

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

February 25

2018

YOU ARE A SERVANT

Yes, each and every one of us is a servant. Many resent the thought of being considered a servant. In fact, some refuse to obey the gospel because, as they say, "I don't want anyone telling me what I have to do." This was the attitude of the self-righteous Jews when Jesus told them *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31,32). Their reply was, *"We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"* "Jesus answered them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"* John 8:34.

The apostle Paul expressed it like this: *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* (Romans 6:16). The person who rejects Christ and refuses to obey the gospel may not like for anyone to tell him what to do but, whether he realizes it or not, he is still a servant (really a slave) to sin and this is the worst bondage of all.

Paul makes it very clear that the servant receives the reward of his service. In Romans 6:23 he tells us that the *"wages of sin is death."* These Romans had been servants of sin however they had *"obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness"* (Romans 6:17-18).

What about you? Whom or what are you serving? If you are serving sin it leads to eternal condemnation (Romans 6:16,23). However, you can obey from the heart the same gospel the Romans had obeyed and become servants of righteousness. Paul said they had been *"buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4). Have you obeyed from the heart as these obeyed or are you still a servant of sin? Yes, you are either a servant of sin or you are a servant of righteousness. Which is it? *✍ James Hahn*



The Tone Deaf Singer

The prosperity gospel has not produced a new generation of great Christian hymns. Neither have Positive Thinking or Progressive Christianity. There is a reason we would not expect them to. The fact is, the deepest songs come from the deepest truth. The most faithful songs come from the most faithful expressions of the Christian faith. The richest songs come from the richest understanding of who God is and what God has done.

As Christians we are told to sing from the gospel, for one another, to the Lord—a ten-word summary of Colossians 3:16 which says, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."* As Paul writes to this Colossian church, he wants them to realize that every Christian needs singing lessons. If we want to sing a song that glorifies the Lord, we first need to apply some lessons.

The first lesson is this: The gospel must be the basis of your song. Before you can sing a song that glorifies God, the word of Christ—the gospel—needs to be dwelling within you. Paul has just said: *"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him,*

having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” That is a glorious message, and one worth singing about. There is, quite literally, nothing better than this in the entire universe. You will never hear a better, richer, sweeter message. If you want to sing a God-glorifying song, you first need to have that rich, sweet message dwelling within you.

The second lesson is this: The gospel needs to dwell richly within you. It is not enough to let the gospel dwell within. Before you can sing—really sing—you need to have that gospel dwelling richly within. To dwell in you richly, a message must be rich. You can’t fill yourself with a shallow, trite, silly message and expect that it will dwell richly. And this is exactly why the prosperity gospel has not produced the next generation of great hymns of the Christian faith. This is why we don’t look to churches dominated by positive thinking for rich, gospel-centered songs. Where there is a shallow and unbiblical message, there must also be shallow and unbiblical songs. Conversely, a rich message generates rich dwelling, and that rich dwelling generates rich contemplation, and that rich contemplation generates rich songs.

As we sing to God, we proclaim who he is, what he has done, and what he requires of us. We also cry out to him in supplication, asking him for those things that he delights to his people. If this is true, it is a call to substance in our songs. We have thousands of great songs at our disposal, so why would we waste our time with songs that don’t say much at all? The richer our understanding of God, the richer the expressions of praise and the richer and bolder the requests we can make in our song. If we know God only as the one who dispenses riches, our songs will ask for nothing more than wealth. If we know God only as weak and barely holy, our songs will tell of a too-small God, a God unworthy of our worship. But if we know God as he is and if we know what he has accomplished through his Son, our songs will be full of rich, sweet truth.

We sing best when that gospel is dwelling richly within us. God

is not looking at the quality of our tone or the perfection of our pitch. He is looking at the heart. Tone and pitch matter, but when you stand with the congregation and sing to the Lord, it is your heart that is far more significant. You can be utterly tone deaf and sing beautiful music in the ear of God when the gospel is dwelling richly within and when you are singing to exult in the Savior.

✍ Tim Challies



God Comes First (Matthew 6:33)

Loving Him with our whole heart is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:36-37). We say it and sing it, but do we practice it? What do our calendars say? What about those Sundays when the kids have a ball game or when we are on vacation - does He come first those Sundays? What do our checkbooks say? Does He come first in finances or is He somewhere down the list, perhaps even beneath what we spend on recreation? What do our closets say? Do our wardrobes reflect godliness or worldliness? In the Apostle’s words, “*Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth*” (1 John 3:18).

✍ Frank Himmel

Belleville church of Christ	
5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258	
www.bellevillechurch.net	
Schedule of Services	
Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.
Evangelist	
James Hahn	(317) 745-1507