrote it sometime later. But how many recognize or have heard of, except you probably heard these messages, you heard me talk about it.

How many heard of William Williams? Not a very popular name. Well, William, you heard about the Welsh revival that happened in the 1800s. This Welsh revival that I'm talking about took place in the 1700s.

There have been two Welsh revivals. And this William Williams was the one who was largely responsible for that first Welsh revival. And he was a songwriter.

He was also a preacher. He was the John Wesley, the Charles Wesley and the Isaac Watts all wrapped in one in Wales. He wrote something like 800 songs.

And this song became the most popular one. It was translated into something like 75 languages. But the Welsh revival that I'm going to talk about was unique in all of the history of revivals.

And that is there was almost no preaching. Now, he was an outstanding preacher, but there wasn't much preaching in the Welsh revival. Because he wrote these songs and sent the whole country singing these wonderful hymns.

And even if there was preaching, before the preaching got very far, somebody would break into one of these songs and the whole service would be sung and people began to respond to Christ just because of the singing. And that's the way I want to introduce the message today. I don't think we realize the tremendous supernatural potential of song.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. God's people were told that. And we're going to be looking at some incidents in the Bible that show us the power of song.

Whether it's the revival in Wales, whether it was the deliverance in Israel under Jehoshaphat, where you remember they marched out singing into the battle, and we'll look at that scripture here a little bit later, or whether it was the Anabaptist movement, song was a very great and significant part not only of the revival, but the power of the revival. So the first thing that I would like to look at is that when we sing, God comes to dwell in our experience. I want you to turn to 2 Kings 3, verse 15.

I just want to talk a little bit about the importance of song, but I'm going to be spending probably the most of my time talking about a way to evaluate what kind of songs are the best. I'm looking into the eyes of idealistic young people. I was young once, and I remember what it was like to be idealistic and want the very best.

In the area of music, nobody told me that, and I had to sort of discover that myself as the years went by. But I'm not going to put down what I call the music that isn't as good of quality as the kind of music I'm going to promote. I see a continuum from excellent music to bad music.

And there are songs that we sing that are better than others, and I'm just going to point you to those beautiful hymns, and I'm going to show you why they're beautiful. I'm going to show you why they endure when the other songs sort of fall by the wayside. All right, now I hope that you have all gotten to 2 Kings 3, verse 15.

And in this case, Judah and Israel and Edom had gone out to battle against Moab under the king of Israel, who was an ungodly king. And they got there on the way to the battle, and they ran out of water. Now, it certainly would be a disastrous thing for a whole army of people to run out of water and not have enough water.

And so they said, well, there's a prophet around here. His name is Elisha. Let's go and see what he has to say about this situation, see if he can help us.

And the first thing Elisha said is, well, if it was just you, king of Israel, who was coming to me, I'd have nothing to do with you because you're a heathen and you don't love God, and I wouldn't help you. But since Jehoshaphat is with you, yes, I'll help you. So let's start reading in verse 13.

And Elisha said to the king of Israel, what have I to do with thee? Get thee to thy prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay, for the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee.

But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And then he prophesied.

That's interesting to me. Music has something to do with inviting spirits into our experience. If it's good songs, good spirits will be attracted.

And bad spirits will be driven away. Remember the case of King Saul. David played songs and the evil spirits departed.

Now the opposite is true. There's a certain kind of music that attracts bad spirits. And we want to make sure that we're singing the right kind of songs.

But if we're singing the right kind of songs, and the right kind of spirits are invited into our experience, remarkable things sometimes happen. A number of years ago, we were visited by two very interesting people, DCO and Olivia. They had spent most of their lives in Christian service.

He was originally from Argentina. I don't know where she was from. And they came into our home.

She brought her concert harp. She was a pianist. He was a singer.

And they told us an experience they had in Atlanta, Georgia. They were visiting the city and they were in a motel room. And they did not get the message that had gone out across the city, that there were killers loose in the city.

And everybody was to keep their doors locked and be careful of strangers. And they did not get that message. And they left our hotel door open because they were expecting friends.

And they wanted the friends to be able just to walk in. And in walked two of these thugs that had already murdered a couple people in the city of Atlanta. They didn't know that.

But these thugs said lie down on the floor. The pattern was they would have their victims lie on the floor and then they would shoot them in the back of the head. And D.C.O. did what they said.

But Olivia did not. And they kept ordering her to lie down on the floor. And she refused to do that.

Instead, she stood up from where she was. She walked straight toward these killers. And she started singing, Jesus loves me, this I know.

And they kept ordering her to the floor. And she kept walking toward them until she was almost nose to nose. Singing, Jesus loves me, this I know.

And they fled. Now, I'm not saying the stories always end that way. But the question I have to ask you, if someone walked into your house like that, what would you do? I don't think I've ever had any audience that hasn't heard me tell this previously say that they would sing.

Some people say they would pray. But I have never had anybody raise their hand and honestly say that if somebody like that walked into their house, the first resource they would think of, along with prayer, I think both of these are important, I'm not minimizing prayer, is they would think to sing one of the songs of Zion. And I hope you remember that, if this should ever happen to you, because we're living in an increasingly violent world, and this may very likely be your situation, to get into a dangerous situation sometime, and whether you live or you die, to sing is a tremendous resource, and it carries with it a tremendous power, because the Bible says that God inhabits the praises of his people.

And I think this is one of the most unused resources that we have. Let's look at something else about singing. So, singing invites the spirits into our experience, whether it's the spirit of God or evil spirits, and we can decide by what we want to sing, what kind of spirits we're going to invite by the songs that we sing.

I'd like for you now to turn to 1 Chronicles 25, 1 Chronicles 25, to show you something else that happens when we sing. There was a man one time that understood what I'm talking about. His name was David.

And when David became king of Israel, one of the things he did very early in his kingship was to establish music as an important institution in Israel. Are you aware of the fact that David set up an institution where there were 4,000 musicians who were paid to praise God in the temple all of the time? How many knew that? Three hundred and some of those, 320 some of those, I think, were trained especially to go throughout Israel and teach Israel to sing. And David, of course, wrote a hundred... Well, he didn't write, but finally there were 150 songs gathered together by David and his people, and that became the Book of Psalms.

And I don't think that it is all a coincidence that the high-water mark of Israel and its power and its glory was under King David. I think it had a lot to do with David's understanding that the continual praise of God is one of the most important things in our lives. And I also think it's no mistake that the devil makes sure that you don't sing, especially the men.

I taught Christian day schools for 16 years, and most of the high schools that I went to... I taught in three different high schools, and I went there, and I was to teach music as one of the things, and all... No, I'm sorry, two of them, not the third one, but two of those high schools... No, three of them. I'm sorry, I taught in four high schools. Three of the high schools, the boys were not singing.

In fact, the last high school I taught in, there were 27 students in the high school, and I think about 10 of those were boys, and not a one of the boys would sing, and most of the girls would not. And the teacher who was there the year before says, have fun teaching music to this bunch. I had to sing a solo in devotions every morning.

Listen, that is a work of the devil, and he knows what he's doing. He knows what he's doing. And, you know, there are a lot of communities where for the boys, singing is not macho, it's sissy, and they won't do it.

Now, I don't gather that here at all, but I'm just saying, I think the devil knows that this resource, if it were ever used the way David saw it used in importance, he would be up against and in a tremendous foe. And so my word to you is, use this resource. God has given us this tremendous resource, and he's made this all so it works the way it works.

When you need wisdom, sing. When you need power, sing. When you need whatever, sing.

And here's another thing that I'm concerned about. A lot of us are involved in music as an interest, but there's a lot of music listening, not enough singing. I mean, it's fine, put your CDs and your tapes and play them, that's fine, if they inspire you to sing.

If they're going to take the place of your song, listen, there's no promise when you shove that CD in there that the thugs are going to run out of the room. It's your song that God wants to hear. It's your song that's the resource for your own spiritual situation.

And you need to sing. And so that's all a little bit of preliminary there. Chapter 25 of 1 Chronicles.

Moreover, David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Juduthon. Look at this. Who should prophesy with harps and psalteries and with cymbals? Now we go back to Elisha.

What happened when they played? He prophesied. And so prophecy has to do with being able to understand God's will for the present moment. Lord, what am I supposed to do? Prophecy is a revelation of what God wants me to do right now.

Wisdom for right now. That will be the right thing to do no matter how far into the future the action extends. To be able to be prophetic is to do that.

And we need a word of prophecy. We need a word of wisdom many, many times. And David understood that if he was to have wisdom in the center of his kingdom, he was going to have to have music to inspire prophecy.

A lot of people aren't aware of this. Of the power and the wisdom and so on that accompanies the Christians' worship in song. And so that's what I'm trying to inspire you about.

Alright? Yes. They prophesied. So, let's turn now to 2 Chronicles 20.

And I want to show you a case in point. And you've all heard this story, but this part of the story you've probably never observed. This is the story where Edom and Ammon and Moab came up against Israel and Jehoshaphat knew they were outnumbered to even begin with.

And he immediately went to the Lord. And we're not going to go into the whole story. Let's start at verse 13 because I'm trying to get through a lot of stuff here.

And all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones and their wives and their children. Then upon Jehaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, and the son of Jael, the son of Madaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph. Who's that? That's one of the singers.

That's one of these people that David put in place to prophesy with music. Then upon him came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation. And he stood up and he prophesied.

Now, this institution that David had put in place to prophesy with symbols and all of that, it's working here. This is what's happening. This musician, and I think it was after they had been worshipping the Lord with song, he stands up and he prophesies.

He says, look, you people aren't going to have to fight in this battle. The battle's the Lord's. And you all know later on then you go down to verse 20.

And they rose early in the morning and went forth into the wilderness to Cohen. As they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established.

Look at this. Believe His prophets. And they were the musicians.

So shall ye prosper. And of course, they marched out singing. They didn't have to fight the battle.

The enemies all killed each other. They gathered up the spoil. It took them three days.

They go back to Jerusalem singing. And the story ends saying all the nations around them were in fear. Case in point.

All right? So my word to you is remember this as a resource. I love to be working with men and they're just singing spontaneously. I just love that.

I just love to hear men, especially men. I love to hear women sing too. I'm not minimizing that.

But because men don't do it as often as women do, it especially inspires me when the men do it. So when you're being tempted, sing. When you need wisdom, sing.

When you need the power to forgive somebody, sing. Whatever it is you need, sing. God dwells in the praises of His people and the joy of the Lord is your strength.

And He wants to give you direction. And He wants to use music as an important part of that. Listen to this verse.

Blessed are they that know the joyful sound. Can you quote the rest of the verse? You don't know that verse. Blessed are they that know the joyful sound.

They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. There's your prophetic function of music. Blessed are they that know the joyful sound.

They shall have light. They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. And so the first part of this message is just to inspire you to sing much more than what you're used to singing.

It's a tremendous resource that will help you with almost anything that's happening in your life that you need help with. And so, use it. That's why God gave it.

He intended for us to experience victory in our lives. Alright. Let's look a little bit at a couple of psalms that give us some insight into music and what we're supposed to sing about.

Would you turn to Psalm 96? Here in the first part of this psalm, it tells us three times to sing. Oh, by the way, singing is not optional. We're commanded to sing.

Now, I hope we don't do it just because of that, but we are commanded to sing. I think a lot of people think, well, you know, those people, they're singers. I'm not a singer.

Yeah, I'd let them sing or whatever. No, no, no, no, no. And listen to this.

I did teach music for 16 years in the Christian school and I've taught music in a lot of churches and there is virtually almost nobody that can't learn to sing. I think I've run across one or two. But if the Lord tells us we're to sing, then it's possible for us to sing.

Does God ever ask us to do something we can't do? Well, then don't tell anybody you can't sing. Because God has told you to sing. We had a man who used to come to our church and he could not carry a tune.

Literally, he couldn't. But boy, did he ever sing. Unfortunately.

He sat beside me in church one Sunday and he said, I'll never sit beside him again. He got me off the tune. But he sang.

And I'm sure that that was beautiful to God. But I think we should sing the best we can. I'm all for training.

Because in the New Testament, singing is the counterpart of the Old Testament sacrifices. It says it's the fruit of our lips. It's the sacrifice we give.

In the Old Testament, what kind of sacrifice did they bring? Did they go out and find a lamb that had a tail that was not there and a leg that was broken? They brought the best lamb they could bring. And it wasn't acceptable if they didn't. And if singing is our sacrifice to God, God is looking for you, first of all, to perfect your heart.

But also to perfect the song the very best you can. To give Him the very best offering you can give. Alright? Let's look here.

Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song. We're going to look at the new song here. How many know that the new song is actually in the Bible? We know exactly what the content of it is.

Oh, you didn't know it was there. Okay. We'll be looking at it.

Oh, sing unto the Lord the new song. Sing unto the Lord all the earth. There's the second one.

Sing unto the Lord. Third one. Bless His name.

Now, we find out there's a call here to sing. We found out who's to sing. Who's to sing? What's to say? The whole earth.

And what are they to sing about? Salvation. What's that mean? They're supposed to sing about how we're all going to go to heaven? What did I tell you salvation means? It means salvage. We're to sing about how God takes bad situations and turns them into glory.

That's what we're to sing about. The great salvaging, supernatural, life-changing God we have. That's what we're to sing.

Alright? For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised. Where did I stop? Declare His glory among the heathen. His wonders among all people.

For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols.

But the Lord made the heavens. The Lord made the heavens. I don't know what that says to you.

I love to look at the stars. How many of you like to go out and look at the stars? Oh, wonderful. Then I probably can't tell you anything about them.

How many recognize Orion? Good. That little star down on the right-hand corner. Rigel.

That's next to the brightest star in the sky. Now I'll test you. How many of you know how far that star is away? Now the scientists say this, but I don't put a lot of faith in the scientists.

How in the world can they measure the distances they talk about? They act like they know an awful lot, but I sort of doubt it. But anyway, they say it's how far away. Does anybody know how far away Rigel is? 500 light years, they tell us.

A light year is the distance that light travels in a whole year at 186,000 miles per second. That means that if you go out and look at Rigel tomorrow morning, you'll have to look at it in the morning. In the winter, it's a night constellation.

In the summer, it's in the morning. It'll be somewhere probably early in the evening. Yeah, that's probably where you'll see it.

I haven't looked at it for a while. But anyway, the light that you see coming from Rigel tonight started out when Columbus discovered America, and it's just now getting here. In fact, it might not even be there anymore.

It might have burned out 200 years ago, and it'll be another 300 years before anybody knows it. Light traveling at 186,000 miles a second. The Lord made the heavens.

The rest of these little pins are idols. They can't even handle themselves. You have the picture of Israel when they had to flee.

They had their idols on these horses, and these idols were jostling along, and the people were holding them so they didn't fall off. But the Lord made the heavens. We live in the galaxy called the Milky Way.

If you looked at it from a side view, it would look a little bit like this. A big disk with a hump in the middle. And when we look at it, we're looking at it this way so we see a band across the sky.

But if you were to be able to get out and look at it this way, that's how they say. I tell you, I don't put a lot of faith in what they say. But they say that's the way it looks.

The distance from here to here is 100,000 light years. Assuming, not assuming, believing that this Earth is only 6,000 years old, light has not reached one, it only has reached 0.6% of the distance across the Milky Way. It's only gotten about this far in all of human history, traveling at 186,000 miles per second.

The distance from here to here, they tell us, is 10,000 light years. That means that in all of recorded history, light has only traveled 0.6% of the distance of the width of the Milky Way at 186,000 miles per second. And this is only one galaxy.

They tell us that there are enough galaxies to give a galaxy to every human being on this Earth. That's 5 billion galaxies. And there's great distance between the galaxies.

Now, I don't know what this is doing to you. But when I lose my perspective, I go out and look up into the sky. And I say, that's my God.

My! He certainly can take care of my problems. And that's what David is saying. Sing unto the Lord.

Sing unto the Lord. Sing unto the Lord. All the Earth talk about His wonderful power and salvation.

He made the heavens. He deserves to be praised. Constantly.

Let's turn to Psalm 100. Wherever you guys go, I want to hear that you're a singing bunch. It blesses me to hear somebody say they came back from that Bible school and they've been singing every day ever since.

Can't get them to stop. That's what I'd like to hear. Psalm 100.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness. Boy, that's a switch from the heathen.

If the heathens sing at all, they sing in mournful chanting tones that is depressing. And our God says, I want to hear a joyful noise. I want to hear you.

I want to hear people who are happy. People who are glad. People who are joyful.

Know ye that the Lord, He is God. I'm sorry. Wait a minute.

I missed something. Come before His presence with singing. I want to say something else about singing.

You know, if you live back in the days when this was written, they had kings. And when you went to visit the king, you went into His presence with a wonderful gift, the best gift you could think of to give to the king. It was not appropriate to go into the presence of a king without a gift.

And if God is the great king, it's not appropriate to go into His presence without a gift. You don't just go rushing into God's presence. In fact, I would suggest that before you start your quiet time in the morning, that you would sing.

Because God wants us to enter into His presence with singing. He's told us here specifically how He wants us to come and how we enter His presence. And that's why I say that when we sing, we invite spirits or we open the way into the presence of God.

Something about God and His presence is all wrapped up here in song. And so, let's use this tremendous resource to have God be a part of our experience in every situation. Know ye that the Lord, He is God.

It's He that made us and not we ourselves. We're His people and the sheep of His pastors. He's a father.

He's a shepherd. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name.

For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations. Alright, so much for inspiring you that you should sing. Now, what are we going to sing? But before we get into that, I'd like for you to turn to an interesting passage in 1 Chronicles chapter 12.

And we're looking down there at about verse 32. And it's going to say something about the children of Issachar. Now, Issachar, of course, was one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

And Saul had died. And the dynasty of Saul tried to continue for a number of years under Ish-bosheth. And David was, at that time, then king over Judah.

But he was not king over all Israel. And Issachar, the children of Issachar, were the ones that came to the conclusion, hey, it's time to bring David to Jerusalem and crown him king over all twelve tribes. But it's interesting what it says about these people.

It says, of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. They were prophets. And I'm only bringing this verse in to say it's time for some people to take a real hard look at music and say, God, what are we to do with all the options we have with music? And I want you to be like these children of Issachar.

Music is very powerful, as we just said. Even the heathen knew that. Plato said the introduction of a new kind of music is to be shunned as imperiling the whole state, since the styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions.

And Aristotle said, Music directly represents the passions or states of the soul. If one listens to the wrong kind of music, he will become the wrong kind of person. So it is important what kind of music we sing.

And I want to point you to what I consider the best and I want to explain to you why it is the best. Would you turn to Revelation chapter 5? I promised you we would look at the new song. But before we look at it, I want to explain something about anything that's going to have the maximum effect in terms of expression, whether it's writing an essay, whether it's giving a public speech, or whether it's writing a song.

There's a basic concept that has to be obeyed for maximum effectiveness. And you can ask anybody you want to. They'll say, if you do this, this, and this, you'll have a good essay.

It'll have the maximum impact and probably people will read it and pass it around and say this is something everyone should read. And if you are going to give a lecture or preach a sermon, here are some basic principles that you'll want to follow for it to have its maximum effect. And if you were to listen to Brother Denny with this in mind, or Brother Dean, you will see that they obeyed these principles.

That's why you found them easy to listen to, and that's why you found that their messages were so powerful. I mean, to say nothing, of course, of the Spirit of God involved with it. But there was something about the way they were presented that had something to do with the effect that they had.

There are two basic principles. I'm going to give you a course in public speaking, writing, and music composition. It's going to take me five minutes.

All right? The first thing that you've got to do is make sure there is sufficient repetition. How many of you have ever gone somewhere to church and the preacher preached a sermon and he had 50 points? And when you got home, somebody said, what was the sermon about? And you had no clue. Don't raise your hands.

That's a problem. On the other hand, if the preacher only had three points, and like Brother Denny does, he just keeps on hammering away. He keeps emphasizing those points until you can't forget them.

There's enough repetition there. There's got to be a certain amount of repetition. We're forgetful people, and somebody has to keep, you know, they might be talking, but they have to keep pounding away what it is they're talking about for us to remember.

However, if you only have repetition, you're going to tune out eventually. Boredom. Okay? So there's one other principle.

It's called variety. You've got to have repetition, but not the same way every time. So, you know, this person's repeating this, but then he tells a story or he gives a quote or he gives an analogy or, you know, anyway, to emphasize that.

But in many, many different ways, he's repeating the same point, but he's doing it in different ways. And so if you have repetition, people will remember what you had to say. If you have variety, it will bring out all kinds of shades of meaning of the things you have to say, plus it will make it interesting.

And then, I must add this. There must be a conclusion. Okay? Those are the three basic principles of effective expression.

And the interesting thing is we find it here in this new song. God's new song. I mean, you would expect that.

You would expect that if this is what good communication consists of, that God's song would have this. And it has it. We find an introduction to a theme.

We find the theme varied. And we find the theme concluded. Now, the problem with much music today is there's scads of repetition.

Not much variety. And often the song goes nowhere. It just sort of ends.

It goes round and round. A little bit like music does in eastern countries because that's their religion. That's their idea that life goes round and round.

Incarnation, it just keeps going round and round. It doesn't go anywhere. But we are Christians.

We believe that life goes somewhere. And our message should have that concept that we're moving somewhere with this message and it moves along with repetition and variety and it comes to a satisfying conclusion. Now, look what we have here.

We have the theme introduced. Verse 8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty-four elders, which represent the church, the four beasts may be the Gospels, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints, and they sang a new song. Here it is.

Thou art worthy. That's the theme. Thou art worthy.

That's going to be repeated over and over. To take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests that we shall reign on the earth. You're worthy because you've redeemed us and you have made us priests and you have made us kings and we're going to reign.

These people who were really messed up. You have redeemed us and not only did you redeem us from destruction, but you made us into kings and into priests. What more could you ask? And we're going to reign on the earth.

And you're worthy because you did this. That's the theme. Every good song has a theme.

And it gets repeated. And you know it's the theme because it keeps coming back. If you're listening to Beethoven's Ninth, the theme is da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da and he does all kinds of stuff with that, but that theme keeps coming back.

It ties the whole song together. That's the theme. This is the theme.

Here it is. Alright? So we start out with the four beasts and the four and twenty elders. Now the angels join.

And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts 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. And now we have a variation. Instead of giving the reason why he's worthy, they simply express and describe his worthiness.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. Now we have the four beasts, we have the four and twenty elders, we have the angels, and now we have every creature. I mean this is going to be quite some song.

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth forever and ever.

So we have repetition, we have variety, and we have a conclusion to this. Now if you could just transfer that principle to musical composition without any words, I mean we're going to have words of course, but I'm talking just about the music. The music that obeys that concept is properly balanced to be a kind of song that you will sing and sing and sing and sing and never get tired of it.

The music that doesn't get composed that way, that has too much repetition, or if it has too much variety and no theme that keeps coming back. We are just simply constituted that that song is not going to have the same impression on us. And it's going to be the kind of song that if you sang it ten times in a row you'd want to sing something else real quick.

You'd be tired of it. But I'm going to point you to some songs that we sing and we could sing them every Sunday. And there would be some people maybe that would get tired of them, but most thinking people would not.

Alright. I hope I wasn't too hard on anybody. Would you turn to number five? Alright.

Now these songs are the best. And I want you to learn to like this kind of song. Because these are the songs that will endure.

After heaven came down and glory filled my soul has finally passed off the scene and they bring in the next one. That's not the kind of song we're talking about. Now mind me, don't go out of here saying I said that was a bad song.

It's not a wicked song. It just isn't as good as this. And we're going to aim for the best.

Okay? Look what this thing does. So me do, re do ti do. That's the theme.

Alright. Then we have a little variation. Look what it does.

So me do so. Okay. So now we have a theme.

We have the theme repeated. The so me do theme. But then it doesn't do the same thing.

It goes down to a so. Where before, it went up to that re do ti do thing. So you see, we have a subtle repetition with a little bit of variety.

Then we have something altogether different. Then, come and reign over us, inverts the theme. Do me so so.

Then we have a conclusion. And the conclusion in many of these hymns is simply the highest note in the song. Notice, the highest note in the song is that la.

And you hear this thing build up to that la. And this song really does it nice. The highest note in the tenor is a la.

So you have a high point in the soprano. And then you have a high point in the tenor. So you have a double high point with a tremendous conclusion to this song.

And when you sing it, you respond to that. I mean, there's something in you that just responds to the way this thing builds up. And you have this theme.

And it's repeated. And there's a variety. And then there's this tremendous conclusion.

Let's sing it. And just feel how this is. You're used to this song.

But now, sing it with new ears. Okay? Don't be so calm, thou almighty king. Help us, thy name to sing.

Theme. Father of glorious, all victorious. Oh, we've got to sing another verse of that.

To the great one in three. Eternal praises be. Hence evermore.

His sovereign majesty. May we in glory see. And to eternity.

That's a truly classical song. In the sense of the word classical, that it's enduring. Classical simply means at all places in the world, in all times of history.

People respond. In a very, very powerful way. To something.

Okay, let's turn to number 18. Now we have a contemporary composer, John Overholt, who did the same thing with this. And I'm trying to show you that it's not always done the same way.

Now, the theme in this song is those two does. Oh, let us worship. Then it goes.

It does that four times in this song. That, come that. There's two high does.

That's the thing. Very simple thing, but it keeps coming back again and again. And it's interesting to me that of all John Overholt songs, and I've been listening to see who's, which ones people are saying now they like, I will abide in that dwelling place forever.

I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand, but I sort of get the impression that that song is not wearing it's a nice song, but it's not wearing as well as this one. This is the one that everybody keeps singing over and over. I'm telling you why.

All right. Then we sing. Oh, come, let us worship before our great Lord.

Come kneel down before him in reverence and fear. And then we do it again with Thanksgiving praise and in hearing his word. And then the high point of this song is not a high note, but it's those six, seven so's.

So, so, so, so, so, so at the end. I mean, that just makes a strong concluding musical statement. All right.

I want you to notice the subtle repetition there in reverence and fear, which is very similar to for our great Lord up in that first line. It's that same pattern. And you sense that when you're singing it, that there's just a little bit of repetition there.

And then, of course, he repeats the first part of the song. And then we have this tremendous, solid ending. Let's sing it.

And this song, I think, will wear down through many generations. And I'm telling you why. Because it fits the classical style that the new song that we're going to sing in heaven fits.

As far as the words are concerned, whether it's words, whether it's music, these are principles that enduring things obey. Do, mi, so, do. O come, let us worship before Him.

Repeat. Come kneel down before Him. Here's repetition.

Repetition. Repetition. It's unique.

Number 138. And we desperately need people that move our worship toward this type of song. Especially, there are a lot of songs written in this style that there's little two-line songs that people don't tend to get

real excited about.

But I do want to say something about them. Those two-line songs are common meter, long meter, and short meter. And I don't have time to explain that.

And most of the best English hymns, in fact, all of the hymns of Watts are written in those meters. And many of the best English hymns are written in those meters. And if people do not enjoy what we're talking about and aren't going to sing those little two-liners, they're going to miss the best in English hymnody.

So, learn to enjoy this kind of music. All right. This is Lift Your Glad Voices.

I simply will say, it begins on a low do, it ends on a high do, and you see the high point of the soprano is at the last line. And then we have a little bit of subtle repetition. Bain were the terrors that gathered, and then it does the same little thing with different notes.

That's a little repetition thing that's in there that adds to this classical style and makes this song the unforgettable hymn that it is. Let's just sing one verse. Do, lift your glad voices in triumph on high, for Jesus has risen and men shall not die.

Bain were the terrors that gathered, and sure the... How many can feel these songs going somewhere? They're going somewhere. They have a true Christian philosophy of onward and upward. All right, 141.

Now, I told you that these composers did not do what I described in the same way. They had their ways of doing this, but it's there nonetheless. Notice what this song does.

This is a very interesting song. Do, me, do. So, we have a bottom note, and then it's up an interval and down.

Then we have a me... I'm sorry, so, la, so. We have a note that goes up just one step and down. Then we have three notes.

It goes up an interval and down. Another measure goes up a step and down. See the pattern that's being established? And then, of course, we have a variety there.

Then we have it inverted. We have an interval down and up. Then we have, again, a step up and down.

Then we have an interval down and up. And we have a step up and... that goes up and down. And then we head for the conclusion.

And it's no wonder to me that this song is a perennial favorite. It has been for hundreds... well, however long it's been. Yes, it's been over a hundred years in our congregations.

And by the way, we're the only people that sing this song. I've never seen this in another hymnal. I have no idea where it came from.

But it is a great favorite of our people, and it's sung over and over again, and nobody gets tired of singing it. Because it's constructed in a way that speaks to us in the most effective way. Let's sing it.

Tosomi Do, rise, glorious cock, and rise into thy native skies, awesome thy right. And wherein many a fold the clouds are back, with broad paths through the state of golden rain in light. To say nothing of the fact that it also has the pattern of quarter notes, and then a dotted quarter, and an eighth, and a quarter.

Then quarter notes, a dotted eighth, and a quarter. It also has that pattern built into it, into the rhythm. All right, let's turn to number 23.

Again, by one of our own composers, John David Brunk. You notice what it does? Great God, indulge my humble claim. Thou art my hope, my joy, my rest.

Then we have the very same thing. The glories that compose, and there's where it's the same to that point, and then it heads for the conclusion. So, we have repetition in the second sentence, but the repetition is not complete.

It tacks some variety onto the end of it, and then it heads for the high point of the song. And that's the reason why, you know, there are people that grew up in the Chambersburg church when we sang out of the church hymnal, and then for years, the church sang out of the Christian hymnal until this came out. And I meet people who are no longer part of the Mennonite church who, when they talk to me about the music, they say, do you folks still sing number 11? This is number 11 in the church hymnal.

This song, of all the songs we sang, is still in their memory, and it's built on almost perfect classical principles of musical expression. Let's sing it. And altos, by the way, at the end, be sure you sing that re there above make.

I always listen for that dissonant chord, and if you don't sing it, I'm going to have a little bit of a grudge against you. Alright. Repetition.

Now we move to the conclusion. And all engage. We're going to do that again because you altos didn't do that re strong enough.

I want to hear a good dissonant note that needs resolution. And did you notice tenors? There's a double high point. We have a high point in the soprano and one in the tenor.

Makes a fabulous conclusion. Let's sing the last verse. I'll lift my hand.

I'll raise my voice. While I have breath to pray or praise, this work shall make my heart rejoice throughout. Thank you, altos.

You made my day. Alright. Let's sing another song now.

815. With that ringing in your ears, let's sing this one. Oh, cling to the Bible, though all else be taken.

Love's not its profit. Sing it. Soul's dead.

Anything different? What did you sense? Too much repetition. Cling to the Bible. And that just keeps pounding away the whole song.

Now, it's not a bad song. Don't go home and tell people that cling to the Bible. It's a good song.

In fact, there's times when I want to sing it. Now, look at the chorus. Let's sing the chorus.

And you listen to it. Our Lamb and God. What did you notice? Has a wonderful conclusion.

It builds and it builds and it builds. So this song has a little bit of what we're talking about. And to that extent, it's going to have more appeal than some other songs.

Let's sing that chorus again. Our Lamb and God. Now, I don't have time to talk about the other things we could talk about.

That's basically the pattern of the melody of a good, enduring song. And I want to say this. That for some reason, these more classical songs attract to them a better lyric, a better text than your cheaper songs.

See, the thing that people had against gospel songs and the people that don't like them, what they don't like is the repetition, especially the chorus. And there's a songbook I have at home that it says in the book, the chorus is to be sung after the last verse of every song. They do not repeat the chorus.

Because too many of the choruses are like this. I'm praying for you. Now, great is thy faithfulness is that chorus bears repeating.

I mean, there are some choruses that are good, but a lot of them are inane. They just say the same thing over and over again. I would point out that it also should have a rich and a varied harmony.

And I could illustrate that, but we're out of time. The beat in the song should be almost, unless it's onward Christian soldiers or something like that, where the rhythm is a part of the message of the song. But for most songs, the rhythm should be the least dominant.

How many of you can feel your heartbeat? Oh, dear, you should go home. You're sick. And if the beat of the song throbs, it is sick.

And that's all I'm going to say. That covers 95% of the music that we hear, if not more. That is not what the beat is for.

The beat is just simply to provide an underlying foundation upon which the song moves. But the melody should carry, and it should be a wonderful melody that has repetition and variety and conclusion. And then there should be a subtle harmony that does interesting things.

And then there should be an almost unobtrusive beat that you don't even think about. And then the last thing I want to say, and I'll conclude. The song should have a text that is worthy of the good music that it accompanies or that accompanies it.

Would you turn to one that I know you like to sing, and so do I. 105. If I could write one text like this one, I would consider my life worth having them. Eternal Father.

And maybe some of you have heard me talk about this song, but this song just literally, completely possesses me when I sing it. Eternal Father, when to thee beyond all worlds by faith I soar, before thy boundless majesty all I can do is stand in silence and adore you so far beyond me I can't even begin to fathom who you are. But, Savior, this great God that's out there that we can just stand and wonder and adore is standing by our side.

Thy voice I hear, thy face I see. It's taken visible, tangible form. Thou art my friend and my daily guide.

God over all, yet God with me. And then it gets better. And thou great spirit.

Now we had God there and then we had him here and now we have him in my heart. Thus make thy temple day by day. The Holy Ghost of God thou art, yet dwellest in this house of clay.

Bless Trinity in whom alone all things created move or rest. High in the heavens, it's true, you have your throne. But you also have a throne here.

And that's this God, Emmanuel, who came to dwell with us. It's just an incredible wonder. And this song gathers that up almost better than any other song.

Let's sing the entire song and that will be our conclusion. Thou eternal Father, whence to thee beyond all worlds by faith I soar. Before thy boundless majesty, I stand in silence and adore.

But Savior, thou art by my side. Thy voice I hear, thy face I see. Thou art my friend, God over all yet gone.

And thou great spirit in my heart. Thus make thy temple day by day. The Holy Ghost of God thou art, yet dwellest in this house of clay.

Bless Trinity in whom alone all things created move or rest. High in the heavens, it's true, you have your throne. It's my prayer that you will go out and help to promote this kind of music, the best.

And I'm not saying we can't sing some of the others, but let's keep moving it toward the best. And toward those little two-line songs that bring all the best of English hymnody into our musical experience. I am concerned.

There have been a few churches that have adopted faith and praise as their hymnal. And I'm not saying there's not some good music in faith and praise. But that tends in a certain direction that really, really grieves and concerns me.

Because that kind of music is not easily sung. The rhythms are irregular. And I'm going to say this, that if our churches are going to have those kinds of hymnals, then they're going to have instruments and they're going to have worship teams to keep the congregation together when they sing.

Eventually, if we're going to go down that road. Let's go the other way. Let's go for the good stuff.

Okay? God bless you.

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