

Singing

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[0 : 00] So let's come to God now and let's ask for his help. Heavenly Father, we thank you that, among other things, the Bible describes you as the God who sings.

Thank you that you sing the great song of salvation over us. And Father, as we come today, would you teach us again, open our hearts, open our ears, open our minds, so that we might be ready to receive your word, to internalize it, and to be able also to, therefore, better build up the church as a result of what we learn today.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. All throughout the ages, in every culture, Christians have seen singing as part of what they do when they gather together.

Where you find Christians, you will find singing. It's something we value. Listen to the words of the great reformer Martin Luther, which is on the screen. The riches of music are so excellent and so precious that words fail me whenever I attempt to discuss and describe them.

In summary, next to the word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our thoughts, minds, hearts, and spirits.

[1 : 22] And just for fun, let me tell you what else Luther said in his typically colourful language. Next slide. A person who gives this some thought and yet does not regard music as a marvellous creation of God must be a clock hopper indeed. That's an insult.

And does not deserve to be called a human being. He should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and the grunting of hawks. So Luther certainly put no punches.

So Christians value singing. That's never been in doubt. But why? What makes us want to sing? Why do we pour out song after song, whether old or new?

And what is the place of singing in our gathering? What exactly is happening? And of course that perennial question, what should we sing? Hymns? Choruses? Something else?

This morning we're hitting the second half of our sermon series, Church Reset. So far we've thought about what church is and a little about what church should be like.

[2 : 27] And for the remainder of our series, I want us to think a little bit about some of the things a church should do as we slowly but surely come back together. And today I want us to consider the place of singing in church.

And of course I want us to get our answers from our supreme authority, the word of God. Unlike past weeks, however, we won't quite be anchored to just one text. Although Colossians 3 will prove significant.

But I've tried to be responsible and be that unashamed worker that Paul talks about correctly handling the word of truth. And so let's dive in. And we're going to be asking three questions today. Why sing? What is happening as we sing? And what should we sing? So first question. Why sing? And the Bible gives us multiple answers.

Let me give you three. First of all, because we are created to sing. You know, it's amazing, isn't it, how infinitely creative God is.

[3 : 34] After all, he's the one who dream up Persian cats, cherry blossoms and the Northern Lights. And he dream up an astonishing variety of music. Whether that's the rhythm and blues or Latin jazz.

Whether it's instruments like the flamenco guitar or the sape. And to accompany this gift of music, God gave us the capacity to sing.

Keith and Christine Getty are one of today's most well-known church musicians. They've written many of the songs we sing, like, In Christ Alone, The Power of the Cross, O Church Arise.

And in their reflections on Psalm 139 verses 13 to 14, The one with the line, I praise you because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.

They write this, Your ability to sing is fearfully and wonderfully made. Around the 12-week mark, the vocal cords of a baby growing in the womb are in place And have been shown to work long before a baby is born.

[4 : 40] We may sound different, But each of you has the same vocal apparatus. You, us, Bono, Pavarotti, Sinatra. Breath flowing up from our lungs, Vibrating through vocal cords in our throat, And pushing sound out through the articulators of our mouths, tongues and lips.

Singing is not merely a happy by-product of God's real intent Of making us creatures who can speak. It is something we're designed to be able to do.

So this is God's gift to all human beings. The Bible makes that clear, As the first explicit reference to song Actually takes place outside the covenantal line.

To Jubal in Genesis 4 verse 21, Who's described as the father of all who plays string instruments and harps, Pipes rather.

But as we keep reading the Bible, We realise that it is a gift to God's people in particular For us to exercise. At key moments in the Exodus, And right before they enter the promised land, God's people sing.

[5 : 58] Israel's most famous king, David, Is described as the sweet psalmist of Israel In 2 Samuel 23 verse 1. And don't forget, Those psalms that he wrote are meant to be sung.

He's also the architect behind the temple sound system And its choir, Again highlighting the important place of singing. And when that temple is completed by David's son, Solomon, And the ark containing the covenant document That God makes with his people Is brought into the temple, Once again, There is singing.

It's the same story in the New Testament. Mary responds in song upon hearing the promises of God. Paul and Silas sing while imprisoned in Acts 16, Testifying to their faith in God.

Jesus himself sings on the Mount of Olives Before he goes to the cross. And perhaps one of the things you might not have realised Is in Revelation, Just how often there are heavenly hymns, Especially when there's action going on down below.

And so from beginning to end, We are created to sing. And we sing not just individually, But as one body.

[7 : 21] And notice that as we do so, We are simply joining in with the rest of creation. In Psalm 98, Our first Bible reading for today, The psalmist begins with a call To us to sing to the Lord.

And by the time he gets to verse 4, However, the call extends to all the earth. And verses 7 to 9 intensifies the call. As now everything is included.

The sea, the world, the river, the mountains. Creation sings. And as part of creation, so do we. But second of all, We sing not just because we are created to, But because we are safe to sing. Safe people sing. Let me briefly take you to just one key text to see this.

In Exodus 14, We have the famous story of God Defeating the Egyptian army When it looked like his people had no hope As they faced the dead end of the Red Sea.

[8 : 27] And chapter 14 stresses that Salvation comes from God's hand alone. Now, let me read some descriptions of that episode for you.

Listen closely. In 14 verse 21, We are told that All that night, The Lord drove the sea back. In verse 24, We are told The Lord threw the Egyptian army into confusion.

In verse 27, The Lord swept them into the sea. In verse 30, The Lord saved Israel From the hands of the Egyptians. And notice the consistent refrain of Exodus 14.

It is, The Lord, The Lord, The Lord. He did it all. Israel did Nothing. Salvation comes from his hand Alone.

And so what do the saved people do? Exodus 15 tells us They sing. They cannot help themselves.

[9 : 30] When we experience the saving work of God, We sing. And what do they sing about? If you skim through Exodus 15 in your own time later on, Two things stand out about their song.

They sing about who saved them And how he saved them. As saved people, They sing about their saviour And his work of salvation.

And that makes complete sense, doesn't it? It wouldn't make sense if they were just singing about random stuff. And this, The first great salvation song of the Bible, Is paradigmatic for many of the songs that follow on in the Bible.

Our first Bible reading, Psalm 98, Is similar. Verse 1, in fact, Picks up on the language of Exodus 15. And the first half of this song, Also concentrates on that great theme of salvation.

Make it known, the psalmist says. And then when we move to the end of the Bible, Again, it's the same story. In Revelation 15, verse 3, We are told that those who are saved Are singing the song of Moses.

[10 : 50] But it's not just the song of Moses they're singing. We're also told they're singing the song of the Lamb. For the Exodus points to that greater salvation, Which the Lamb of God provides, Where sin is dealt with, And victory over death, And the devil is won.

And in both cases, The saved people sing. And third of all, Very simply, We sing because we are commanded to sing.

Again, we see that in the first verse of Psalm 98. Sing to the Lord a new song. Or come back with me just a couple of psalms to Psalm 96, And let me read out the first few verses to you.

Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord. Praise his name. Proclaim his salvation.

There's that theme again. Day after day. Declare his glory among the nations. His marvelous deeds among all peoples. And so there you have it.

[12 : 03] In just three verses, We are told repeatedly to sing, To proclaim his salvation, To declare his glory. Or if you want a New Testament example, Here's Revelation 19 verse 5.

Praise our God, All you his servants, You who fear him, Both great and small. And all in all, There are supposedly at least 50 direct commands To sing to the Lord in the Bible.

I'm sure if you had a quick skim through the Psalms alone, You would find plenty of other examples. And so we sing because we are commanded to.

But remember, We obey this command, Not like how a prisoner of war obeys his captives, But how a grateful child obeys his parents.

We obey this command, Not as unwilling captives, But as those who have been rescued. As John Newton, The guy who gave us amazing grace, Once wrote, Our pleasure and our duty, Though opposite before, Since we have seen his beauty that's God, Are joined to part, And no more.

[13 : 25] And so we obey as those who are delighted to obey. It is not just our duty, But our pleasure. But why the need for a command then?

Simple. Because sometimes, We forget. Or sometimes, In certain circumstances, We find it hard to. And so we need to be commanded to sing.

We need to hear that call afresh, And be reminded what a good thing it is to do. So there you have it.

Why sing? On one level, It's pretty simple. Because we are created to, Because we are commanded to, And really because that's what safe people do.

So my brothers and sisters, What does that mean for us today? Well, It's an invitation for us to, Sing.

[14 : 24] And it's an invitation for us to sing, Together. Most of the verses we've just looked at, Address, Not to individuals, But to the entirety, Of God's people.

Now, One of the things that this pandemic, Has robbed us of, Is the ability to sing, Together. Even Zoom, Can't resolve that, Since, Singing doesn't really work, When internet connections, Vary so much.

And because we've, Gotten out of the habit, Perhaps some of us, Might have stopped, Singing. Perhaps some of us, Are worried, Because we know that, We're not very good singers, In the first place.

I'm sure I fall into that category. And yet the Bible says, Don't let that stop you. God's more concerned, With your heart, Than your vocal abilities.

And so as we slowly begin, To gather again, Even if we have to put up, With masks, For now, Let's, Sing. That's what those, Who are safe, Are known for, As people, Who sing.

[15 : 41] But what is happening, As we sing? That's our second question, For today. What is happening, As we sing? And I want to begin, Answering this question, By showing first of all, What is not happening, As we sing?

You see sometimes, There can be a bit of confusion, In this area, So it will be good, To clarify this, Theologically. And what we need to know, Is that, Singing, Or music, Does not enable us, To enter into God's presence, Or bring the Holy Spirit, Down to us.

I'm sure most of us, At one time or another, Have been at a service, Or at an event, Where the well-meaning song leader, Say something like this, As we sing this song, Let us be ushered, Into

God's presence, Let's welcome the spirit.

Or perhaps we hear, A comment like, Oh the worship leader, Today was so anointed, He made me close to God, Or perhaps we said, Such things ourselves, And what is being implied, Even if it is not, Explicitly said, Or intentionally meant, Is that it is, The singing, Or the music, In itself, That draws us, Into God's presence, Or brings the Holy Spirit, Down to us.

However, The scriptures tell us, Differently, In the Old Testament, We know that, The people of God, Needed the sacrifice, Of atonement, And the mediation, Of the priests, To have any hope, Of even approaching God, At all.

[17:18] And interestingly, When we examine, What's happening, In the actual rites, Of the tabernacle, We discover, That music, Doesn't play, Any role.

The sacrifice, Of atonement, In particular, Was never, Accompanied, By music. And of course, In the New Testament, We discover, That it is, Jesus, Who is both, Our sacrifice, Of atonement, And our great, High priest.

Hebrews, Hebrews 8 to 10, As we saw, A couple of weeks ago, Makes clear, That it is only, By the blood, Of Jesus alone, That enables us, To enter, Into God's presence, And of course, Jesus himself, Is the only one, Who pours out, The Holy Spirit, On us.

Ever since, Pentecost, When we trust, In Jesus, We already receive, The Holy Spirit. And so, To ascribe, This ability, To anyone else, Such as a song leader, Or a musician, Will actually be, Blasphemy.

And also, To place, Too much burden, On him or her, To bear. And that's actually, Liberating for them. You know, Just imagine, If I tell Daniel, And the band today, It's your responsibility, To bring us, Into God's presence.

[18:42] So your guitar playing skills, Better be up to par. You know, Can you imagine, The kind of pressure, That they'll be under? Can you imagine, The amount of anxiety, I've just made them feel?

But thankfully, The truth of the gospel, Sets them free, From such pressure. The truth is, We are already, In God's presence.

Even without music. Because Jesus, Has died, And risen again. So, What is happening, As we sing?

What does our singing, Actually accomplish? Well, To answer that, I want you to come with me, To Colossians 3, Verse 15 to 17, Our second Bible reading, For today.

So to open your Bibles, To that verse, And let's briefly, Try to put it, In its context. Notice once again, That the entire church, Is in view here.

[19:44] Back in verse 12, Paul is speaking, To his readers, As God's chosen people, Who should relate, To one another, In all sorts of godly ways, In verses 13 to 14.

In verse 15, He refers to them, As members of one body, And in verse 16, He makes mention, Of their one another ministry. And so clearly, The instruction, Paul will give, In verse 16, Is about, What we do, When we're, Together.

And not just, On our own. That's, That's, The context. And in verse 16, We discover, That there are, Two things, That are happening, When we sing together.

The first one, Will be more familiar, To us. Firstly, When we sing together, We are praising, And expressing, Our gratitude, To God.

That's what we find, At the end, Of verse 16. Our songs, Are directed to God, As a way of saying, Thank you, To him. And that sounds, Almost too obvious.

[21:00] And you're a pastor, You needed three years, Of bible college, Just to get that. But bear with me, And let's think about, This truth, Just a little more. And to do that, I want you just to, Ask yourselves, For a moment, How do you normally, Thank people.

Over the past month or so, Many of you have, Very kindly given my family, All sorts of snacks, For Christmas, And for Chinese New Year. And I said, Thank you to you, I hope I, Didn't forget anyone. Maybe by, Doing it in person, Or by, Sending a whatsapp. But what I certainly, Didn't do, Was, Sing to you.

But what if I did? What if Jeremy, Gave me a cookie, And I started singing to him, Thank you, Jeremy, For your gift to me, I lift my voice, To praise, Your name, And I thank you, Again and again, And by that time, Jeremy would have run, Far, Far, Far, Away.

Why? Well, Maybe because my singing, Is pretty bad, But leaving that aside, For a moment. Also, Because it feels a little, Over the top, Doesn't it?

[22 : 35] If I just said, Thank you to him, That would have been, Perfectly normal. But when I sang, Thank you, It intensifies, The thanks, In a way that feels, Out of proportion, To the gift.

Because, Singing expresses, Emotion, In a way that, Mere speech, Cannot. That's how God, Designed it. It enables us, To express, Our joy, Or our gratitude, Or even, Our sadness, In an elevated way.

And imagine, If it wasn't just me, But my, Entire family, Singing thank you, To Jeremy, Together.

Now the, Emotional intensity, Increases even, More, Doesn't it?

If you've ever, Participated in a concert, You know, Fully well, What I'm talking, About. And, If the gift, Is just a cookie, Then, Singing my gratitude, Seems rather, Out of place.

But what if the gift, Was God's, Son? What if I wanted, To express my gratitude, Not just for, A Chinese New Year snack, But the fact that, Out of his lavish grace, God sent, God sent his one, And only, Beloved son, To take the penalty, For my sin, That I fully deserve, To defeat, The power of death, To take away, My shame, To completely, Sanctify me, So that, I can be, Welcome, Into his family.

[24 : 15] What if I wanted, To communicate, Just how, In awe, I am, That God, Would do that? Well then, Singing wouldn't be, Out of place at all.

And singing together, To thank him, Wouldn't be out of place, Either. In fact, You could say that, It would actually, Be necessary. For God deserves, Our utmost thanks, And singing, Uniquely enables us, To express that.

For when we sing, We can enhance, The meaning of words, In a way that, Speaking cannot. Now just imagine, If I said this lyrics, Man of sorrows, On the screen, We just sang this song, Last week. I'm waiting for it, To appear on the screen, Yep, So I'm sure you all know, This song, We just sang it last week. Now just imagine, If I just said this lyrics, Like this. Now my debt is paid, It is paid in full, By the precious blood, That my Jesus spilled.

Now the curse of sin, Has no hold on me, Whom the sun sets free, O is free indeed. Now imagine that, Instead of me, Speaking those words, Someone like, Allison was right now, Leading us to, Sing those words.

[25 : 34] There would be a difference, Wouldn't there? Singing would actually, Capture the sentiment, Behind those words, More accurately, Than if we just said them.

When I said, These words, That way, I wasn't really, Communicating the emotion, Appropriate to those words. And as such, I ended up, Not fully communicating, The true meaning, Of those words. Because, I made them sound flat, When they should really be, Dripping, With appreciation. But if we sang them, It's a different story, Isn't it?

The emotion, Appropriate to those words, To the truth of those words, Are now being, Communicated, Properly. As Yip Harburg, The songwriter, Behind the hit, Somewhere Over the Rainbow, Once said, Next slide, Words, Make you think, A thought, Music, Makes you feel, A feeling, A song, Makes you feel, A thought.

And so, That's probably why, The psalms, Frequently pair, Thanksgiving, With singing. I'll just give you, One example, To illustrate the point, There are others, On your handout.

[27 : 00] So here's, Psalm 57, Verse 9, I will praise you, Lord, Among the nations, I will sing, Among the peoples, And the word translated, Praise there, Is actually a Hebrew word, That also means, Give thanks, Which is why, Some other English translations, Translate it as such.

So notice once again, That thanksgiving, Is expressed, In song, You know, The two, Are frequently joined together, For that, Appears to be, The best medium, To express, Our gratitude, To God. But what else is happening, As we sing? Well, Secondly, When we sing together, We are discipling, One another.

When we sing together, We are discipling, One another. Come back with me, To Colossians 3, Verse 16. Notice, Paul's concern, At the start, Of that verse.

Let the message of Christ, Dwell among you, Richly. And so here is, What Paul wants for the church. He wants God's word, The gospel, And all its implications, To go deep into our hearts.

[28 : 20] Now, How is that to happen? Well, Let's read on. As you teach, And admonish one another, With wisdom. And so God, Expects all of us, To be discussing God's word, Helping each other apply it.

Whether that's in the context, Of Sunday sermons, Or Bible studies, Or even informal conversations. But, Notice what Paul zooms in on, In this verse. Let's keep reading.

True psalms, Hymns, And songs from the spirit. Well, Did you get, What he's saying? Paul is saying, Paul is saying, Here is, The way we teach, And admonish one another. At least in this verse, Obviously, There are other ways, We can do it as well. But this is the way, We teach and admonish one another. We do it through, Song. We do it through, Singing. As we sing together, We are actually participating, In a powerful form, Of word ministry. By teaching that word, To one another, And helping it dwell, Within us richly.

[29 : 33] Now, Why might singing, Be able to do that? Well, So far we've seen, Singing, Music's power, In the way it can express, Our emotions. But singing, Doesn't just express emotion, It arouses emotion, As well.

Movie makers, Know this very well. Watch the way, Films play with song choices, The way they arrange, The chord progressions, And the tempo, To make you feel, All kinds of things. Whether that's, To lift you up, Into euphoria and joy, Or to bring you down, Into sadness, Or despair. Or even just to convey, A sense of unease, That something bad, Is about to happen. Think Jaws, Think Star Wars, Think the bodyguard. And that can be a good thing, If the emotion being aroused, Is both truthful, And appropriate, To the occasion.

When I was a teenager, I used to have this collection of, Cassette tapes. Remember those? One of my Christian albums, Was the burn service, Which was put out by, Vinyard.

[30 : 41] And when I was feeling down, Like any typical teenager, And not particularly, In the mood to give, Any sort of thanks to God, Well track five, On this album, Help me out.

It's called, I will praise you, And it's based, On Psalm 42, And 43. And when I used to sing, Those words, You know, Why are you so downcast, So my soul, I will yet praise him, My saviour and king, Why are you so downcast, So my soul, Raise your voice and sing, Put your hope in him. Well what was happening, Was that I was actually planting, Psalm 42 and 43, Into my heart. And as that happened, My emotions, And my posture towards God, Was being changed, In a way that aligned, More with the scriptures.

I was being taught, And challenged, To put my hope in him, Even in circumstances, That I deem were, Unfavourable to me. Now imagine that, In the context, Of congregational singing, When we come together, Whatever our mood, Or our circumstances, For that day, If, We are singing about, Our unchanging God, About how praiseworthy, And trustworthy he is, About the goodness, Of the gospel, That has the effect, Of encouraging, Our brothers and sisters, In Christ, Of teaching one another, To keep trusting, In him.

Because music, Music can help us, Remember words, In this case, It can help us, To remember truth, From God's word. Think of it this way, If I ask you today, Whether you could even quote, One line from my sermon, Last week, How many of you, Would be able to?

[32 : 41] I'll be really surprised, If you could, I'll be surprised, If I could. But if I said, Joy to the world, How many of you, Can finish that sentence? Most of you can say, The Lord has come, That's right, And then I say, The next line, Let earth receive, And all of you can say, Her king, Yeah, We remember songs, And that's why, We teach kids, Nursery rhymes, And that's why, Even Alzheimer's, Patients, Who have trouble, Remembering the name, Of their spouse, Can sometimes, Still sing, Entire songs, That they learn, By heart, As a child, When I was a kid, We had a cassette tape, Which was basically, Scripture set to song, That was often playing, In the car, And to this day, I can still remember, Philippians 4, Verse 6 to 7, By heart, Because, I sang that, While my mom, Drove around, And that's probably why, In Deuteronomy 31, Verse 19 to 21, God instructed, Moses to teach, Israel a song,

To remember him, And in that context, To remember his judgment, Maybe that's why, The Bible encourages, Musical accompaniment, To vocal praise, Psalm 150, For example, Talks about trumpets, And cymbals, And string instruments, As we praise God, For when those instruments, Are paired with words, They can, Very powerfully, Bring our focus, Back to God himself, To his goodness, To his sovereignty, To his grace, His gospel, His call to obedience, And so many other, Wonderful things, About God, And so my brothers, And sisters, When we sing, Don't forget, We are not just, Singing to God, We are singing, For the sake, Of one another, Congregational singing, Is not the same, As singing privately, To God, It's also to help, Each other, To live, For Jesus, When we sing in church, We sometimes, Close our eyes,

Nothing wrong with that, I do that, Sometimes as well, But can I encourage you, From time to time, To open your eyes, And actually look around you, As you sing, Now that might seem weird, But that's actually in line, With Colossians 3, Verse 16, It only feels weird, Because sometimes, We've

overly individualised, Our faith, In a way that is foreign, To the Bible, And that brings us, To our last question, For today, What then, Should we sing?

I hope the answer is now, Obvious, We must sing, Truth, We must sing, Truth, In Colossians 3, Verse 16, Paul talks about singing, Psalms, Hymns, And songs from the spirit, And there's a bit of debate, About what they all mean, But I don't think, It needs to get too complicated, For clearly, If they are the means, By which God's word, Is to dwell in us richly, They must refer to, Biblical truth, Notice they're not, All exactly the same, Indicating that they can be, A variety of styles, But the content, Is non-negotiable, It is biblical truth, We must sing, So that God's word, Can dwell in us, Richly, For in the end, Music must serve, The words, We've just heard about, How music can arouse,

The emotions, And that's why, It can sometimes feel, As if we are even more, In God's presence, When we sing, And that's appropriate, If the melody, Brings out the meaning, But it's, Inappropriate, If the music, Is used simply to, Manipulate, How we feel, Augustine, Whom we're going to learn about, This coming Friday, Warns about this, He goes as far, As to say, If the music, Moves me more, Than the subject, Of the song, God himself, I wish I had never, Heard the singer, At all, For this is what, The Bible does, Again, And again, It doesn't just, Call us to sing, But constantly, Gives us the reason to, By drawing attention, To the subject, Of the song, Let me just take, Two examples,

[37 : 20] From Revelation 4, And 5, Here's Revelation 4, Verse 11, On the screen, You are worthy, Our Lord and God, To receive glory, And honour, And power, Why?

For, You created all things, And by your will, They were created, And have, Their being, And here's Revelation 5, Verse 9, And they sang, A new song, Saying, You are worthy, To take the scroll, And to open its seals, What's the reason?

Because, You were slain, And with your blood, You purchased for God, Persons from every tribe, And language, And people, And nation, And so we sing, With understanding, Not merely being moved, By the music, But praising God, Because, He is creator, And redeemer, That's why, We sing, And if our singing, Is to, Teach one another, Then of course, That makes the truth, Of what we sing, Even more important, It would be sad, Within it, If the preacher, Sat down, Having preached, Faithfully from God's word, Only for the song leader, Or the choir, To come up, And sing something, That totally contradicts, God's word, But sadly, It can, And does, Happen, As someone once said, We are much more likely, To sing heresy, Than to preach it,

And if so, This has implications, For our song preferences, And selection, When we choose, What to sing, The question to ask, Is no longer, Should we just sing hymn, Should we just sing choruses, No, The better question, To ask of songs, Would be things like, Does this song, Convey to us, The great truths, Of the gospel, Does it cause us, To see, God's character, And his mighty acts, In history, Does it cause me, To break out, In thanksgiving to him, Because I see God, In all his beauty, And majesty, Objectively, And of course, We need to take into account, Whether the song, Can help others, And so we ask, Is this song, Understandable, Is it, Singable, And when we do that, We realise, The question is no longer, So much about, Whether we love, The style of the song, Personally, Or not, Because in the end, Singing is not, About,

Us, It's about, It's about, It's about, It's about, It's about, It's about making sure, God's truth, Dwells in us, Richly, And if music ministry, Is word ministry, Then those of us, Who are song leaders, Need to make sure, That we know, Our bibles well, To be more discerning, In our songs, It's why song leaders, And pastors, Work together, not a part, to make sure that our songs are serving their purpose.

[40 : 26] And as a pastor, I need to oversee our pool of songs, for otherwise I'm advocating my responsibility. For songs are about God's truth.

And that means that should an unbeliever ever walk into this gathering, he should learn about our message, not just from the sermon, but also something of our message from the songs we sing as well.

And so we better make sure we're singing good songs. And in the end, remember the purpose of our gathering together from a couple of weeks ago?

We said it's to meet with God and to encourage one another. There's a vertical and a horizontal dimension. We sing, and it's the same with singing.

We sing with gratitude to God in our hearts, but we also sing to teach and even admonish one another. There's a vertical and horizontal dimension.

[41 : 33] And as our lips express the thanks and the praise of our hearts, and as those same lips praise God to others, and encourage them to fix our eyes on him, well, that will build us up.

And so when we leave the gathering, we will be able to, as Colossians 3 verse 17 says, give glory to God in word and deed, and to do it all in his name.

Well, that's the power of singing together. So church, shall we pray, and shall we sing? Father, thank you again for teaching us from your word, and we pray now that you have equipped us to understand the role of singing in our gathering better.

So indeed, please help us to sing with gratitude to God in our hearts. Help us to sing, to teach, and to admonish, and to build one another up that the word of God might truly dwell in us richly.

We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.