

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

II. Colossians: Nurture In Living Focused On The Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Of Christ

J. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency To Our Walk

3. Nurture In Performing Church Worship Music Righteously

(Colossians 3:16-17)

I. Introduction

- A. If the believer must focus on his positional certainties in Christ in the heavens to offset the trials he faces from evil pressures on the earth, what Paul teaches in Colossians 3:1-4 with its Colossians 2:1-23 context, he is **also** obligated to **function righteously** in the local church body's **music** as **opposed to worldliness**.
- B. Colossians 3:16-17 accordingly provides practical instructions on this subject for our insight and application:

II. Nurture In Performing Church Worship Music Righteously, Colossians 3:16-17.

- A. In writing on music in the local church in Colossians 3:16-17, Paul set the subject in the context of countering the Colossian heresy by focusing on Christ's supremacy and all-sufficiency (Col. 3:1-4) versus errant philosophy (Col. 2:8-10), legalism (Col. 2:11-17), mysticism (Col. 2:18-19) and asceticism (Col. 2:20-23).
- B. Thus, worship music was to have the function of **edifying believers** in **righteousness, that is, an innately TEACHING ministry relative to the TRUTH that is centered in CHRIST!**
- C. Thus, Paul instructed that the music highlight "the word of Christ," the word of the believer's Supreme, All-Sufficient Lord Who is enthroned in the heavens at the Father's right hand, Colossians 3:16a. Contrary to a lot of contemporary worship music today where the main focus is on the musical production and **not its message content** (as often short, theologically empty phrases are endlessly repeated), local church worship music is to be marked by its **wealth in content** of and **focus upon** the **Word of God!** The Word of God is thus to "live, dwell in" (*enoikeo*, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 266-267) the believer "richly" (*plousios*, "richly, abundantly," *Ibid.*, 679) as he sings.
- D. With this focus on the wealth of Scripture content, we are to make music in "wisdom" (*sophia*, *Ibid.*, p. 766-767), Col. 3:16b. The word, *sophia* implies "striving after the best ends as well as the using of the best means . . . mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense," R. C. Trench, Syns. of the N. T., 1973, p. 283. The **performance itself** must align to the best ends and means of mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense, that it might produce true spiritual edification in the body without any taint of worldliness! Of necessity, then, the instruments used, the way they are used and the style of the music, etc., must conform to what is held to be upright and edifying to **all** in the body (1 Cor. 6:12a; 8:12-13) opposite much contemporary church music!
- E. Local church music must then be used by believers to "teach" (*didasko*, *Ibid.*, p. 191; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 700) and "admonish, warn, instruct" (*noutheteo*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 546) "yourselves" (*heautou*, *Ibid.*, p. 211; *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.), put for the reciprocal pronoun "one another," *allelon*, *Ibid.*, Col. 3:16c. Thus, the Word of Christ, being used in music in a tasteful manner to edify, is to be **applied** in exalting the supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ over all false teaching to the contrary, and that application according to the Colossians context is to apply both to doctrinal beliefs and to their application to living.
- F. The specific forms of music are named in Colossians 3:16d, that of (1) Old Testament "psalms" (*psalmos*, *Ibid.*, p. 899) ["The Lord's My Shepherd"], (2) anthems, or "hymns" (*humnos*, *Ibid.*, p. 844) ["How Great Thou Art"] and (3) "spiritual songs, odes" (*odais pneumatikais*, *Ibid.*, p. 903), songs that relay a personal testimony or an experience of God's interaction with the Christian in his walk ["Fill My Cup, Lord"].
- G. The musical expression is to be performed with an attitude of grace in the heart toward the Lord, Col. 3:16e.
- H. Indeed, Paul added in Colossians 3:17 that whatever we do in word or in deed is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, with an attitude of thanksgiving to God the Father by Christ. Applied to church music, both those who perform on the instruments and those who sing should seek to please the Lord, not to impress man, and to be an act of worship directed toward Him Who is righteous and sits enthroned in the heavens, Col. 3:1-4.

Lesson: *Believers in Christ are called of God to perform music in the local church RIGHTEOUSLY, that is, to have the music abundantly highlight the Word of God in appealing to the loftiest of motives in all involved, music that effectively disciplines the body in righteous belief and action through psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, with the music being performed in an attitude of grace in the heart to and for the Lord with thanksgiving.*

Application: *(1) May we RIGHTEOUSLY perform music in the local church as taught in Colossians 3:16-17, carefully functioning ABOVE this WORLD'S errant means, methods and ends of musical expression.*