

Worship: Responding to God

– with a joyful noise –

Psalm 150 - NCBC, October 8, 2017

Main Point: **God is glorified when music unites hearts together in His truth.**

- What is the place of music in worship? (1-2)
 - To Reveal & to Respond
- What is the purpose of music in worship? (Col 3:16-17)
 - Vertical & Horizontal
- What is the pattern of music in worship? (Gen - Rev)
- What is the practice of music in worship? (3-5)
 - Head & Heart & Art
 - Vocal & Instrumental
 - Humble & Expressive
 - Rooted & Relevant
 - Skilled & Authentic

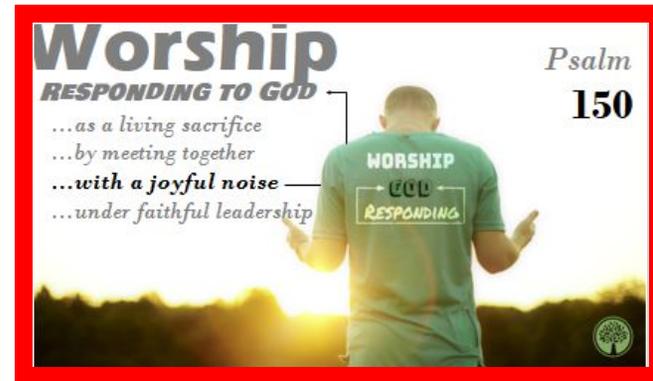
Application: **Make a joyful noise together in humble submission to God's truth** (6)

- Reject all performance orientation
- Refuse to spiritualize preferences
- Resolve to love and be peaceable
- Recognize Christ ultimately unifies us in Gospel – not our music

Opening Announcements:

Counseling Roundtable Invite – Oct 15th following 2nd svc

<<Cornerstone>>

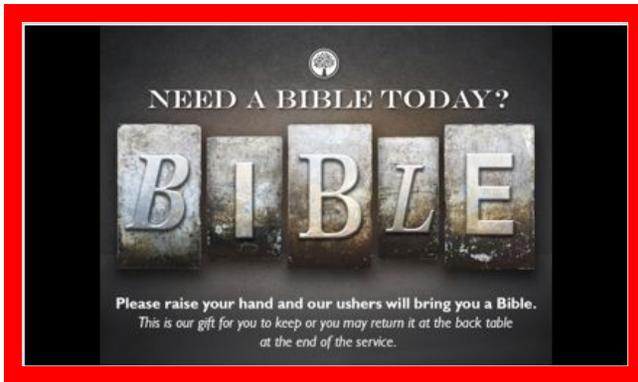


We are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.¹

So with hearts dependent upon the Holy Spirit, please continue your worship now by opening your Bible to **Psalm 150** – the final “Hallel”² or final Praise – the last Psalm in the Biblical hymnbook of the Jews.

¹ Ephesians 2:19-21

² The Psalter’s “Final Hallel” consists of five psalms (Pss 146-150) that each begin and end with “Hallelujah,” meaning “Praise the LORD”.



If you don't have a Bible with you, please just raise your hand as our men are coming to give you a Bible. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just simply return it after our service by placing it on the table in the back of the room.

And while you're preparing to read **Psalm 150**, I want to speak to the evil we've all witnessed this week in the Las Vegas shooting. These are tragic times where the evil of men's hearts is abounding, and our culture grasps to discover a motive. What causes a "normal" 64-year old citizen to brutally and non-discriminately murder so many Americans before taking his own life?

Our hearts grieve deeply with the victims and their families. Yet our Bible reminds us of this truth, "the wickedness of man is great in the earth, and every intention of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually."³ So the greatest problem in our culture today is not a skin problem – but a sin problem. It's not

³ Genesis 6:5, c.f. 2 Tim 3:1-9; Psalm 14:1-3; Romans 1:28-32

poverty, but pride. Our greatest problem today is not mental illness – but worship disorders.⁴

We are living in dark days. Yet God has made us lights in this world.⁵ So as the days grow darker – the church must not retreat and cower in isolation – but we must humbly and boldly advance into our culture with the saving message of Jesus Christ.⁶

We who have been saved by God's grace through faith in Christ alone are the only people on this earth who possess lasting hope! We are God's ambassadors in this present age.⁷ Every born-again believer is a minister of God – commissioned to spread the knowledge of Jesus everywhere!⁸

Historically, the church cannot be commended in her missional faithfulness. She has (or should I say we have?) been too quick to isolate and shelter ourselves from our lost neighbors in the name of holiness.

But there is nothing more holy than Christ-like love. Holy love is what shines so bright in the darkness for the world to see.

It's possible some of our good-intentions may actually be hindering our witness for Christ to souls on their way to hell. If the church only succeeds in separating from the world by creating its own schools, neighborhoods,

⁴ Romans 1:24-25

⁵ Matthew 5:14; Philippians 2:5

⁶ Matthew 5:13-16

⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:20

⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:14-17

marketplaces, recreation, etc. – then it’s fair to ask whether it ever fulfilled its evangelistic mission.

We must think humbly about why we do what we do in this world. We are to glorify God by making disciples. We’re supposed to be living on mission – not living in shelter. God’s Spirit has put His church on the offense – while most of the church traditionally and fearfully lives life in this world on the defense.

It’s time for us church to finally abandon the Old Testament “come and see” approach to our witness. Jesus has put His Spirit in us – and commands us to “go and tell.”

So... the last Tuesday of this month is Halloween. It’s an evil and pagan holiday in our culture. But God’s people don’t cower and shelter themselves. God’s people prayerfully and humbly ask the question, What opportunity does this cultural event provide me to share Christ with my neighbors in holy love?

Halloween is the one time every year our neighbors knock on our doors and ask us to give them a Gospel tract...with some amazing candy treats and warm smiles attached of course! To call our church family to leave their homes dark and empty and miss such an opportunity with our unbelieving neighbors does not seem like our best strategy. Especially when very few unbelieving families/children are likely to come to the church-house for an alternative event on Halloween night.

So this year, we’re not planning a Halloween alternative event for October 31st. Instead, we’re providing all of you with free Gospel tracts out on the entry tables. Please take as many as you believe you can give away. This year prayerfully prepare your heart and home for witness – and give away more than candy.⁹ Offer lasting hope to a world who is desperately seeking answers to the self-destructive tailspin in our culture. Turn the light on – and let your light shine before others for the glory of God this Halloween.

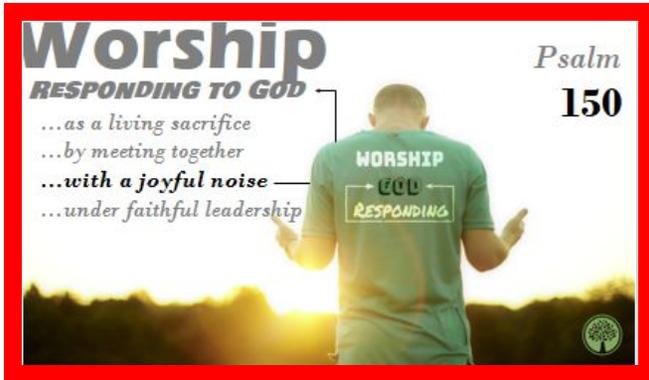
If God provides the leaders required, we would love to still offer a Fall Festival on the Saturday after Halloween each year. But as of now we’re still waiting for God to raise up leaders for this event – so this year we may not have a Fall Festival.

But by the grace of God this Halloween, God’s church will be equipped and faithfully active in our mission to engage our neighbors with holy love and lasting hope in this present darkness.

Today then is our third sermon on Worship. Recognizing our desire to excel yet more in our worship of God together here in this church – we’ve set aside these four weeks to focus on God’s biblical design for the corporate worship of His church on Sunday mornings.

Again, today’s sermon is much more topical than normal. Most of the principles I’m teaching today are applications of **Psalm 150** – and taught in other Scriptures.

⁹ <http://blog.spreadtruth.com/2017/10/02/share-unchanging-hope-this-halloween/>



Please stand with me in honor of God’s Word as I read **Psalm 150**, from the **English Standard Translation**:

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary;
 praise him in his mighty heavens!
 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
 praise him according to his excellent greatness!

3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
 praise him with lute and harp!

4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
 praise him with strings and pipe!

5 Praise him with sounding cymbals;
 praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!

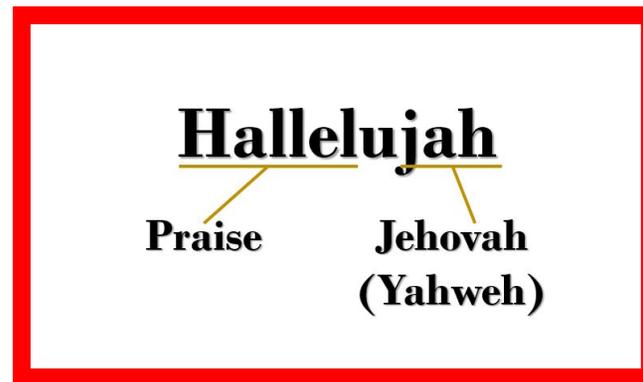
Praise the LORD!

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Let’s Pray.

Did you notice which command is repeated 13 times in this final Psalm?

13 times we are commanded to Praise God! The first Hebrew word is the same as the last Hebrew word in the text: Hallelujah!



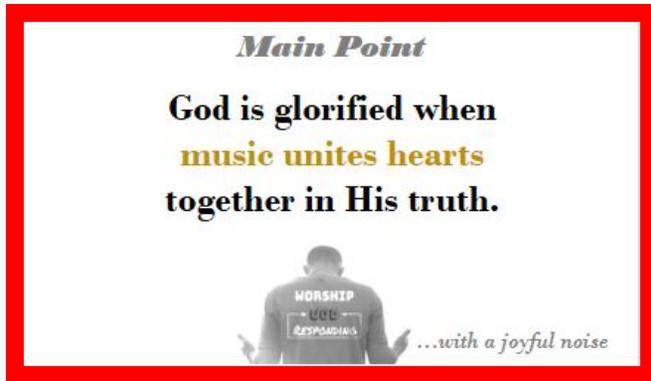
Praise Yahweh! Praise the LORD!

To praise God means to call attention to God’s glory. To extol His greatness. To shine the light on His works as an act of worship. To praise the Lord is to worship and boast in who He is, and what He is done.

This psalm is jubilant in its tone, diverse in its expression, and God-centered in its focus. Thus, it is a fitting meditation for our consideration of the role of music in our worship together.

Sadly, music is one of the most divisive battlegrounds in churches today. It is a rare local church today who doesn't have scars from the worship wars of yesteryear.

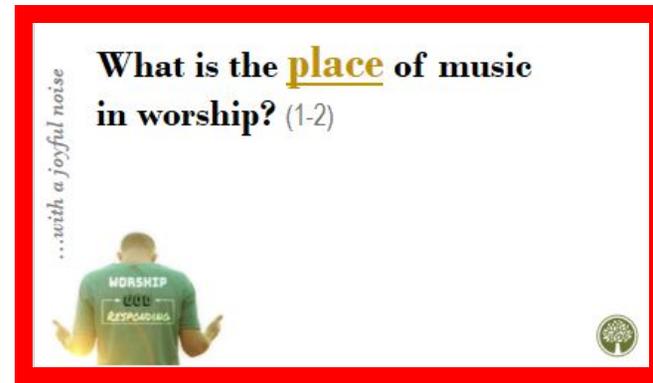
But this is quite ironic since,



God is glorified when music unites hearts together in His truth.

As we shall learn this morning, God has given the gift of music to His people into to better unite them in the Gospel of Christ!

So let's begin by quickly reviewing,



What is the place of music in worship? (1-2)

We've learned from **Psalm 95** and **Romans 12** that worship is a whole-person response to the revelation of God. Therefore, music must help us respond in reverent awe to God's revelation.

You can think of the place of music in terms of,



Revelation & Response

Notice the two places mentioned in **verse 1 of Psalm 150**:

Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!

Here we observe two primary means of God's revelation. The *special* revelation of His Word which is the center piece of His sanctuary, and the *general* revelation of His world – since the heavens are the theater of God's indisputable glory for all mankind to acknowledge.¹⁰

And why does the special and general revelation of God demand such a response of praise? Because God's revelation trumpets all that God has done in **verse 2**:

Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

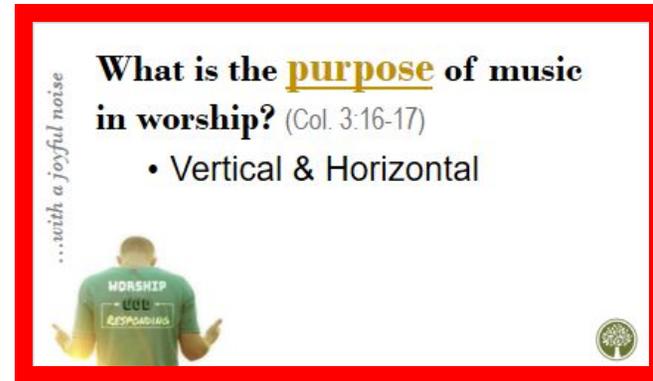
His mighty deeds of creation and excellent greatness of salvation compel stammering tongues to praise! Music helps us respond together in awe to the revelation of God.



¹⁰ Romans 1:19-21ff; c.f. Psalm 19:1

So then we must consider, **What is the purpose of music in worship?** (Col 3:16-17)

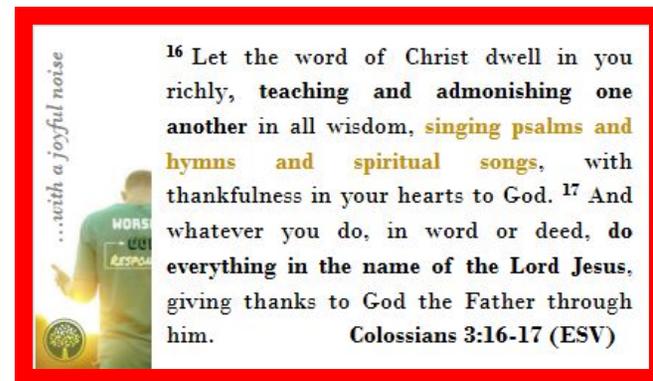
From **Colossians 3:16-17** we observe that God's purpose for music in worship is both,



Vertical & Horizontal

There's a vertical reason why we sing together on Sunday mornings – and there's a horizontal reason.

Consider **Colossians 3:16-17** with me now,



Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Notice first the vertical purpose for our music and singing:

The end of **verse 16** says we are to sing all kinds of songs together with thankful hearts *to God*. In **verse 17** likewise, our giving thanks – our worship – is always *to God*. Though many musical styles may be used in the church, don't miss this important point: God is the first audience of the church's music. The vertical purpose of our music is to glorify God alone.

Any war over musical styles or preferences misses the point that all musical worship is to and for God! It's never about what we want – but rather what pleases God.

The purpose of music in the gathering of God's people is never to perform before humans – it's vertically oriented. To God and for God! We make a joyful noise together to draw attention to God's Name – not the reputation of any leader or musician. Applause – when it occurs in the church's worship – is the joyful overflow of thanksgiving to God, and adoration of God.

But while God is the only object of our worship, He is not the only audience. For notice in these verses the horizontal purpose for the church's music as well.

The church's singing and music is to be chiefly congregational – helping teach and admonish *one another* in all the wisdom of the word of Christ!

Ephesians 5:19 commands us to *address one another* in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. This is the horizontal purpose of music in our worship together.

These psalms, hymns, and musical songs have biblically accurate lyrics – instructing, encouraging, reminding, building up, warning and convicting – all uniting the church together in God's truth.

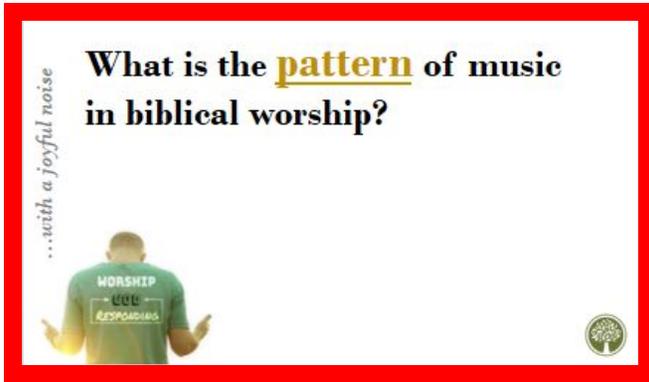
After all, music and the rest of the arts¹¹ always aim to define and unify culture. Music and the arts are means of communication. They always communicate a message. Broadly speaking, the arts are the means through which a culture uniquely shares its values, ideals, and messages.

So music allows any and all of the redeemed to say something of real importance to and about God. And as the redeemed sing Gospel truths to one another – their hearts are united and bound together in their common faith. And the identity of the community of faith is united around its biblical lyrics.

The vertical purpose of music is to glorify God while the horizontal purpose is to unite hearts together in God's truth.

And this corresponds to the

¹¹In addition to music, “the arts” broadly include all art, film, drama, architecture, & literature of a specific culture.



pattern of music in biblical worship throughout all of Scripture.

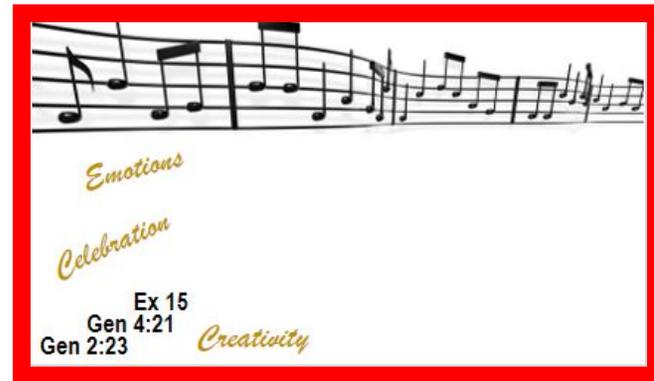
Worship as music has always been a significant part of the redeemed community's experience.



Starting even before the fall Adam uses the poetry of his original love song in **Genesis 2:23** to vocalize his affections for his beloved.



Then in **Genesis 4**, Jabel creatively introduces instruments into the world.



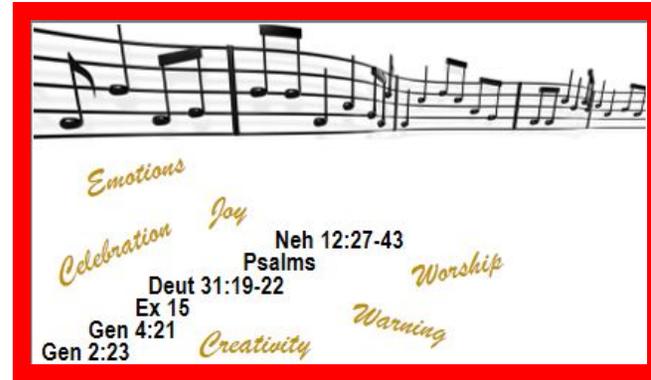
In **Exodus 15**, Moses and Miriam lead a singing by the sea to celebrate God's deliverance over the Egyptians.



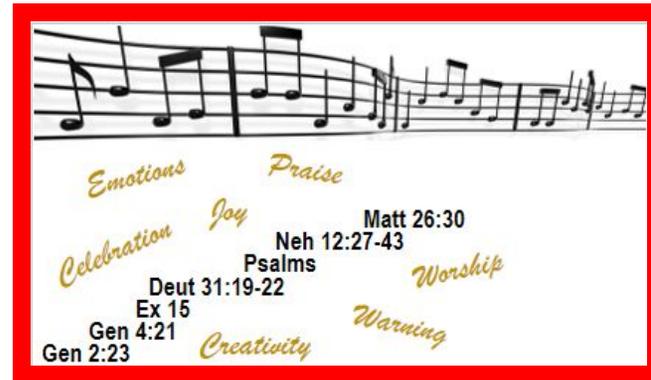
In **Deuteronomy 31 and 32**, God commands Moses to compose Israel's national anthem as a perpetual warning of the judgment that their faithful God will bring to their disobedience.



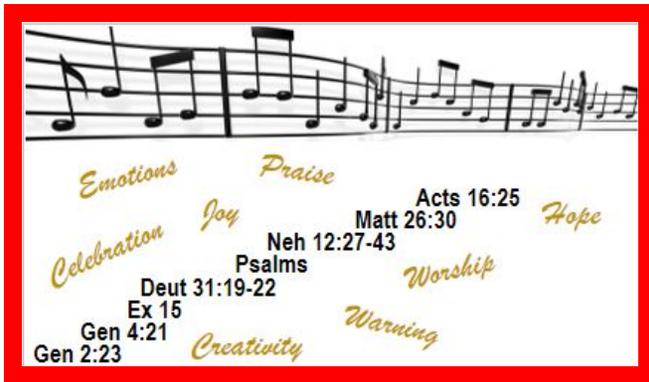
Of course the vast collection of **Psalms** are the worship manual of God's people – helping them to adore and appeal to God.



In **Nehemiah 12**, the Levites joyfully worship with music at the dedication of Jerusalem...

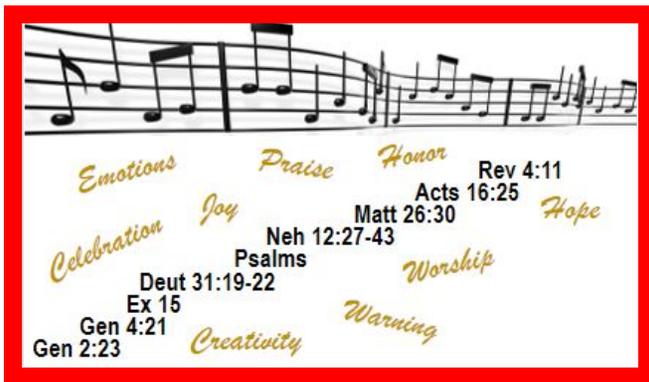


and in **Matthew 26:30** Jesus and the disciples all sing a hymn of praise to conclude the Passover liturgy.

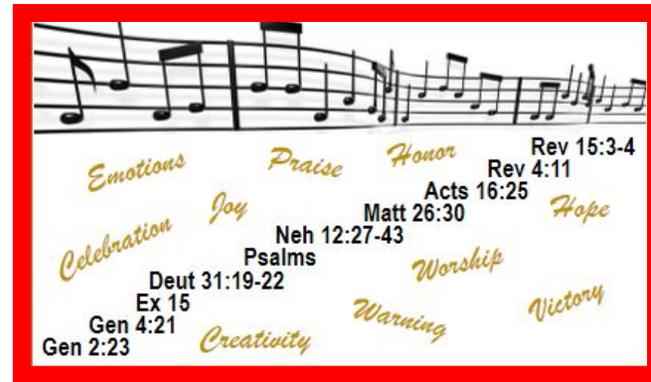


In **Acts 16:25**, Paul and Silas hold a jailhouse singing to voice hope and strengthen the faith of the persecuted.

Of course we've already considered **Colossians 3** and **Ephesians 5** that incorporate music into the regular liturgy of the church's worship when she gathers together.



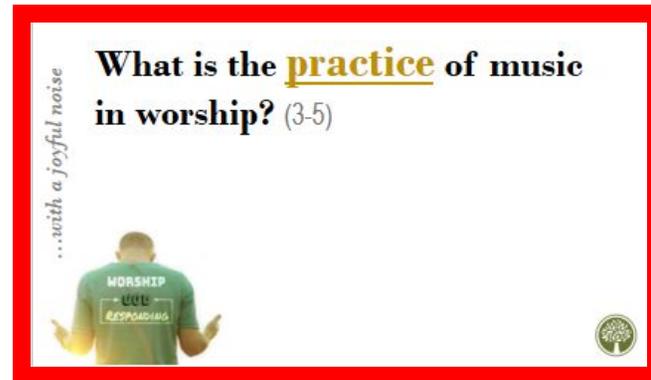
So then we come to heavenly chorus of glory and honor in **Revelation 4:11**, and then to



the final victory song of the Lamb in **Revelation 15**.

Truly from beginning of time to the ultimate culmination of all of history – music has always been a significant aspect of the redeemed community's experience.

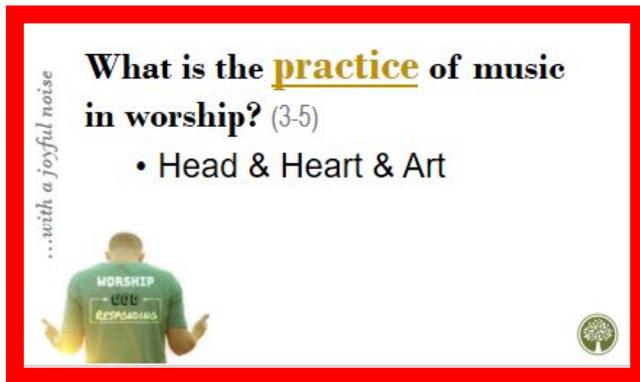
So then let's consider further,



What should be our practice of music in worship? (3-5)

Our study last week from **Psalm 100** and **John 4** taught us that God is seeking worshippers who will gladly worship Him in spirit and truth. In other words, when it

comes to the topic of music in worship, it must be a balance of



Head & Heart & Art

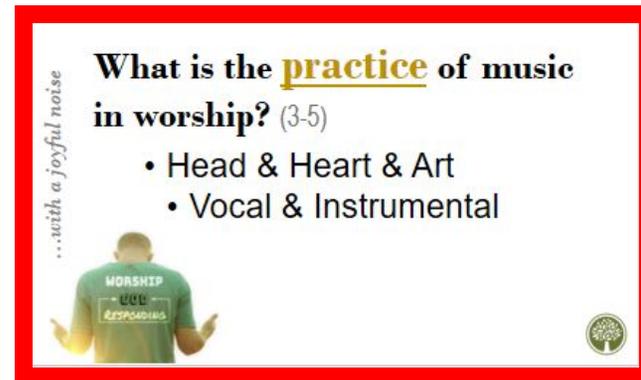
Worship music that glorifies God will combine lyrics of Truth (that's head) with a Spirit-controlled life of faith (that's heart) with creative and moving language and style (that's art).

In other words, worship music should creatively serve both our doctrine and our devotion. The newness and creativity of music helps keep our creeds both familiar and fresh.

Worship is a matter of the heart; music is a matter of art. Any music which places art over heart is not pleasing to God.

But like we've already discussed – the art of music can powerfully serve the message of God's Gospel by making it more memorable and vivid – driving it into our very hearts.

Substance, Spirit, and Style – that's a foundational balance to the practice of music in worship.



But worship music must also balance both **Vocal & Instrumental** elements.

We see this clearly in **Psalm 150, verses 3-5**.

The Psalmist employs 7 different instruments here in the worship-filled praise of God.



The trumpet in **verse 3** probably refers to the ram's horn or the Shofar that was blown on the Day of the Atonement and other special occasions.¹² The "pipe" in **verse 4** is sometimes translated as flute.¹³

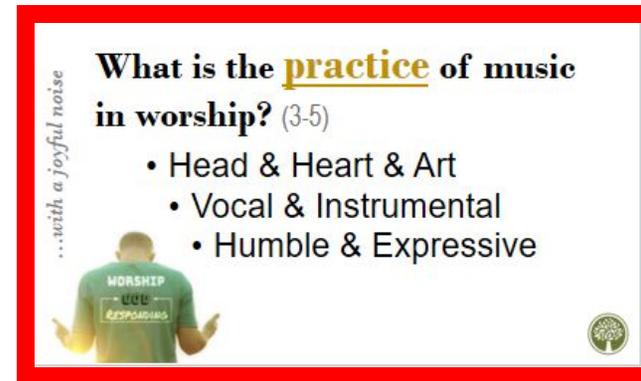
The lyre, or lute in **verse 3** is basically an ancient guitar, and was David's preferred instrument.¹⁴

But for now – just notice the variety of instrumentation commanded for worship by the psalmist. Wind, String, and Percussion are all to be combined with the voices of all living creatures in **verse 6** to praise the Lord!

Certainly biblical worship was not always quiet or subdued in tone. What tradition has caused us to believe it is acceptable to make loud joyful noises in a stadium but not in the church house?

Further, did you notice that the exuberance of corporate worship together in **verse 4** includes dancing?

This biblical command helps us to observe the balance of music in worship as both,



Humble & Expressive

Certainly to dance is to jubilantly express your entire being with joy and celebration. Dancing is a physical and behavioral response of emotion to the goodness of God.

In the culture of the Ancient Near East, religious zeal often expressed itself with dancing – most often for the Israelites by dancing together in circles – men with men and women with women. In 2 Samuel 6¹⁵ King David dances with joy as he leads the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.

By application then, the point for us is to be expressive in our practice of music in worship. Perhaps it is by clapping, or by swaying, or by raising your hands, or by shutting your eyes... the point is to allow the music to move your body into a whole-person response to the revelation of God.

¹² Leviticus 25:9; Ps 81:3; Joel 2:15; 2 Samuel 6:15

¹³ C.f. Genesis 4:21; Job 21:12, 30:31.

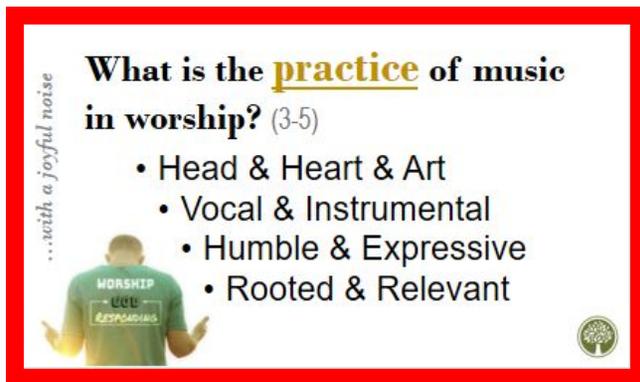
¹⁴ Genesis 4:21; 1 Samuel 16:16, 23; Psalms 43:4; 71:22

¹⁵ Vv. 12-23

And yet always being humble enough to love others around you at the same time. Never fearing men – but loving men.

And remembering too that feelings are never the goal of worship – the goal of worship is to bring attention or glory to God. Always be more concerned about what is producing your feelings – and how you can express them humbly in submission to God – than on seeking to experience some feeling that you desire in worship.

Next, our practice of music in worship must be both,



Rooted & Relevant

Did you notice how **Colossians 3** and **Ephesians 5** both describe the church's music with the phrase, *psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*?

God has designed His people's worship music to be rich in variety and total in scope.

To posture hymns against contemporary songs is to miss the entire point of God's design. Your preferred musical style for worshipping God is a worship language. Your native tongue so to speak. But in a multi-generational church – there are a variety of native tongues present.

Thus the musical leader blends both the native tongue of the old with the native tongue of the young – using a full variety of musical style to help convey the same unchanging message of Christ and His Gospel.

Here's the point: Cultures change. Styles change. Traditions change. And even languages change. But God and His Gospel never change.

So we employ music that helps to connect us with our rich heritage – but at the same time communicates the Gospel in ways our culture can understand. We must reject any dependence upon tradition or newness as the measure of God-pleasing worship.

Quickly then, please consider that we must practice music in worship as both,

...with a joyful noise

What is the practice of music in worship? (3-5)

- Head & Heart & Art
- Vocal & Instrumental
- Humble & Expressive
- Rooted & Relevant
- Skilled & Authentic




Skilled & Authentic

The Psalmist had in mind a harmony of praise – not a chaotic cacophony of frenzied noise. In **1 Corinthians 14** Paul exhorts the church to ensure that their worship would be done *decently and in order*.¹⁶

Thus, spiritual maturity is not the only criteria for musicians and vocalists who lead the congregation in worship. Musical proficiency is required.

Now of course we love people more than we love musical excellence. But it is love for God that compels a worship leader to carefully plan and prepare – to practice to and organize.

Spontaneous or extemporaneous acts of worship are not always more pleasing to God. The key is that we are worshipping in spirit – authentically with all of our being responding in submission to the revelation of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:40, c.f. vv. 12, 26, 33

Main Point

God is glorified when music unites hearts together in His truth.



...with a joyful noise

To sum it all up – **God is glorified when music unites hearts together in the truth of His Gospel.**

So then as you come together every week to worship God in the assembly of His redeemed, I urge you to,

Application

Make a joyful noise together in humble submission to God's truth



...with a joyful noise

Make a joyful noise together in humble submission to God's truth.

Let everything that has breath – praise the Lord!

Don't allow the medium of music to distract you from the message of the Gospel which unites us together in love.

God has given us the gift of music to unite us all together in our Gospel identity – all for the greater glory of His Name and our greater joy together.

So let me press in on four practical implications for us.

Application

- Reject all performance orientation

WORSHIP
GIVE
RESPONDING

...with a joyful noise

First, we must **Reject all performance orientation** to our worship together in music. This platform is not here to please you – or to please people at all. All of our worship is *to* God, and *for* God. Only as we keep God at the center of our worship– will we be transformed more and more into His image together.

Second,

Application

- Reject all performance orientation
- Refuse to spiritualize preferences

WORSHIP
GIVE
RESPONDING

...with a joyful noise

Refuse to spiritualize preferences

Differing musical tastes or “languages” should never be allowed to divide or separate the body of Christ in worship. It’s not right or wrong to prefer a different style. Please don’t try to make it right or wrong.

Like we mentioned before – one’s musical preferences is his language of worship – it is the language of his heart’s conversation with God. So to lose the hymns one has grown up singing is no small thing. But the opposite is also true: if the older do not defer to the younger in love – the younger will be deprived of their own language of worship – those forms of God’s word which are most intelligible to them – by which they can best grow in Christ.¹⁷

Worship as music provides a practical forum for the redeemed community to defer to one another in love, gentleness and patience.

¹⁷ John Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, 117.

A song's age frankly has nothing to do with its worth for our worship. It's the message that matters.

Application

- Reject all performance orientation
- Refuse to spiritualize preferences
- Resolve to love and be peaceable



So Resolve to love and be peaceable

Delight in the fact that the Gospel always transcends culture – and should never be bound by it. And church – in the end –

Application

- Reject all performance orientation
- Refuse to spiritualize preferences
- Resolve to love and be peaceable
- Recognize Christ ultimately unifies us in **Gospel** – not our music



Recognize that it is only Christ who ultimately unifies us in the Gospel – not our music

Music is a powerful part of God's design for our corporate worship together. God has designed it to unify us around His Gospel truth.

So, may everything that has breath – Praise the Lord! And respond to the revelation of God's grace and goodness with a joyful noise together.

Worship
RESPONDING TO GOD

Psalm 150

- ...as a living sacrifice
- ...by meeting together
- ...with a joyful noise
- ...under faithful leadership



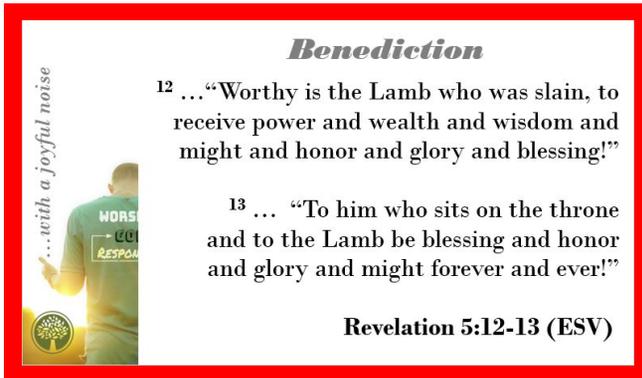
Let's pray.

<All to Us>

<<Special Exit Offering Today for Dominica Hurricane Relief>>

Let's pray our Benediction now as we are dismissed,

Benediction



...with a joyful noise

Benediction

¹² ...“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ ... “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

Revelation 5:12-13 (ESV)

¹² ...“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” ¹³ ... “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” **Revelation 5:12-13**

Recommended Resources on Worship – with a joyful noise:

- Genesis 2:23; 4:21
 - Exodus 15
 - Deuteronomy 31:14-32:47
 - 2 Samuel 6:15
 - 1 Chronicles 25:1-8
 - Nehemiah 12:27-43
 - Psalms; 137; 149:3-5
 - Amos 5:23
 - Matthew 26:30
 - Acts 16:25
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1
 - Ephesians 5:18-20
 - Colossians 3:12-17
 - Revelation 4:11; 5:9-13; 11:17; 15:3-4
- 
- Bob Kauflin: “Why Do We Sing” - <https://vimeo.com/220994816>
 - <http://sovereigngracemusic.org/training/wmvi/>
 - https://drbarrick.org/files/studynotes/Psalms/Ps_150.pdf
 - <https://yourmomhasablog.com/2017/10/03/letter-to-a-church-member-or-a-letter-to-myself/>
 - <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/souls-need-songs>
- *True Worshipers*, Bob Kauflin
 - *Worship Matters*, Bob Kauflin
 - *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel*, Ronald Allen & Gordon Borrer
 - *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, Allen Ross
 - *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, John Frame

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. According to 1 Corinthians 13:1 and Amos 5:23, what is the effect of pride and self-centeredness in our worship as music? Discuss how Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:12-15 transform common “worship wars.”
2. Review why God had Moses compose a national anthem for Israel in Deuteronomy 31:19-22. What can we learn about the power of music for our worship from this text?
3. Does your worship music focus more on the centrality of the cross, the performance of the leader, or your emotional response to the music? How can you determine whether or not you desire to be entertained in your worship as music?
4. When, if ever would you counsel the leadership team of a church to offer two separate worship services to accommodate different musical styles? What are some possible worship disorders to avoid in such decisions?
5. How does God want your beliefs/actions to change in this area of your worship? How can you accomplish this change by His grace? What is the first step towards bringing about this change?