

Why We Do The Things We Do
 (The Way We Do)
 Ephesians 2-3

Intro:

- *Glory, beauty, worth... belong to the family of grace
 - not merely by performance
 - but by virtue of UNION w/the ONE
 - who possess all of these as His essence
 - thus... derived and essential

- *the purpose of the family of grace
 - must be guided by scripture
 - reveals His purposes
 - rather than depending upon
 - our personal preferences for this body
 - the particular/pressing needs of those around

- I. What the Bible says about the Family of Grace
 -Ephesians is one of the clearest expressions

The Theme of Ephesians:

The glorious destiny that belongs to the church because of her union with Christ.

Chapter 1- The numerous blessings of salvation in Xt. Election, pre-determined destination (Christlikeness), redemption, assurance of promised inheritance, gift of the HS.
"God's work for us"

Chapter 2- A reminder about the glorious rescue that resulted in our deliverance from sin's bondage to new life in Xt and walking with Him. A rescue so far reaching that foreigners are made citizens, full members of the household of God.
"God's work in us"

Chapter 3- The eternal purpose of God is that His manifold wisdom will be made known to the church and put on display by the church for all of the world to witness, both on earth and in heaven. (10-11)

God's plan for the church is revealed in Paul's prayer: 3:16ff
...that [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your

*hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. **20** Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, **21** to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever.*

*here is a clear guide for the family of grace

- i. It exists by the abundance of Her King's spiritual supplies
- ii. It's purpose is to bring Him glory (honor), in much the same way the incarnate Son did, in every generation on planet earth.

*We are obligated as leaders/members

to do WHAT we do

and HOW we do

*according to these twin realities.

*activities that do not require the provision of the Mediator

*activities that do not reflect the honor of God

-must be questioned, rethought.

*For either to be reality in daily experience

-we must first do an unexpected thing

-we must put away an individualistic pursuit of xty
and embrace the vital life that is biblical xty

*Xty is personal... it is not an individual matter

*When we consider the NT teaching

-realize I cannot receive the fulness of Xt merely on my own

-realize I cannot adequately reflect God's multi-faceted glory on my own

*both require involvement in the family of grace

-and that means... a vital connection to a local gathering of believers

*That brings us to another issue

-theological adjustment

-Xt accomplished a Dual Reconciliation

1. Godward: God to you, you to God

-by atoning death, that both propitiates and removes the offense

2. Horizontal: you to other redeemed sinners

-secondary... but an essential consequence

*like faith and works

*so is your rel'p to God and to others in His church

-with the second... why should we believe you have the first?

Being reconciled to God means being reconciled to everyone else who is reconciled to God.

Listen to Eph. 2:

...so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross...

*with these things understood... let's move on:

II. Why we do and the things we do?

- the activities of the Family of Grace
are as varied as an earthly family
- but there are basic activities that are Biblically demanded
and we need to be sure we do them
and we need to be sure we do them for the right reasons.

*these may be basic things to you
but many haven't understood the why of what we do
*can't emphasize all in one sitting...
but main ones
some more to say next WED.

*remember: done by depending upon His provision
done in order to glorify Him

1. Preaching

- we preach Xt
 - we do so doctrinally
 - we aim at the exp'l understanding and real application of Him
- God is the center of the passages
 - not our duties
- Encountering the reality of God
through this means of grace
is the goal
 - equipping us to go home and fuel our every day obedience
- all good things in religion
which threaten to take center stage
which we might be attempted to think God exists in order to promote
*are rigorously exposed as idols and competitors to God's honor.
 - these things are often very good things
 - family, evangelism, moral causes, particular doctrines
 - *the good things make the best idols

- don't misunderstand the criticism of them...
 - it is their place/not validity
 - that is being questioned
- God=hub of the wheel
 - believing God, loving God... spokes
 - rim... each pt of contact with faith/love... area of obedience

*get the heart right in its focus... hand the person a bible... they will obey

2. Prayer

Prayer is fundamental in the life of the church. *Not supplemental.*

- how we plan our church events demonstrates our views of this
- ?is the prayer meeting a catch-all for those who have no other activity?

2 types of corporate prayer here:

- i. worship oriented. Group Q Time.
 - made aware of His worth,
 - express it to Him in praise
 - express it to Him in longing for Him
 - *experiential desires... built on an objective foundation
 - last week... baptists and brethren?

- ii. pleading... for our needs, and others
 - intercession, supplication
 - spiritual is still the major focus
 - WED nt/SAT morn
 - *more personal, more specific in prayers

*danger:

- we are oriented to come and RECEIVE
- but you must come to prayer to GIVE, to WORK
- it is the hardest meeting to do well
- it is the sweetest and most vital...

You must come to pray... silently or aloud
do let hand it over to the same 6 or 7
6 or 7... do not hog it

For corporate prayers... shorter and earnest are best

- *you are not merely talking to God (as in private prayer)
- your prayers help your siblings

*no meeting so difficult to keep on track
 -thus... many Reformed churches avoid it as dangerous

*Great Worth=grace received from Him
 -real prayer is transaction
 -communion=receive, give, receive again
 -important connection
 obedience requires grace
 grace is given to one type of people... humble
 prayer is the great corporate expression of humility
 -we need YOU

*the opp. is true
 -grace refused to proud
 -self-sufficiency is pride
 -to attempt to live xty while avoiding prayer
 is an expression of sp'l pride

*about gratitude
 -in Luke 17... after cleansing 10 lepers... only 1 returned
 ?would Jesus come to our prayer meeting and ask: Were there not ten cleansed?
 But the nine--where are they? Was no one found who returned to give
 glory to God, except this one?...

*last point for tonight

3. singing

this too is not an option

Ephesians 5:19

"Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord..."

Colossians 3:16

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Paul expects that believers will communicate truth and knowledge and instruction by means of these various forms of singing.

The same point is being made in Colossians as in Ephesians.

The *speaking* in Ephesians is *teaching and admonishing* in Colossians.

Paul's point is that the way the "word of Christ richly dwells" in our corp. gatherings is by our teaching and admonishing one another and this will include psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

corporate singing

is designed not simply to praise God
but to educate His people.

By means of them we "teach" and "admonish" one another.

-Sound odd to us?

How does one teach someone else by singing to them?

How can singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
admonish another believer?"

*of course this means that certain things need to be true of our songs

i. present highest views of God possible

ii. present the most honest expressions of xtn experiences as possible
*theology, practice, experience, struggle, joy... all there.

iii. must call forth from us consecration of our all to God

-helping us return to God, desire God, devote ourselves to God

The educational and convicting power in music and song cannot be denied.

Warren Wiersbe writes:

"I am convinced that congregations learn more theology (good and bad) from the songs they sing than from the sermons they hear. Many sermons are doctrinally sound and contain a fair amount of biblical information, but they lack that necessary emotional content that gets hold of the listener's heart. Music, however, reaches the mind and the heart at the same time. It has power to touch and move the emotions, and for that reason can become a wonderful tool in the hands of the Spirit or a terrible weapon in the hands of the Adversary".

*Illus. John and Charles Wesley

This reality alone is sufficient reason for us to be conscientious and biblically accurate in what we sing!

*As with prayer... hard work to do well.

*As with prayer... you don't have an audience of 1
-God... and your fellow xtens

*So... it requires some thought and effort

*do not dishonor God by mumbling through these hymns

*do not come selfishly ... lazily

*each hymn is an opportunity for you to GIVE
 so some sacrifice is required,
 some sp'l energy,
 some thought and response to God

John Wesley's "Rules for Methodist Singers"

- Learn the tunes
- Sing them as printed
- Sing all. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find it a blessing.
- Sing lustily (heartily) and with a good courage.
- Sing modestly. Do not bawl. (distractingly)
- Sing in time. Do not run before or stay behind.
- Above all, sing spiritually.
 Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually.

*sing to God
 -but sing also for benefit of your family

Conclusion

*go back to Eph 3
 -filled with fullness of Xt
 -richly supplied
 -in order to bring God honor in every generation

1. ?does your preaching/listening
 -require provision of our Lord
 -promote His glory

2. ?does your praying...

3. ?does your singing...