

# Why Sing?

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Preacher: Jonathan Gemmell

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, please do have a seat. We're going to put the talk right at the beginning of tonight. So we'll get into that now and then we'll have lots of time to rejoice and to sing together at the end.

So let me pray and then we'll get to work together. Father God, thank you so much that you have been outrageously kind to us. Father, you've given us all sorts of gifts.

Father, you've given us all sorts of ways to sing your praise together. So, Lord, as we look at the reason why, Father, would you speak to us?

Would you teach us? Would you enlarge our hearts? Father, would we be those that are encouraged to raise our voices to you, our great God? So be with us in this time.

Father, make us a singing people as those that have so much to sing about in your son, Jesus. So bless us in his worthy name. Amen.

[ 1 : 0 1 ] So we're in Why Church. Tonight we're looking at Why Sing. I've been looking at this for about the last two weeks. It's still a work in progress. I haven't quite got to the 10,000 sermon points that Matt Redman seems to suggest we should have in the song we've just sang.

I've got seven for you. There's a handout just to help you follow along. Why do we sing? In a recent article by Oliver Berkman in The Guardian, he reported on research done by Goldsmiths College, and it found that participating in a choir had profound and unexpected health benefits.

Here are some. People who sing in a choir are generally happier than people who don't. They have a greater sense of belonging and social cohesion.

People that sing in a choir are more hopeful than people that don't. And surprisingly, people who sing in a choir have a higher pain threshold than those who don't.

I just say that's because some of the people they may be in a choir with are quite painful to listen to. One woman commented in the research, It's as if I'm inhabiting another reality.

[ 2 : 2 7 ] I become temporarily suspended in a world where everything bad is bearable and everything good feels possible. Singing, it seems, in a choir has health benefits.

And so it seems a good way to spend our evening. Singing, it seems, quite apart from the religious content, is good for you. So whether you don't agree with anything else I say tonight, it's been worth you being here just to sing five songs together.

However, when we look at singing within the church, singing within a Christian context, it takes on a far more important, far more key role in the life of individuals and a church together.

One of the chief things that Christians are renowned for, both historically and universally, is singing songs and making music. It is almost unique in the realm of faith.

For example, in contrast to Islam, you will never hear music in a mosque. You may hear some musical recitation as people are called to prayer.

[ 3 : 41 ] But within Islam and the Koran, music is expressly haram. It is forbidden. And yet singing, it seems, in the Bible is commonplace and encouraged.

There are 143 references to singing in the Old Testament and just nine references to singing in the New Testament. Singing or reciting songs appears at all the key moments in redemption history.

When Adam first meets Eve, the most beautiful woman he's ever met, he sings her a song. The first extended song in the Bible is Exodus 15, as Moses and Miriam and the people of Israel celebrate the Exodus.

And then the last extended song is in Revelation 15, as everyone sings the song of Moses together. Psalms, song of Solomon and Lamentations are books principally of songs.

Some of them more joyful than others, as Lamentations is just basically five ways to say I'm miserable. Singing is educational, it is emotional, it is edifying.

[ 5 : 06 ] It is a means of grace through which God implants His words and through His word transforms our hearts and minds and bears fruit in our lives.

God's word contains 185 extended songs. As a church, if we take about 100 services a year with five songs, making up most of our services, we spend about 34 hours a year singing together.

We spend a lot of time doing it. So it is a worthy study to think, why do we do it? What is it about? And here's my big answer. We sing to help us learn of, focus on and respond to who God is and what God has done together.

So if you fall asleep now, you've got something. We sing to help us learn of, focus on and respond to who God is and what God has done together.

And there is a rich history of hymns in the Christian world. But the earliest one that doesn't come from the Bible is from the end of the second century.

[ 6 : 23 ] It's called the Orinkus Hymn. And we found a little extract of it. I didn't. I say we. They. They found a little extract of it. And roughly translated, it says this.

Let it be silent. Let the luminous stars not shine. Let the winds and all the noisy rivers die down. And as we sing to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, let all the powers add, amen, amen.

Empire, praise always, and glory to God, the soul giver of good things, amen, amen. Late second century, they're singing songs about singing songs, which is very interesting.

To get a further grip on the role of singing in corporate life, it's important to learn what we do together as a people when we meet. So I've drawn you a little diagram. This is what happens at church.

For church to happen, God gives us his word and his spirit. God gives us his word and his spirit. We give God our prayers and our praise.

[ 7 : 28 ] And we use, give each other our spiritual gifts to build each other up, to edify God's church. That's what happens on a Sunday and as a church when we gather together.

Singing, it looks very similar. What does God give us to help us sing? Well, he gives us of his word and his spirit. And in song, we give to God thanksgiving and adoration.

We worship who God is and all that he's given us. And as we sing, as we'll see, we're teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Unless we understand these dynamics of what is going on, of what God is giving us, what we're giving back to God, and what we're doing for each other, singing will always just be a filler of time, or an option for the enthusiastic, or a waste of time for the tonally challenged.

Martin Luther writes this, The gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely, by proclaiming God's word through music, and by providing sweet melodies to accompany God's words.

[ 8 : 51 ] I think Martin Luther has done more for the worshipful singing of the church than maybe anyone else. And so I want to give you my seven points. Point one is this, we sing to reaffirm the word.

We sing to reaffirm the word. If we go to 1 Corinthians 14 verse 26, there may be slightly controversial verses, but I want us to see one quick pattern.

What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each one of you has a hymn or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.

Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. Now we can have lots of discussion, I think, about what it means to come with a revelation, or a tongue, or an interpretation.

But all I want to simply say is that all of those, Paul lumps together as word ministries. Ministries about God's word. And right at the beginning, we'll see, does anyone have a hymn?

[ 10 : 02 ] In Paul's mind, the singing of the church is not distinct from the word ministry of the church. Church. What are we singing? We're singing God's word.

It seems clear then that worship and the word are not in contradiction of each other. They're not fighting each other. Why do we sing?

We sing to help us get God's word into our system. Because it's God's word that will do God's work in our lives. I was trying to think of an analogy. If preaching is like the meal, the food, then the music and the singing is like the ambience and the decor.

You can't just have ambience and decor or else everyone leaves hungry. But if you have excellent food, God's word, and you accompany it with lovely decor and great ambience, then the two just mutually help each other.

That if you go for a nice meal in a lovely restaurant, it's very memorable. It does you good. We cannot just have worship because there would be no meal.

[ 11 : 21 ] But if the worship enhances the word, then it becomes much more memorable and dynamic in our lives. And so Paul will tell the Colossians, let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

See, Paul writes that the ministry of singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is a teaching ministry. It is not one person teaching from the front, but it is everybody teaching everyone within the congregation.

You're letting the word resonate between us. We're singing to one another. It is a great way, as it says in Colossians, of enhancing and amplifying the message of Christ dwelling richly and loudly amongst us.

We're not singing just to fill time. We're singing to teach and admonish one another, to get this word reverberating and resonating in our lives. Mark Dever writes, it is a key responsibility singing reaffirms the word.

And therefore that helps us know what we should be singing. We should be singing the words of Scripture, the truths of Scripture, the promises of Scripture. We should be singing in praise of the God who is revealed in Scripture.

[ 13 : 08 ] We're not just looking for catchy tunes and memorable lyrics. We're looking for memorable ways of getting this word to be implanted in our lives. And singing is a great way to do that.

Sometimes I wish I was Scottish, not very often. But the one time I really wish I was Scottish is when I go to watch the rugby at Murrayfield.

And you've got that excitement as the players run out and they all line up and the bagpipe plays the introduction to Flower of Scotland. And I'm there just as an onlooker because I'm not brave enough to sing the English national anthem in Murrayfield.

But the minute those bagpipes play up, start up, I think this is about to kick off. And you know that everybody with the smallest drop of Caledonian blood in their veins is going to sing at the top of their voice.

What they lack in tuning, they'll make up for in volume. And it's a way of them saying, I'm Scottish, I own this anthem, this is my team.

[ 14 : 21 ] And so when we sing in church about things far more important than nationalism, and far more important than rugby, when we sing together, it is a way of each of us and all of us saying together, these are my truths.

This is my God. This is me worshipping my Lord and my Saviour. This is me resting on the promises that He has given me. And as we do that together, it just reaffirms.

You know, I can stand here preaching every week and you can just wash it over your head. Listening can be incredibly passive, but when I sing, it's active. And it's a way of saying, this truth is my truth.

These truths are what I believe. These truths are what we believe. And therefore, we're going to sing them and affirm them together. We sing to reaffirm God's word. Secondly, we sing to respond to truth.

The way the word gets into our lives is through our mind, via our emotions, to our will. We inform our mind so that it might inflame our hearts, so that it might infect our will.

[ 15 : 35 ] That's how God does His work, through His word. And when we sing, it engages our emotions. It takes that truth and gives us the response to it.

Singing gives us a physical connection and an emotional ascent to what is being sung. It must always be light and then heat. We're not just singing to try and whip ourselves up into some kind of frenzy.

We're singing in response to who God says He is and all that He's done for us. We're not to be like the gong in 1 Corinthians 13 that just goes gong, gong.

And the whole reason that is there is because in pagan worship, that's what you do. You keep making a racket until your God does something. That's not what we're doing. We're responding to truth.

We're engaging our emotions in responding to who God is and what He has done. It is facts and then faith and then feelings. And as we sing, it engages our feelings, our emotions.

[ 16 : 48 ] If it's just our mind, it will be intellectualism. If it is just our emotions, it will be emotionalism. If it is just our will, it will be fanaticism because we'll just get people to do things without them understanding what they're doing.

But if we get this right, that it flows from our mind to our emotions, to our will, then God's word will bring a dynamic change into our lives.

And so we get told how to respond. Psalm 47, clap your hands, all ye nations, shout to God with cries of joy, for the Lord most high is awesome.

The great King over all the earth, He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet, He chose our inheritance for us. The pride of Jacob whom He loved, God has ascended amid shouts of joy.

The Lord, amid the sounding of trumpets, sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises, for God is the King of all the earth. Sing to Him a psalm of praise.

[ 17 : 54 ] God reigns over the nations, God is seated on His holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of God of Abraham. For the kings of the earth belong to God, He is greatly exalted.

What's going on in the psalm where we're learning of who God is, that He's awesome, that He reigns, that He conquers, that He wins. And then the psalmist says, what do we do in response where we sing?

And we shout with cries of joy. That is the right response to who God is. As we learn of Him, it engages our emotions and that's expressed as we sing.

Jonathan Edwards writes this, how can they, that's those who gather in church, sit and hear of the infinite height and depth and length of the love of God in Christ Jesus, manifested in His dying agonies, His bloody sweat, His loud and bitter cries and bleeding heart, and all this for His enemies, to redeem them from deserved eternal burnings, and to bring them to an unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory?

How can they hear all of these things and yet be cold and heavy, insensitive, insensible and ambivalent? As we learn of God, we respond to who He is.

[ 19 : 13 ] That we sing to respond to truth. Thirdly, we sing to reprogram our emotions. This follows on from point two.

That the Bible tells us how to respond. When we've got truth, it tells us what to do. John Calvin writes, in the Psalms, there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not represented in this book of Psalms as in a mirror.

All the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are so commonly agitated.

The other parts of Scripture contain the commandments which God enjoined His servants to announce to us. But here, the prophets themselves, seeing they are exhibited to us as speaking to God and laying open all their inmost thoughts and affections, core, or rather infirmities to which we are subject, and of the many vices with which we abound, may remain concealed.

It is certainly a rare and singular advantage when all lurking places are discovered and the heart is brought into the light purged from that most baneful infection, hypocrisy.

[ 20 : 33 ] What Calvin is saying there is that as we read the Psalms, we see every human emotion reflected. And as we see these psalmists lay open their hearts, we see what God's truth does to their anxiety and their fear and their distress and their loneliness and their longing.

We see in the Psalms the anatomy of human emotions, but not just put on display, but that God also tells us what we're to do when we experience those emotions.

They show us how to respond in pure adoration, what to do in the depth of spiritual despair. They tell us what comfort looks like in the face of death, a response to God's rescue, a heartfelt cry for mercy, a declaration of security, what real satisfaction is expressed as, the longing for God's presence, the joy of knowing God, a right response to blessing and every other emotion besides.

And as we sing these songs, they help to reprogram our emotions. They help to rewire us and help us respond in a godly way to the situations that we find ourselves in.

When everything else seems so much in flux, God's word remains the same, God remains the same, and as we learn these responses, we learn how to deal rightly with different things that come in our lives.

[ 22 : 03 ] So I find myself, with the facing unemployment in January, I find myself singing in my head all the time, abide with me.

Abide with me. That great line, when all other helpers, fears and comforts flee, help of the helpless Lord, abide with me.

And I feel that anxiety all the time, so I just have it going round in my head, so I don't freak out. This is why I love standing here on Sunday morning and watch everyone sing.

When you see the student who just became a Christian singing my Jesus, my Saviour with all of their heart at the top of their voice. The dear saint who is the muddle of faithfulness, singing with utmost sincerity, prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave, the God I love.

And I find that encouraging because I feel like that all the time and they've been on the road 50 years longer than me. The parents who buried their daughter two weeks ago singing in unison together, it is well with my soul that as we get these songs into our lives, they teach us how to respond rightly to the circumstances we face in our lives.

[ 23 : 29 ] The congregation facing uncertainty about the future singing with one voice, Jesus, we enthrone you, we proclaim you our king. The dad recently made redundant and worried about the future, how to provide for his wife and young son.

In Christ alone, my hope is found. as we sing, we reprogram ourselves to respond rightly to who God is and what he's done.

Singing together is so important. The businessman who's got so many opportunities to do so many things because money's not a worry to him and he sings, all that thrills my heart is Jesus.

The person who's fallen on hard times and can sing, my heart is filled with thankfulness. It's a wonderful thing to sing together because it helps us respond rightly and to assure ourselves of God's deep love for us even when it seems the world is crumbling.

Singing helps us reprogram our emotions to respond rightly and to rely wholly on God's truth. Fourthly, we sing to reinforce our unity.

[ 25 : 00 ] There is something profoundly beautiful about singing together. I like singing with lots of people because then it means I can't hear myself sing which is a much more pleasurable experience. I remember last March when we had our joint service in Berkeley.

Thousand people from the Gospel Partnership singing together. I could have been there forever. It was great. I remember early on being here and having a sing song in room three with the guys from Refine.

It wasn't pretty but it was authentic and it was meaningful. The difference there was is we did seem to stay there forever because Refine used to go on until about one in the morning.

We sing together Guide me O thou great Jehovah pilgrims through this barren land and we do that together so we don't feel like lonely pilgrims on the way but people surrounded by friends.

So Psalm 118 give thanks to the Lord for he is good his love endures forever. Let Israel say his love endures forever. Let the house of Aaron the priests say his love endures forever.

[ 26 : 16 ] Let those who fear the Lord that's the Gentiles and God fearers say his love endures forever. So as they repeat that refrain together it knits them together.

Everyone joins in declaring truth together. I think back to 1 Corinthians 14 What then shall we say brothers and sisters when you come together each of you has a hymn or a word of instruction a revelation a tongue or an interpretation everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

We're not singing for personal enjoyment we're singing because it knits us together. Back in Colossians 3 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since as members of one body you were called to peace and be thankful.

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since as members of one body you were called to peace be thankful and what's going to help that? Well teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit.

[ 27 : 38 ] Peace rules one body be thankful together and do this by singing God's word together. The word is the source of unity and the music and singing gives expression to that unity.

This means that all our songs need to be balanced. It's not just me and I songs but it should be also us our and we songs. Because singing isn't just me and God it's us and God together.

We sing as a means of reinforcing unity. Point five we're over halfway through. We sing to reflect God's image.

This blew my mind this week. It's probably the only verse of Zephaniah that any of us know but in Zephaniah 3:17 God is described as singing.

The Lord your God is with you the mighty warrior who saves he will take great delight in you in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing.

[ 28 : 52 ] So God sings but also in the New Testament Jesus sings and he sings four times and this is exciting. In Matthew 26 verse 30 and in the same passage in Mark we read after the last supper when they had sung a song they went to the Mount of Olives that Jesus as the perfect worshipper sang songs and hymns to the Father.

And then in Hebrews 2:12 So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters he says I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters in the assembly I will sing your praise.

It's a quote from Psalm 22:22 and the picture is amazing that when God's church sings together he declares God's name to brothers and sisters so imagine him holding the hymn book with you and singing with you but he's also the chief worship leader singing praises at the front.

that is how much Jesus is into worship ensuring that God receives the worship that he is. We see Jesus' solidarity with the worshipper and the one who facilitates that worship.

worship. And then in Romans 15. Accept one another then just as Christ accepted you in order to bring praise to God for I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and moreover that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

[ 30 : 39 ] As it is written this is a messianic eye therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles I will sing the praises of your name. Again we've got this idea of Jesus singing and the most exciting thing is that second phrase is present continuous.

So it seems that Jesus is continually singing praises to God's name and therefore we can enjoy and join in with him.

In Psalm 19 the heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim his greatness but unique to humanity seems to be the ability of humanity to sing praises to God.

We sing because it is one of the ways we reflect God's image as a God who sings. Number six we sing to remember God's word. This is a very practical point.

This morning we learned of twelve men who went to spy in Canaan and we know that ten were bad and two were good. And we remember that story much better because it's a song.

[ 31 : 51 ] That I dare say when you're trying to remember a verse, if you learn it at Sunday school to a song, it comes much easier. Because we remember words of songs and verses of songs much better than we do remember sentences of prose or whole paragraphs of Bible books.

So when we sing God's word to memorable tunes we're helped in remembering the word. We're letting the word dwell in us richly, which is so good.

Because if we remember God's word, it supplies spiritual power to us. Psalm 119, I have hidden your word in my heart so that I might not sin against you.

If we remember God's word, it will help keep us from sin. Remembering God's word strengthens our faith. Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise, says the person who writes Proverbs.

Apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips so that your trust may be in the Lord. I teach you today, even you.

[ 32 : 59 ] As we remember God's word, it strengthens our faith. It helps us to trust and rely on who God is. If we remember God's word, it equips us for witnessing and counselling.

Proverbs again, a word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Just imagine how beautiful that is. And as you remember God's word and share it with people, they go, that is beautiful.

Must investigate that further. Or Proverbs 27 verse 17, as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. If we can remember God's word, it helps us.

So both witness to the unbeliever and counsel, our fellow Christians. it acts as a way to be guided in life. Your statutes are my delight, they are my counsellors.

They stimulate meditation. If we can remember God's word, we can be psalm on people. Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked, or stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

[ 34 : 15 ] It's much easier to meditate on the law of the Lord day and night if you don't have to have a book open. It is no coincidence, I think, that on the cross, as Jesus bleeds and dies for sinful humanity, he's reciting Psalm 22 to himself.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? His David psalm equates so perfectly with his experience. He sings it to himself to strengthen his faith. to keep him going, to not despair as he entrusts his life to the one who judges justly.

Finally, we sing to rehearse for eternity. The picture in Revelation 5 is all God's people gathered together, singing together.

It's what eternity is going to look like. And they sang a new song saying, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open it seal because you were slain and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You have made them to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth. Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels numbering thousands upon thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand.

[ 35 : 37 ] they encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were singing worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise.



Then they heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them singing to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever.

The four living creatures said amen and the elders fell down and worshipped. That's what eternity will look like and we get to practice right here right now.

And so we ask the question why do we sing? Here are my seven initial reasons. We sing to reaffirm the word to get it resonating and reverberating in our lives.

We do it to respond emotionally to truth that it prevents us from mere intellectualism, that it reprograms our emotions and as we sing it helps us respond rightly to situations in our lives.

[ 36 : 46 ] It reinforces our unity as we sing shared truths together. It reflects God's image as a God who sings. It helps us remember God's word which is so useful in every area of our lives and it helps us rehearse for eternity.

I'm all but done but I want to read you a story about Brad. Jonathan Lehman writes, my friend Brad helped me to do a little reprogramming of my own heart.

Brad was a fellow member of a former church of mine and we met weekly for a season. I remember one evening driving up to his house to pick him up for dinner and he was waiting for me on the curb.

I reached over, opened the car door from the inside and heard him immediately say, hey Jonathan, have you ever seen a CD player this small? He had bought his own battery powered player and was intending to play it but it wasn't that small.

Brad is autistic and blind. Like most people with autism he's socially awkward and makes strange bodily movements. For instance he will squeeze his eyes shut, flap his hands in front of his face so that his fingertips touch.

[ 37 : 58 ] And then repeatedly wipe his face with both hands. I turned my car radio off, Brad's finger hit the play button. We had not made much conversation at that point.

We had not even said hello. Still it was time to sing. Not two more seconds passed and the Atlanta Symphony chorus began filling the small cabin of my car with Handel's Hallelujah chorus.

Accompanied by Brad's own sonorous vibrato, Brad may be blind and autistic but he's also a member of a professional chorus and has a beautiful voice. Hallelujah, hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent.

I began singing with him. My meagre baritone was no match for his hardy tenor. The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.

The cabin reverberated loudly with these words from the book of Revelation. I began thinking about the king of kings who had established his kingdom in Brad's heart. The song finished.

[ 39 : 02 ] Brad then asked me, do you know this one? He punched the track button and then he sang the following lines from Isaiah that Handel placed in part two of his Messiah. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our inequities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.

But Brad didn't let the song finish. He stopped the CD in order to discuss the lyrics with me. Yup, with his stripes we are healed. Do you know that Jonathan?

With his stripes we are healed. He was bruised for our iniquities and with his stripes we are healed. He took the suffering we deserved, he paid for our sins. With his stripes we are healed.

He talked this way for long over ten minutes. Actually he talked this way most of the evening. There was no pretense in his words. There was no fear in what I might think of him.

He simply spoke gospel, gospel words from gospel lips overflowing from a gospel heart. I wondered at several points if I was with a prophet. Make no mistake, Brad is lonely.

[ 40 : 07 ] He longs for more friends, he longs for a wife, he longs to see, he longs to be released from the ravages of a crumpled nervous system. Yet somehow more than any of these he longs for the day when he will be released from sin and the ravages of sin.

That evening, in fact, it occurred to me that Brad's heart rang like a gospel bell, ringing this one sustained note. You know what a bell sounds like. There is no complexity, no dissonance, no conflict in its ring.

A bell sound is not boastful. It does not presume to be an orchestra. A bell is single-minded and wills only one thing, to sing its one note clearly. By his stripes we are healed, Brad kept saying.

He told me that his mum tries to get him to stop talking about the gospel so much. I wasn't surprised. This evening wasn't unique. Brad often talks this way, he cannot help it.

After the evening, I considered my own heart and my own mind. Analytical, complex, fickle, double-minded, occasionally afraid. I wish the people closest to me got sick of me hearing, got sick of hearing me talk about the gospel so much and even singing it as well.

[ 41 : 20 ] Let me pray. Father God, thank you so much for the gift of singing. Father, thank you that you haven't called us to sing alone, but you've placed us in a family of faith so that we might sing together to encourage one another.

Father, to build each other up. So, Lord, I pray that as we take time singing together tonight, Father, you might enlarge our hearts, you might open our mouths, and that we might sing joyfully and sincerely to you.

We thank you that all this is only possible because of Jesus Christ, who is the true and greatest worshipper. So may he inhabit the praises of his people.

We pray this in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.