

THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

Evaluating Music

By Pastor Del Miller

A number of years ago I led a session on Evaluating Music. We used Philippians 1:10 (...”approve the things that are excellent”...) as our starting point and went on from there to make a case for each Christian singing and listening to God honoring, Bible based music.

Here are some of the questions that were recommended when considering the value of music:

- Is the content scriptural?
- Does it match the Bible?
- Does the music support the message of the song?
- Is the musician a born again believer?
- Do the lyrics and music encourage me to grow in my relationship with God?
- Are the lyrics focused on God?
- Do the music and lyrics promote a high view of God?
- Do the music and lyrics adorn the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- Do the music and lyrics promote passionate worship?
- Do the lyrics and music promote

thankfulness in my heart to God?

A number of passages were mentioned from Ephesians and Philippians supporting the validity of asking such questions.

Another book that includes some significant information about music is Colossians. From the words of Colossians 3:16 we are reminded that God’s purpose for music is to enable believers to build up other believers:

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.

For many years we have made it a matter of great importance to sing music at OGBC that matches what the Bible teaches and therefore builds up the saints. We have made an effort to sing doctrinally accurate songs in our times of public worship and praise. We have often been able to find music that reinforces the content of the Bible passage that is being preached.

It has appeared that the church family appreciates this effort to have the music

of the church consistently conform to the truths of the Bible. I recall clearly a Sunday over 20 years ago when Pastor Ethan Kallberg and I sang a song by Michael Card about “The Prophet.” It was a forceful song which explained the sometimes harsh ministry of a prophet and its ramifications. It was not musically a beautiful song but it was a very Biblical song and a number of people expressed appreciation for it after the service that day.

It is good to be thoughtful about the music we sing when we gather our Church Family together. However, God may be the most interested in what you are listening to and singing the other 6 days of the week.

Sunday, everyone in the church building is expecting music that revolves around Jesus Christ the Son of God who came to take away the sins of the world. When you reach for your phone or your car radio controls what music will you choose? At this “high tech” time you have a staggering array of choices available. What will you select to listen to during your free time or during drive time? Will you make an intentional choice to choose music on Monday that measures up to the same standards that you demand for your music on Sunday?

This is not a question about style.

Styles vary widely across the country and around the world. This is an appeal for thoughtful, Biblical, encouraging musical intake throughout the week. Music has tremendous power to “lock” phrases into our minds.

Advertisers have known this for many years. Advertising jingles of all kinds have been produced to help you remember cars, retail stores and fast food. It is far more important to remember the truths of God’s Word and the message of the Gospel than to remember the temporal things that are promoted all around us. Music that is based on truth will embed that truth in your mind and heart. Music that is based on selfishness and evil actions will also embed those ideas in your mind and heart.

We are told what kind of things we should focus on with our minds in Philippians 4:8: *Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*

What is the focus of the music you choose to listen to when you are all alone? You can learn something about yourself by thinking about that.

Music is a gift from God. He created it and it is His desire for us to enjoy it and benefit from it. He wants us to

listen to, and sing along with, music that reminds us of Him and His eternal truth.

Prayer for a New Year

—Marianne Farningham

Father, who givest us
Now the new year,
Grant that Thy mercy
May with it appear;
Lead us the path along
Which we must go;
Choose Thou our portion
Of pleasure or woe.

Father, Thy blessing give
Brightening each day;
Be Thou our comforter,
Hear when we pray.
Let us not go alone
Out in the wild;
Let Thy forgiving love
Shelter each child.

Whate'er our work shall be
Let us have light;
What our hands find to do
Doing with might;
Faithfully serving Thee
While it is day,
So be the happy year
Passing away.

Father, Thy wisdom give,
Let us be strong;
Keep us from grieving Thee
Doing the wrong.
Oh, let us hear Thy voice
Calling us near,
Oh, let us see the way
Clearly appear.

Father, we cannot see
What is before,
Yet we would sing our song
Trusting Thee more;
Burdens we have and griefs
Bitter to bear.
But Thou wilt quiet us,
Thou who dost care.

So we will meet the months
Leaning on Thee,
Loving and mighty One,
Still near us be;
Help us to forward go
Strong in Thy fear;
Father, abide with us
All through the year.

If it should be the last,
Happy are we!
We in the heavenly home
With Thee shall be.
Guide our feet thither, and
Bless Thou us still—
Father, with us and ours
Do Thine own will.

FUNNIES

A little boy who wanted one hundred dollars very much prayed and prayed for two weeks, but nothing happened. Then he decided to write a letter to God requesting the one hundred dollars.

When the post office received the letter addressed to "God, USA," they didn't know what to do with it, so they sent it to the president at the White House. The president was so impressed he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a five dollar bill. "That should look like a large sum of money to one so young."

The boy was delighted with the five dollars and immediately sat down to write a thank-you note to God, which read, "Dear God, thank you for sending me the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you had it sent through Washington D.C., and as usual, the government deducted ninety-five percent."

Watching young Willy making faces at the kids around him in Sunday School class, teacher Miss Betsy stopped the lesson and said, "Willy when I was your age, I was told that if I made ugly faces, my face would freeze that way."

Willy looked up and replied innocently, "Well Miss Betsy, you can't say you weren't warned."

Bobby and his grandmother were looking at vacation pictures. "It looks just like an artist painted this scenery," Grandma said. "Did you know God painted it all for you Bobby?"

"Yes," Bobby said. "God did it with His left hand."

This confused grandmother a bit, "What makes you say God did this with His left hand?"

"Well," said Bobby, "We learned at Sunday School last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand."

The substitute teacher was struggling to open a lock on the Sunday school supply cabinet. She'd been told the combination but couldn't quite remember it. Finally she went to the pastor's study and asked for help.

When the minister began to twist the dial, he paused after the first couple of numbers and started blankly. Finally he looked heavenward and his lips moved silently, then he looked back at the lock, turned to the final numbers, and clicked open the hasp.

The teacher was amazed. "I'm in awe of your faith, Pastor."

"It's really nothing," he responded. "the numbers are on a piece of tape on the ceiling."

If you know of any good funnies that could be included in future Heralds, please let Pastor Joshua know.