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“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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THE SONGS THAT WE SING

All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah. (Psa. 66:4)

Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. (1 Chr. 16:9)

Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation. (1 Chr. 16:23)

Singing is a large part of our worship service. Typically, most services contain either five or six songs, each led by the designated song leader for that service. There are other methods

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and other ways that this is done and that is okay; the purpose of this is not to debate those ideas. I want you to think back to the most recent worship service that you attended. Can you remember the names of the songs that were sung? Let's take it a step further-- can you remember what each song was about?

The most famous "song writer" in the Bible was David. He did not write everything in the book of Psalms, but he did write many songs (psalms) that worship and praise God. Have you ever read one of the chapters in the book of Psalms and thought about it being a worship song? Read the following from Psalm 148 and think about it being used to worship God.

Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD. (Psa. 148:1-14)

If it sounds familiar (other than the fact that you have probably read this in your Bible), this text is the primary text in a hymn that we sing ("Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah"--song #77 in the book that we affectionately call "the red book"). Most of

the songs that we sing get their content and ideas for lyrics from Bible verses. Of course, verbiage is updated but the content remains largely the same. Sometimes our songs even mix ideas from different areas of the Bible. This is another common practice used by the composers and arrangers who have worked to create our modern song books. Many song books show a verse under the title that was the inspiration for the song. How many times do we pay attention to that information? My guess is not too many.

If you are a song leader, do you think about the words to the songs that you are singing before selecting them or do you just choose something because you know it really well or you like it? Too often, the latter is true. It is important that every song that we sing is selected because of what it is about, not because we know how it goes. Are we are singing songs in an improper context, such as singing songs that talk about it being night or the end of the day when it is Sunday morning? How many times do you listen to what the preacher is speaking on that day and select a song or songs to be sung after he is done that relate to his topic? Proper thought should always be given to song selection so that we are truly worshipping God and not just going through the motions.

Another important thought for song leaders is related to programming. If you have been to a concert, think about the song selections. Were they all fast and upbeat songs? Were they all slow chorale-like songs? I would venture to guess that the set list consisted of a mix of all types and tempos of songs. There are a lot of reasons for that, but one major reason is to keep the interest of the audience. Do we think about these types of things when selecting songs for our worship service? There's nothing wrong with the fast songs or the slow songs but the best thing to do would probably be to mix the types up some and not just do a service that consists of one or the other.

Everyone who attends a worship service should be thinking about the content of the songs selected. We typically do a

good job about paying attention to the preacher and can process his topic and what is being said but do not always do a good job of paying attention to the songs. Again, it is typically just going through the motions. The content should be the most important part of our singing. The most important thing is not singing the proper pitches or rhythms but singing with our hearts and knowing what we are saying.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; (Eph. 5:19)

It says “*singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*”. How can we do that if we are not thinking about what we are saying?

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Col. 3:16)

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. (1 Cor. 14:15-17)

The next time that you are in a worship service think about these things. Think about the songs that you are singing and

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what they are about. Just as there are verses that can help us through different situations, there are songs based on these verses that can help as well. Keep the songs in your heart in everything that you do, not just in worship services. They can go with you throughout everything to help provide comfort and relief.

Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant. (Psa. 135:3)

A. D.

ALL SCRIPTURE

You have accepted the gospel of Jesus and learned many things about Jesus, God the Father, their ways, and their promises from the Holy Scriptures. You must continue in the things you have learned. The apostle Paul gave the following instruction to Timothy, his son in the faith:

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

Just like Timothy, you have learned many things from the Holy Scriptures.

When the apostle wrote to Timothy, the writings of the New Testament had not been collected together into a single book. The Holy Scriptures that Paul referred to were likely the Old Testament Scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi. They include writings of history, instruction, wisdom, psalms, and prophecy. As Paul said, these scriptures are inspired by God. That means that they were “God breathed”. The apostle Peter described it similarly in 2 Peter 1:20-21:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Inspired means that the Holy Spirit of God moved them or spoke to them the things that they were to write. Yes, these holy men of God were humans and they were the ones who did the writing, but their message is from God, the I AM, the creator of the universe. He wants His message to be passed down to all mankind. He wants people to know His words. As Jesus said in Matthew 4:4b, *“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”* You know the words from God because the Holy Spirit of God inspired the holy men of God who wrote the scriptures.

The writings of the New Testament are also inspired by God. From Matthew to Revelation, these books were written by the apostles and followers of Jesus. Jesus gave many of God’s words to the apostles while He was on the earth, but He also sent the Holy Spirit to guide them after He returned to heaven. He told his apostles in John 16:12-13,

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Just as the holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the books of the Old Testament, I believe that other holy men of God were moved by the same Holy Spirit to write the books of the New Testament. The apostle Peter wrote concerning the apostle Paul’s writings in 2 Peter 3:15-16,

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in

which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Peter understood that God had given Paul wisdom for his writings and some people twisted what Paul wrote as they also twisted the rest of the Scriptures. The implication is that Paul's writings were considered by Peter as part of the Scriptures, inspired by God. So, you and I have the Holy Scriptures, both the Old Testament and the New Testament, which are inspired by God and collected into the Bible. These writings are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

The Bible is profitable for doctrine. That means for teaching. You are taught from the Bible many, many things. You are taught about God and about His nature – who He is and what are His characteristics. You are taught what pleases Him and what displeases Him. You are taught how He hates sin and unrighteousness. You are also taught that He loves you.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

You are taught about His plan of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. There are so many things that you are taught by the Bible; it is profitable for doctrine.

The Bible is profitable for reproof. That means that it is helpful in convicting the sinner of the error of his way. It is helpful in imposing discipline on those who depart from God's ways. It is helpful in combating error or false doctrine. The Bible is profitable for correction. That means that when there are false notions, mistaken views, or improper actions, the Bible is helpful in restoring things to their proper place and making things right. The Bible is profitable for instruction in righteousness. That means that it teaches you what God considers right or just. As such, it teaches you what you should believe and how you should act. Altogether, the Bible enables you to be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

My hope is that you appreciate that the Bible contains the words of God as He inspired holy men to write His message. My encouragement to you is that you continue in the things which you have already learned and have been assured of from the Bible and that you diligently seek to learn more and more of its truths which will make you wise for salvation.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. According to the law, why could the Israelites not eat blood?
2. How many times did Samson lie about his source of strength to Delilah?
3. What did Abigail prevent David from doing to Nabal?
4. When Jesus died, for how long was there darkness over the land?
5. Which woman, who was “full of good works and almsdeeds”, was raised from the dead by Peter at Joppa?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH. . .

And remember last month’s questions?

1. What was the name of the field where Abraham buried his wife? MACHPELAH (Gen. 23:19)
2. From which country did Solomon import horses? EGYPT (1 Ki. 10:28)
3. In Zechariah, the prophet has a vision of a man riding a red horse and standing among what kind of tree? MYRTLE (Zec. 1:8)
4. How many wise men does the Bible say came to visit the baby Jesus? IT DOESN’T SAY (Mat. 2:1-12)
5. Jesus appeared to his disciples after the resurrection beside which sea? SEA OF TIBERIAS (GALILEE) (John 6:1; 21:1)