

"The driving force of worship"

A Bible study investigating the role of worship and music particularly in a Christian Union context.

From the passages below and others you know in the Bible summarise some of what has God done/is doing/will do?

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds are evil." John 3:16-19

"He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."
Colossians 1:15-17

"He (Jesus) was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification." Romans 5:25

"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that face judgement, so Christ was sacrificed once to take sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him." Hebrews 10:27-28

"The LORD gives strength to His people; the LORD blesses His people with peace." Psalm 29:11

"We know that we live in Him (God) and He in us because He has given us His Spirit." 1 John 5:13

N.B. all passages in this study are taken from the NIV

What should our response be to God from the passages to below and from others you know?

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Ephesians 5:1,2

"Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you." James 1:7-8

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come! All this is from God who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Have a look at the passages below. How concerned is God for people to recognise his glory and bring praise to him? Are we that concerned that people at Warwick do not do this?

"Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth – everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Isaiah 43:6-7

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isaiah 43:25

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Romans 9:17

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Romans 15:7

Jesus speaking: "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." John 17:24

Jesus speaking: "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour?" No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name! Then a voice came from heaven "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." John 12:27-28

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and give glory to your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

"If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 4:11

Jesus speaking: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father." John 14:13

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

"Immediately because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down." Acts 12:23

What is worship? How would you define it? The passages below might help.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."
Matthew 22:37-38

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

"Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship." Romans 12:1

"Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." Psalm 100:2

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
Colossians 3:16-17

"Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day that he visits us." 1 Peter 2:12

In John chapter 4 Jesus gives us an amazing insight into the type of worship his Father desires.

"Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:21-24

What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth?

What do the following verses show about the role of personal worship?

"I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream." Amos 5:21-24

"These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." Matthew 15:8-9

Our communal acts of worship are offensive to God when our lives are not worshipping him. However, we see in the bible that communal worship has a wonderfully special and significant place, when done in spirit and truth. Congregational singing is one of the main forms of communal worship seen in the bible. The remaining questions will be focused around the uses of music and song in the Bible.

How do we see singing being used in the following verses?

"Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all of the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise." Psalm 47:6-7

"Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures for ever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100

"That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant. Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and rider he has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him." Exodus 14:30-15:2

"All the Levites who were musicians – Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives – stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures for ever." Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God." 2 Chronicles 5:11-14

"On that day God subdued Jabin, the Canaanite king, before the Israelites. And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin, the Canaanite king, until they destroyed him. On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoan sang this song: "When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves – praise the LORD! Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I will sing to the LORD, I will sing; I will make music to the LORD, the God of Israel." Judges 4:23-5:3

What do we see about the different roles of people in music and song from the following verses?

"Kenaniah the head Levite was in charge of the singing; that was his responsibility because he was skilful at it." 1 Chronicles 15:22

"Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song." Psalm 95:1-2

What are some of the important aspects Paul encourages the churches to think about when singing in the following verses?

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:19-20

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:16-17

What does the following verse show about communal worship (in this case singing and prayer)?

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose." Acts 16:25-26

What do the following verses from Revelation reveal about the worship and singing in the future?

"Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Revelation 4:9-11

"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and 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. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the earth, 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, for ever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said "Amen", and the elders fell down and worshipped." Revelation 5:6-14

The CU context

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions.” John Piper

The importance of worship

- The great commission flows out of the two great commandments – love God and love others.
- Our worship shows our passion for God and his glory to the world. It is the fuel for mission.
- Our mission will end when people from all the nations are worshipping God. Worship is the goal of mission.
- Our mission exists because worship doesn’t. As a CU we must be concerned to worship God personally and corporately.

The role of music and song

- Music is a way we can together express our worship to God.
- Music is a way we can praise God for what he has done in our own lives and in the CU.
- Music is a way we can engage with God.

“Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures for ever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” Psalm 100

- When we engage with God it reminds us of what Jesus has done for us (Hebrews 10:19-22).
- God can use our corporate expressions of worship for his purposes.
- Through singing together we can show our unity as a body of Christians.
- Spirit and truth worship, expressed in music, can challenge non-Christians.

The Aim of CU music

“To encourage all people at Warwick to praise, worship and engage with God in spirit and truth through music.”

Within our main aim we aim to:

- Encourage all those attending CU meetings to develop an appropriate attitude towards worship. To emphasise the importance of what we do when we sing to the Lord.
- Provide an environment where all feel able to respond to God through music in a way they feel comfortable whilst recognising and respecting different styles.
- Equip leaders, musicians, singers and those on the PA and Projection teams to carry out their roles. To encourage them to develop their gifting in their area.

“Sing to the LORD a new song, sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all the peoples. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.” Psalm 96: 1-4

Further reading on the role of worship and music

“Let the Nations be Glad” – John Piper

“The unquenchable worshipper” – Matt Redman

**If you have any comments or questions about anything to do with music in Warwick CU or to be involved then please e-mail:
music@warwickcu.org**

To find out more about music and the wider activities and aims of Warwick CU please have a look at: www.warwickcu.org