

INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Our bodies consist of a variety of different parts. In 1 Corinthians 12, the physical body and its individual members is used to illustrate the church with its individual members. The body has eyes, ears, hands, and feet which all serve different functions (1 Cor. 12.15-18). In like manner, the church has members that serve different functions such as preachers, elders, song leaders, and teachers (1 Cor. 12.28-30).

In Romans 3, the Holy Spirit teaches us that everyone needs the gospel because everyone has sinned. Quoting the Old Testament psalmist, we learn that *“There is no one righteous, no not one”* (Rom. 3.10; cf. Ps. 14.1-3). As you keep reading, verses 13-18 tells us that the sin in our lives is committed by six different body parts. The throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, and eyes are all identified as what we use to violate the laws of God.

Of interest, four of the six different members of the body relate to our speech. There is nothing that will cause us to sin faster than the things that we say or not say. We use our mouths to speak profanity, to use the name of God in vain, and to tell dirty jokes (Col. 3.8). From our lips come all kinds of gossip, backbiting, and whispers (Prov. 16.28). Then when there are times when we ought to speak, we hold our tongues (2 Kings 7.9; 2 Cor. 4.13). Maybe that’s why James tells us that *“the tongue is so set in among our members that it defiles the whole body”* (James 3.6).

How are we to use our tongues and all members of our body? The Holy Spirit answers that question in Romans 6.13 where we are told, *“do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”* We are to use our different body parts as instruments of righteousness. Our hands are to be busy doing good works (Eph. 4.28). Our feet are to be busy going down the right path (Heb. 12.13). Our tongues are not to be used to speak words of edification (Eph. 4.29). It is when we use our bodies for good that God is glorified. CLP

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

November 3, 2024

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

WHY DO WE SING?

You might be quick to answer the question posed in the title and say that we sing because we are commanded to sing by God. And you would be accurate. God desires our worship and requires our worship (John 4.23,24). The instructions to sing in Ephesians 5.18-21 are in the form of an imperative – the Bible form of a command. But I am not asking why we engage in the act of singing. I am asking about the purpose of our singing. There are three answers.

First, we sing to express our feelings toward God. Ephesians 5.19 tells us that when we sing, we are *“making melody in our hearts to the Lord.”* Singing is an expression of our hearts. What feelings are we expressing? Verse 20 continues to say, *“giving thanks always for all things to God the Father.”* We sing to express from our hearts gratitude to God for everything He has done for us.

Second, we sing to teach one another. In Colossians 3, the inspired writer tells us that when we sing we are *“teaching one another”* (Col. 3.16). Our singing is instructive. This makes what we sing important. We need to make sure that what we sing is biblically accurate.

Third, we sing to praise God. We find that thought in Hebrews 13.15 where we are told to *“continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips.”*

Knowing the purpose of our singing should encourage us to put more thought into that part of our worship service. CLP

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

LUKE 15:32

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Bible has the ability to cut right down to our very hearts when we dig down and see what God has to say. (Heb. 4.12)
2. The parables of Jesus can cut deeply and move us to evaluate our lives and our relationship with God.
3. This morning, we will look at the parable of the prodigal son.

I. THE BACKGROUND OF THE PARABLE

- A. Group One: The tax collectors and sinners. (Luke 15.1)
 1. Tax collectors were Jews working for the Romans to collect taxes. (Luke 19.2,8)
 2. Sinners were harlots. (Matt. 21.31)
 3. They came “to hear Him” (Luke 15.1; cf. Matt. 4.24)
- B. Group Two: Pharisees and scribes. (Luke 15.2)
 1. Pharisees were a strict sect of Judaism. (Acts 26.5)
 2. The scribes were men of the law. (Matt. 2.4)
 3. They “criticized Him” (Luke 15.2)
- C. Group Three: Jesus. (Luke 15.1,2; cf. Luke 9.4)
 1. Parable of the lost sheep. (Luke 15.7)
 2. Parable of the lost coin. (Luke 15.10)
 3. Parable of the prodigal son. (Luke 15.24)

II. THE POINT OF THE PARABLE

- A. The point of the parable is seen in the parable itself.
 1. Read Luke 15.11-32.
 2. The word “father” appears twelve times.
- B. This is a parable about a compassionate father.
 1. The first part of the parable is about the love of a father toward his younger son. (Luke 15.20,22)
 2. The second part of the parable is about the love of a father toward his older son. (Luke 15.28,30,31)
- C. There is a direct correlation between the characters in the parable and two groups Jesus encountered.
 1. The younger son represented tax collectors and sinners.
 2. The older son represented the scribes and Pharisees.
 3. The father represented God.

CONCLUSION: As your heavenly Father, God loves you and wants you to come back to Him.

HIS MERCY IS GREATER THAN HIS ANGER

We serve a God who is both angry and merciful. Consider the words of the psalmist who wrote, “*God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day*” (Ps. 7.11). But also consider what Jonah had to say when he himself was angry with God. He said, “*I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm*” (Jonah 4.2). Is God an angry God or a merciful God? The answer is both.

God is often portrayed as an angry and vengeful God whose wrath is unleashed against His creation. However, His anger is directed toward specific individuals. He is angry with the wicked, those who chose to violate His will (Ps. 7.11). He is angry at the unrighteous and ungodly (Rom. 1.18). He was angry with Israel when they rebelled against Him (Heb. 3.16-19).

It is of great interest that the anger of God is described as temporary. In Psalm 103.8, we are told that “*the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.*” Verse 9 goes on to say that He will not “*keep His anger forever.*” We deserve to be punished for our sins. We deserve the vengeance of God. But in His mercy, “*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities*” (Ps. 103.10). In contrast to His anger which is not forever, fifty-one times in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit directs the pen of the inspired writers to write, “*His mercy endures forever*” (1 Chr. 16.34). When we sin against God, it arouses His anger against us, and we incur His vengeance. But His anger is temporary. The mercy of God is forever and is greater than His anger.

God is frequently portrayed as being merciful and slow to anger. To be merciful is to feel pity for someone and then act in a way that helps them. God is angry, but it takes Him a long time to get to the point of anger. Without us needing to do anything to deserve His mercy, God acted in our best interest to save us from His wrath (Rom. 5.8-10). Through the death of Jesus, the wrath of God was appeased (Rom. 5.9), and we accept the offer of being saved from His wrath by our obeying the gospel (Heb. 5.9). Therefore, God is angry with those who sin. But to those same individuals who sin against Him and arouse His anger, God shows mercy and kindness by offering them the change to be saved.

Anger or mercy? Romans 11.22 tells us to “*Consider both the goodness and severity of God.*” Each day, we need to give our attention to how God feels about the way we live. He can be both good to us and severe toward us depending on our choices. CLP