

11/28/10

Series Title: “*Thanksgiving Admonitions*”

Today’s Title:

“*The Song of Thanksgiving*”

Scripture Reading: Psalm 96:1-13

Text: Psalm 96:1-13

Introduction: (Illustration from Knight, p.366 and song #6)

In the period following the Reformation, singing in churches was confined mostly to psalms. It was thought wrong and even sinful to make up new hymns.

One man who made many contributions to the change from psalm singing to hymn singing was Isaac Watts. By the age of seven, he was composing so many poems that his father became annoyed and ordered him to quit. But Isaac refused. So his father took him to the woodshed to “spank poetry out of him.” But poetry was too deeply ingrained in Isaac for that.

When he was eighteen, Isaac complained to his father that the hymns in the church service were uninspiring. “Well,” said his father, “if you could improve on them, why don’t you try!”

Isaac did try. After much prayer, he wrote a hymn which was sung the following Sunday. During the following two years he wrote a new hymn for each service. At first, his hymns met opposition, for people considered them emotional, but Isaac Watts wrote on. Today his hymns are sung in churches throughout the world. The Lord guided his pen to write such never-to-be-forgotten hymns as “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.” Another such hymn is the following:

*Ye nations round the earth, rejoice
Before the Lord, your sovereign King;
Serve him with cheerful heart and voice;
With all your tongues his glory sing.*

*The Lord is God; ‘tis he alone
Doth life, and breath, and being give;
We are his work, and not our own,*

The sheep that on his pastures live.

*Enter his gates with songs of joy;
With praises to his courts repair;
And make it your divine employ
To pay your thanks and honors there.*

*The Lord is good; the Lord is kind;
Great is his grace, his mercy sure;
And all the race of man shall find
His truth from age to age endure.*

Premise: *A healed soul produces a jubilant song of worship*

Outline:

- I. Futility of the Old Song**
- II. Function of the New Song**
- III. Fruitfulness of the New Song**

I. FUTILITY OF THE OLD SONG

A. Components of the old song

- 1. The delusion of self-sufficiency
 - a. Robert H. Schuller, *Your Church Has a Fantastic Future*, pp.76-77, 89-90

“Possibility thinking is maximum utilization of the God-given powers of imagination exercised in dreaming up possible ways by which a desired objective can be attained....The principles of possibility thinking are these: (1) Possibility thinking assumes that there must be a way to achieve a desired objective, (2) Possibility thinking makes great pronouncements, (3) Possibility thinking results in brainstorming, (4) Possibility thinking brings in support from unexpected sources....

“...play the possibility-thinking game!....When you start playing the game, here’s what happens. The wild and reckless ideas that you have allowed to be expressed in your slumbering subconscious get stirred up. So wild and reckless

into some snoozing, creative brain cells that, once jarred out of their slumber, perk up and listen to what's going on. They emerge from their hibernation to join the party and offer their own suggestions.

After a while, more sleeping, creative brain cells are aroused by all the activity and great ideas come forth until the "list of possible ways" is lengthened and, generally speaking, a more probable solution is mentally generated.

What are your goals? What are your dreams? What great thing can you imagine for God? Play the possibility-thinking game.

b. c/w James 4:13-16

2. The despair of no one to thank

- Christina Rossetti

"Were there no God we would be in this glorious world with grateful hearts and no one to thank."

- Jean-Paul Sartre

"That God does not exist, I cannot deny: that my whole being cries out for God, I cannot forget."

(Illustration from Nelson, p.215)

The philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, understood the implication of what he was advocating. In removing God from our lives, we were removing our source of comfort and stripping ourselves of hope and peace. We were crossing the line of despair.

Nietzsche thought that after an initial time of chaos and despair, his God-is-dead philosophy would pave the way for a great superman to come and take charge of the human race, someone who could lead humanity to its zenith. But the insanity he predicted for the world came upon himself. Apparently unable to live with his own beliefs, Nietzsche became increasingly irrational. One day he collapsed on a street in Turin and was taken to an asylum. For the last twelve years of his life he was insane, becoming himself a madman, being cared for by his mother, a devoted Christian.

Furthermore, the superman he predicted for the world was personified in the person of one of his greatest disciples – Adolf Hitler.

3. The deception of false deities

v.5

c/w Psalm 115:4-8

B. Consequences of the old song

Note: The song is only that of a dirge

c/w Psalm 88:1-18

II. FUNCTION OF THE NEW SONG

A. Expressed gratitude of the redeemed

vv.1-2

(Illustration from Knight, p.435)

- told by a pastor:

I have a friend who is a federal judge. He was a U. S. congressman for 22 years. In the summer he was working on his farm with one of his employees. The man said to him, “Judge, have you ever talked to Tom about his soul?” Tom was the manager of the farm who, with his family, had lived there for many years.

“Why, no,” said the judge, “I don’t believe I have.”

“Well,” persisted the questioner, “why haven’t you, Judge? I have, and Tom is thinking about it, but it would mean so much more if it came from you. Why don’t you do it now, Judge?”

The judge said he did some fast thinking, but he couldn’t find any real reason not to do so, so he dropped his pruning shears and went up and had a talk with Tom. He told him what Christ had meant to him and to his family, and what He could mean to this man and his family. Tom trusted Christ as his Savior, and two weeks later the judge had the joy of seeing Tom and his family baptized and received into the church. “But,” concluded the judge, “the thing that is on my conscience is this: Why hadn’t I spoken to Tom before? And how many others needed to hear from me about the Kingdom of God and His saving

B. Exaltation of the glory of God

vv.7-8a

- Sir John Bowring from *The Christian Book of Mystical Verse*, A. W. Tozer, *ADORATION*

*Almighty One! I bend in dust before Thee;
Even so veiled cherubs bend;
In calm and still devotion I adore Thee,
All-wise, all-present Friend!*

*Thou to the earth its emerald robes hast given,
Or curtained it in snow;
And the bright sun, and the soft moon in heaven,
Before Thy presence bow.*

*Thou Power sublime! whose throne is firmly seated
On stars and glowing suns;
O, could I praise Thee, - could my soul elated,
Waft Thee seraphic tones, -
Had I the lyres of angels, - could I bring Thee
An offering worthy Thee, -
In what bright notes of glory would I sing Thee,
Blest notes of ecstasy!*

*Eternity! Eternity! how solemn,
How terrible the sound!
Here, leaning on thy promises, - a column
Of strength, - may I be found,
O, let my heart be ever Thine, while beating,
As when 'twill cease to beat!
Be Thou my portion, till that awful meeting
When I my God shall greet!*

C. Dominion over the created order

vv.9-10

c/w Revelation 19:11-16

III. FRUITFULNESS OF THE NEW SONG

A. Responsible obedience

v.8b

c/w Romans 12:1-2

- Charles H. Spurgeon, #772

Men in business may work as many hours as they like, and as hard as they will, to get money, and very seldom does any sagacious, prudent Mentor shake his head and tell the young merchant that he is laying out his strength too recklessly, and devoting his energies too vigorously, in getting gain or acquiring a fortune. Oh, no! they would rather tell him to spread all his canvas and ply every sinew, especially when wind and tide are in his favor. But the minister of God, the servant of Christ, often has that judicious advice tendered to him, "Do thyself no harm; be sure and not work too hard." "It was never intended," they say, "that anyone should risk his health, consume his spirits, or deny himself innocent recreation, with an enthusiasm that far exceeds the line of duty," as if there were such a line, or it were possible to define it. Ah! well, if the love of his Master be in him, as a constraining power, then kindling with the noble passion, and labouring with a fiery zeal, he will resent such expostulations as Christ did that of Peter, when, replying to his pitiful rebuke, "Pity thyself, Lord" – he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." We are bound to sacrifice ourselves, yielding up the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto God, and devoting the faculties of our renewed minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

B. Evangelical fervor

v.10 "Say among the nations...."

(Biblical Illustrator, p.177)

Rev. E. P. Scott, while laboring as a missionary in India, saw in the street one of the strangest-looking heathen his eyes had ever seen.

Upon asking, he found that he was a representative of the inland

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tribes that lived in the mountain districts, and which came down once a year to trade. Upon further inquiry he found that the Gospel had never been preached to them, and that it was hazardous to venture among them because of their murderous propensities. He went to his lodging place and pleaded for Divine direction. Arising from his knees, he packed his handbag, took his violin, with which he was accustomed to sing, and started in the direction of the tribe. As he said farewell to his fellow missionaries, they said, "We shall never see you again; it is madness for you to go." But he said, "I must preach Jesus to them." For two days he traveled without scarcely meeting a human being, until at last he found himself in the mountains and suddenly surrounded by a crowd of savages. Every spear was instantly pointed at his heart. He expected that every moment would be his last. Not knowing of any other resource he tried the power of singing the name of Jesus to them. Drawing forth his violin, he began with closed eyes to sing and pray,

All hail the power of Jesus' name!

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all."

On commencing the 3rd verse he opened his eyes to see what they were going to do, when lo! the spears had dropped from their hands, and big tears were falling from their eyes. They afterwards invited him to their homes. He spent 2 and a half years among them. His labors were so richly rewarded that when he was compelled to leave them because of impaired health to return home, they followed him for thirty miles. "Oh, missionary," they said, "come back to us again!" After visiting America, he went back again to continue his labors till he sunk into the grave among them.

C. Overflowing joy

vv.11-13

c/w Psalm 98:1-9

Conclusion: (Illustration from Nelson, p.805)

James Cash Penny, coming from a long line of Baptist preachers, grew up with deep convictions. He was unwaveringly honest. He never smoked or drank, and he was a hard work-

er. But in 1929 when the Great Depression hit, Penny found
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himself in crisis. He had made unwise commitments, and they turned sour. Penny began to worry about them, and soon he was unable to sleep. He developed a painful case of shingles and was hospitalized. His anxiety only increased in the hospital, and it seemed resistant to tranquilizers and drugs. His mental state deteriorated until, as he later said, *I was broken nervously and physically, filled with despair, unable to see even a ray of hope. I had nothing to live for. I felt I hadn't a friend left in the world, that even my family turned against me.*

One night he was so oppressed he didn't think his heart would hold out, and, expecting to die before morning, he sat down and wrote farewell letters to his wife and sons.

But he did live through the night, and the next morning he heart singing coming from the little hospital chapel. The words of the song said,

*Be not dismayed whate'er betide
God will take care of you.*

Entering the chapel, he listened to the song, to the Scripture reading, and to the prayer. *Suddenly - something happened. I can't explain it. I can only call it a miracle. I felt as if I had been instantly lifted out of the darkness of a dungeon into warm, brilliant sunlight.*

All worry left him as he realized more fully than he had ever imagined just how much the Lord Jesus Christ cared for him. From that day J. C. Penny was never plagued with worry, and he later called those moments in the chapel "the most dramatic and glorious twenty minutes of my life."

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