

# "Harmony and Balance"

Text: 1 Peter 2:19-25

<sup>ESV</sup> **(Romans 15:13) *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*** Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians:

Most know something about King David. Some of you know a great deal from your reading of God's Word. Yet one aspect of David that gets less attention than it probably should is the fact that he was also an accomplished musician. This should interest us if for no other reason than that God himself once said of David: ***'I have found that David, son of Jesse, is a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.'*** (Acts 13:22) David was a thoroughly intriguing man – quite literally a warrior poet. Utterly ruthless in battle against God's enemies, he humbly refused to raise his hand against his Lord's anointed king, even when the man, King Saul, had turned away from God and had tried, repeatedly, to murder him. You will recall how David the musician played so beautifully for Saul that ***"whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him."***

<sup>ESV</sup>(1 Samuel 16:23)

In one of his many Psalms, this same David once wrote, ***"I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. <sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices."*** <sup>ESV</sup>(Psalm 16:8-9) This is where music enters the picture for us this morning. It is the reason we have chosen to emphasize, for a Sunday, the music of our worship. If you've ever taken singing lessons you were probably told that singing, when done correctly, involves much more than the vocal cords and a bit of air. Done right, singing involves ***"the whole being."*** It takes effort, admittedly more for some than for others. It also, when done correctly, involves emotion – which is, of course, a major part or component of ***"the whole being"*** with which we rightly seek to worship our God.

And yet, as in every aspect of our lives, a lack of balance here will certainly create problems. So it is this morning that as we examine this element of our worship we will continue to seek also ***"Harmony and Balance."*** We seek this balance this morning not through a single Bible text but through several, which we will read throughout the course of our study. That our

God would bless our feeble efforts with his power and wisdom, so we pray: *Sanctify us by your truth, O Lord. Your Word is truth. Amen."*

Have you ever tried to define or articulate the difference between speech and song? It's not as easy as it sounds. Most would probably identify how long you hold a word or syllable as the difference, or the amount of air that you expend in doing so. Experts, however, tell us that the difference has more to do with range of pitch. When we speak, we tend to use a very narrow range, while when we sing we use a much broader range. For example, speak the words of the Sound of Music scale (Doe, Ray, Me, Far, Sew, La, Tea, Doe) in the same pitch and you sound like you are speaking. Change your pitch for each word according to the scale and it sounds like you are singing, even if you hold the words the same amount of time.

The point is that it is in large part the pitch, and the variation of pitch, that not only turns speech into song, but it is that which both projects and elicits emotion. God, of course, knows all of this, so it ought to interest and inform us that he advocated more than just speech in connection with his worship. He called for music and song:

<sup>ESV</sup> **(Colossians 3:16-17) *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. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***

It is likely, in fact, that Jesus himself sang hymns. We read in Matthew 26:30, for example, that just before Jesus and his disciples left the upper room on Maundy Thursday: ***"when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."***

Music was a critical component also of Old Testament worship, yet the goal was never just emotion. The goal was to communicate our praise and thanksgiving *with* emotion, the emotion itself a natural product of the truth communicated in the words. Listen, for example, to the balance in the worship service arranged by King David when the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the tent that he had constructed for it:

<sup>ESV</sup> **(1 Chronicles 16:7-25) *Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the LORD by Asaph and his brothers. <sup>8</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;***

**make known his deeds among the peoples! <sup>9</sup> Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works! <sup>10</sup> Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! <sup>11</sup> Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually! <sup>12</sup> Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered, <sup>13</sup> O offspring of Israel his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones! <sup>14</sup> He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. <sup>15</sup> Remember his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, <sup>16</sup> the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, <sup>17</sup> which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, <sup>18</sup> saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan, as your portion for an inheritance." <sup>19</sup> When you were few in number, of little account, and sojourners in it, <sup>20</sup> wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, <sup>21</sup> he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, <sup>22</sup> saying, "Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!" <sup>23</sup> Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. <sup>24</sup> Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! <sup>25</sup> For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and he is to be feared above all gods.**

Note in particular how the emotion of the music and the singing flowed from, and was based upon, the message of truth conveyed by the words. The emotion was therefore real and genuine. It was never contrived, artificial, or superficial. It was a natural reaction to what the Lord God had already done for them in the past and promised to do for them in the future.

Our worship is to be the same. Will it involve emotion? I would hope so, since the message of the gospel is the greatest news we could ever hear. God's rescue of sinners is the ultimate "happily ever after" story. So it is that we do not just speak the words of our liturgies, we convey also our emotions through our music. So also our God, in his wisdom, gave us freedom to conduct our worship services according to our own personal tastes, while always maintaining the appropriate dignity, reverence, and orderliness of which our God is also worthy. Our liturgies, or orders of service, are simply a framework by which each of us can worship together with emotion and good order.

But here's the thing about liturgies (orders of service). They are just frameworks. They provide sound, Scripturally accurate words, but they do not supply the thought and effort. Each worshipper has to supply that. And that takes effort. Prayer itself takes effort. To do it right and to gain any

benefit, it requires thought and concentration. Since hymns are just prayers set to music, we should expect that they too require thought and effort. No one else can supply that to the worshipper. All have to provide that for themselves.

God in his Word speaks often not only of the effectiveness and benefits of prayer but of the effort required. On the benefits and effectiveness of prayer he wrote to the Church in Corinth: **For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup> He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. <sup>11</sup> You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.**<sup>ESV</sup>(2 Corinthians 1:8-11) But then listen also to how Paul described the work/effort/struggle of prayer in his Epistle to the Colossians: **Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. <sup>13</sup> For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.**<sup>ESV</sup>(Colossians 4:12-13)

The most beautiful, emotive, doctrinally sound liturgy is neutralized by thoughtlessness. Emotional expression is clearly supposed to play a role in our worship, but always in harmony with (in balance with) the true basis for our hope and joy. Listen to how Paul described that balance to the Church in Corinth: **For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.**<sup>ESV</sup>(1 Corinthians 14:14-15) Worship, as God desires it, requires the effort of thought: **I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.**

Where does this leave us? Should we somehow inject more emotion into our worship? Do we even now have too much? Those are the wrong questions. Our first reading this morning laid out our path for us: **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.** When we truly do that, when our hearts and lives are filled with the truth of God's Holy Word, the emotion will take care of itself. How could human beings, crushed under the weight of their own sin, not be filled with joy, comfort, and peace in the realization that Jesus suffered all punishment in our place,

that Jesus paid the full penalty for all sins on the cross of Calvary? How could we ever remain cold and indifferent when we come to recognize that the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday assures us not only that he has redeemed us, but that we too will one day rise from the dead – as will every single one of our loved ones who have also died in the Christian faith?

How could we not be filled with emotion when we read those magnificent words that God the Holy Spirit wrote through Paul to the Ephesians: ***And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-- by grace you have been saved-- <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*** (Ephesians 2:1-9)

Jesus did that for us. With hearts filled with joy and thanksgiving, praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Amen.

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## ST PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

# ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2510 E. Divide Ave. Bismarck, ND 58501

Parsonage and Office: (701) 223-4885 Cell: (701) 425-5483

Website: [www.bismarcklutheran.org](http://www.bismarcklutheran.org)

Mick Johnson, President      Angela Pfennig, Organist  
Michael Roehl, Pastor

**Worship in Music Service – May 7, 2023**

## The Opening Introduction and Prayer by the Pastor

**The Opening Hymn** – 657 *(Red Hymnal) (Congregation stanza 4)*  
"Beautiful Savior"

**The Confession of Sins** – Hymn 325 *(Stanzas 1-5)*

**The Absolution and Hymn 779** *(Stanzas 1-2, 4)*

## The Music of Worship

- A Presentation by Layman Gary Miller

## The Confession of Faith -

Hymn 251 *(Red Hymnal)*

Stanza 1 – Gary Miller

Stanza 2 – Hope Meyer and Angela Pfennig

Stanza 3 - Congregation

**The Pre-Sermon Hymn** – "Living Hope" *(Congregation joins in Chorus)*

**The Sermon by the Pastor** – *(See back page of this bulletin for texts)*

**"Harmony and Balance"**

**The Post-Sermon Hymn** – "The First Song if Isaiah"  
*(Congregation Joins as Indicated on Screens)*

## The Prayers of the Day

## The Lord's Prayer

## The Benediction

**The Closing Hymn** – "Go Now in Peace"

*(Quartet: Janelle Fettig, Hope Meyer, Angela Pfennig, Sandy Roehl)*

## Silent Prayer

**Welcome!** - We warmly welcome any visitors who might be with us this morning and invite you to join us every Sunday at this time. St. Paul is a congregation in fellowship with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – a conservative Lutheran synod with churches and missions throughout the United States and around the world. We are glad you are here. Thank you for letting us share the Word of God with you. Please record your visit in our Guest Book, and come again.

**Attendance** – Sunday (27) Average (42)

### This Week at St. Paul:

<b>Today</b>	<b>-9:00 a.m.</b>	– Sunday School and Bible Class
	<b>-10:00 a.m.</b>	– Worship in Music Service
	<b>-11:00 a.m.</b>	– Fellowship Hour
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>-6:00 p.m.</b>	– Confirmation Class
	<b>-7:00 p.m.</b>	– Midweek Bible Study
<b>Next Sunday</b>	<b>-9:00 a.m.</b>	– Sunday School <b>(No Bible Class)</b>
	<b>-10:00 a.m.</b>	– Worship Service
	<b>-11:00 a.m.</b>	– Fellowship Hour

**CLC News** – Pastor Nathanael Mayhew is considering the call to Messiah of Eau Claire. Seminary graduate Jonah Albrecht has accepted the calls to the dual parish of Redemption of Lynnwood and Ascension of Tacoma. Teaching Program graduate Stephen Krause has accepted the call to Grace of Valentine. Teacher Ross Kok has returned the call to Valley Bible Academy of Clarkston.

**Music Festival** – This morning is our first (annual) Music in Worship Service. This service is intended not only to include a greater focus on worship through music but an enhanced understanding of the role of music in the worship of our God, together with the balance that is necessary in every aspect of our Christian walk. Our thanks to the members who gave of their time and talents in this effort.

**Pastor Out of Town** – Pastor Roehl is scheduled to preach at the annual Christian Education service next Sunday at Messiah of Hales Corners – leaving Friday and returning the following Wednesday morning. As a result, no Sunday Bible Class or Holy Communion is scheduled for next Sunday. Our next communion service is scheduled for May 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Need for Sponsors** – The CLC Kinship Committee has announced the need for additional sponsors for orphans in Uganda, and for seminary students around the world. The cost to sponsor an orphan or seminary student ranges from \$30-\$50 per month. For more information please contact Dan Roehl at 507-381-2042 or [danroehl@hotmail.com](mailto:danroehl@hotmail.com)

**CLC Youth Camp** – CLC Youth Camp coordinators have announced that this year's camp is full, and therefore registrations have closed.