

**Eph 5:18-20 Filled with the Spirit to PASSIONATELY WORSHIP THE LORD** Murray B. 29.9.19

We're talking about passion. The passion of Christ on the cross, and has passion for all to be saved; the passion the Holy Spirit fills us with to love Christ with a passion, and to desire with a passion what he desires – that all be saved. We've talked about bringing the Gospel to the people of Murray Bridge and District, and the people of Vietnam and the world. We've talked about the role of the Holy Spirit, and the role of prayer. Today we talk about passionately worshiping the Lord. This might seem like an oxymoron! For too many the last thing they want to do is to worship the Lord. They say it is boring. At worship they look as though they've been drinking lemon juice for breakfast. Passion and excitement are not what they associate with worship. How sad! How sad they feel like that! How sad if the church has made them feel like that! God is not boring. Jesus is the most exciting man who ever walked this earth. The Holy Spirit transforms people in the most amazing ways.

**WORSHIP THE LORD WITH SINGING.** Above all worship means coming into God's presence and receiving his grace and love through Jesus, and then responding to it in prayer and praise. There used to be a radio programme called: *FOR THE GOD WHO SINGS*. Our God is the God who sings. Zeph. 3 calls: **Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout aloud, O Israel. Be glad and rejoice with all your heart... The Lord, your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you... he will rejoice over you with singing.** God sings because he loves you and delights in you. Isn't that something? Doesn't that make you sing? Not only does God sing. So do the angels. When God created the earth **the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy**, Job 38. Ps. 148 calls **all his angels... the shining stars**, and all creation to **praise the Lord**. The first recorded songs in the Bible are in Ex. 15 after the crossing of the Red Sea. Moses and all Israel sang, then Miriam, accompanied by all the women. Mary sings to God in our reading today. Rev. Is full of songs being sung in Eternity, especially in chap 5 and 15. **Worthy is the Lamb who was slain... You alone are holy...glory to your name.** The Bible is a book of worship, singing praise to the one who made us all, and redeemed us all, and has prepared a heavenly home for us all.

Luther was a great song writer and singer. He said: *Let God speak directly to his people through the Scriptures, and let us his people respond with grateful songs of praise.* It is said that *Luther's enemies feared his hymns more than the man himself.* Singing is powerful. Every revival of the church has been accompanied by passionate singing of God and to God. Eph. 5 tells us there are two main times when people sing. When people are filled with alcohol they sing and act in **debaucherous**, self centred ways. When people are filled with the Spirit of God, they build one another up with God's Word, and sing songs of thanks and praise to God. **Angels in heaven rejoice over every lost person who is found.** We rejoice & sing that God has found and brought us into his family, and we rejoice & sing & celebrate every time another lost soul is brought home to God. We sing and worship God for all he has done and is doing for us. God's good work never stops. Neither does our singing.

**WORSHIP THE LORD WITH JOY. Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.** Singing in church is the most joyful thing on earth. We are called to **shout**. We are called to **clap your hands...shout to God with cries of joy**. Was their shouting and clapping at the football yesterday? Were their cries of joy? And that is only a game! God is real. God has done great things. God is awesome. There is only one way to respond... in passionate, wholehearted, joyful worship. The song calls us to *sing like we've never sung before*. You may not be a good singer, but you're called to sing joyfully. You may not be a tuneful singer, but you're called to sing passionately. You may not like all the songs, but you love the Lord, so you're called to give him the glory.

**WORSHIP THE LORD WITH HEART AND SOUL.** *Worship is primarily about our hearts. It's about what & who we love most.* Jesus quotes Isaiah as he laments the half hearted worship of his time: **These people honour me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.** How sad is that? Our bodies have turned up to church, but our hearts are away with who's coming for lunch, or our next holidays, or how our harvest will turn out. We sing the hymns, but our hearts are fixed on quite something else. We praise God who has found us, but we still feel lost. But God is real, and he works through the Word that is preached, and the words that are confessed, and the words that are sung. God is present in worship to cleanse us from all our sins, and to bless our souls as we sing: **bless the Lord O my soul.** Saved people are singing people, and as we sing, we become surer of our salvation. Singing to the Lord opens our hearts to the Lord. Some churches sing many songs before they hear God's Word preached. As we sing the songs of love for God, our hearts are opened to receive the Word of God. As we sing the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to invite Jesus in to feast with us.

**WORSHIP THE LORD IN UNITY.** You can sing by yourself in the shower. You can sing by yourself in the car. That's OK. But there is nothing like singing together with your fellow believers to worship the Lord. There is power in singing together. There is power in unity. We carry one another along when we sing together. The better singers carry those who don't sing so well. The happy singers carry those who are having a sad day. **Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Eph 5.** We don't come to worship for me. We come to worship for one another, and for God. We come to worship to encourage one another. **And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the distant triumph-song; and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong: Alleluia, Alleluia.** Whether it is the victor songs of heaven, or the confident singing of the person next to us in church, singing unites us, and gives us courage to keep following the Lord.

**WORSHIP THE LORD AS WITNESS TO THE WORLD.** Passionate singing is a powerful witness to the discouraged & the unbelievers. Holy Spirit works through passionate singing, opening hearts to receive Jesus. Passionate singing proclaims to the world: We believe in God and he has blessed us, and we invite you to come and follow Jesus with us..... **I was glad when they said to me: let us go to the house of the Lord...Rejoice in the Lord always and ... Amen.**