

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Sermon Series: Body Building

Title: Corporate Praise

Speaker: David Song

Text: Ephesians 5:18-19; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:16-18

Date: April 29, 2018



WARM-UP

- When you listened to the radio or bought recordings, what decade of music would be your most favorite decade?
- Put these Christian songs in the right order in which they were written, from oldest to newest: Cornerstone, Amazing Grace, All Glory Laud and Honor, Reckless Love, Hosanna (Praise is rising). (See the answer at the bottom of the last page.)
- At the worship services, do you tend to be more of a critic, an evaluator, an observer, or a worshiper?

DISCUSSION

REVIEW:

Three Key Elements of Corporate Praise:

- Corporate praise facilitates space for **God's revelation**:
"Worship is a strategy by which we interrupt our preoccupation with ourselves and attend to the presence of God." (Peterson)
 - ⇒ What does it mean to "attend to the presence of God?"
 - ⇒ Read I Peter 2:1-6: How is this text about us as a corporate experience?
 - ⇒ Which key words in the song, "Cornerstone," reveal the presence of God to us?
 - v.1** *My hope is built on nothing less, Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly trust is Jesus' name*
 - Chorus:** *Christ alone, Cornerstone, Weak made strong in the Savior's love
Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all*
 - v.2** *When darkness seems to hide His face, I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the veil.*
- **Why do we do it? Corporate praise facilitates space for our response to God:** An opportunity to express back to God our obedience, commitment, praise, thanksgiving, prayer, adoration:
 - ⇒ Scriptures indicate that we too should enter into corporate praise: Ephesians 5:18-19
 - ⇒ God is pleased when we sing together. Psalm 148
 - ⇒ The church is strengthened through teaching and admonishing each other as well as giving thankful praise: Colossians 3:15-16
 - ⇒ Corporate praise can involve everyone. It's accessible to each person.
- How should we do it? **Corporate praise facilitates spiritual transformation** in the worshiper:
Three primary factors of corporate praise:
 1. **Content is primary:** "For worship to be biblical and Christian, the story of God's creation, redemption and salvation must be its content...Content of worship is non-negotiable. (God acts to save us and heals us) as we remember, proclaim, enacts and celebrates (His story) with thanksgiving."

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DISCUSSION

2. **Structure is secondary:** A service plan that facilitates *delivering the content*. Significant thought and prayer is given to preparation of a worship service:
 - * A call to gather; a number of worship songs to focus our thoughts on God; a corporate prayer; the blessing of our children; giving offering back to God; greeting each other; hearing the Word; responding to the Word; closing the service with a blessing.
3. **Style is third** and least significant element of the three:
 - * Style (the atmosphere in the service) is open and flexible to each culture.
Examples:
 - a. **Formal and traditional** – using valued music and forms from the past that have served the community well throughout history.
 - b. **Liturgical** – using a traditional, ritualized, formally structured way of worshiping; using religious symbols, the communal recitation of such prayers, the congregation's united response to petitions read aloud to God, the observation of the church year, the following of a lectionary, and performance of the sacraments.
 - c. **Contemporary** – perhaps more informal, using music recently written.
 - d. **Charismatic** – maybe contemporary but has significant expressiveness in the congregation, and an emphasis on the operation of the Holy Spirit.
 - * **When we focus more on Content (focus on the story of God and His redemption) and Structure (the way we deliver the content) then Style will not be so divisive.**

Applications and Ponderings:

- Is there sometimes a situation during the corporate praise in the service where you simply "check out?" Why is that?
- If a "generation" is 15 years, how many different generations does South Abbotsford include? Why does determining "style" become challenging?
- If we are "one body," how can we learn to appreciate the worship style of generations other than yours?
- If we intentionally use David's template of **Content first, Structure second and Style third**, how will that transform our attitudes and approaches toward the corporate praise of our worship service?

(Answer to Warmups: All Glory Laud and Honor, Amazing Grace, Hosanna (Praise is rising), Cornerstone, Reckless Love)