

Our meeting with Tim Stevens begins today!

View

A Publication of the Folsom Point church of Christ, 900 E. Natoma, Folsom, CA

April 13, 2008

“Sing with the spirit...”

As I was contemplating the arrival of Tim Stevens, who is coming to encourage us in our singing of praises to God, I was reminded once again of how great and good our God is. After all, He not only addresses the needs of the soul and body, but also cares about the inner man, the spirit, and provides a wonderful outlet for our thoughts and feelings. That outlet is singing.

Most of the things we do in our worship to God emphasize the use of the mind: prayer is not primarily an emotional experience, but and logical and thoughtful communication to God. Teaching and preaching appeal primarily to our intellect and we are commanded to discern the Lord's death during the Lord's Supper.

But God knows that we are also emotional beings and singing, more than any other act of worship, allows us to give vent to those feel-

ings. I hasten to add that it is not all feeling — not by a long shot. When describing what we are doing when we sing, Paul says we are “addressing — or speaking to — one another” (Eph. 5:19) or “teaching and admonishing one another” (Col. 3:16). But by its very nature, the emotions come into play; otherwise, why sing? Why not just speak out the words to each other? Singing the words give them a different flavor and color and sometimes teach us things

that we may not hear in regular discourse.

God has created us to think *and* to feel.

Who can read the

Psalms and not feel touched by something that is not explained purely by appeal to the intellect? That's the point of poetry and God uses it to speak to our hearts. Likewise, singing — poetry set to music — speaks a message through the medium of an appeal to the emotions as well as the mind.

“WE’RE GOING TO SPEND THE NEXT FEW DAYS SINGING AND LEARNING TO SING MORE EFFECTIVELY. WHAT BETTER WAY TO SPEND THE NEXT FEW DAYS?!”

James brings this aspect of singing out in his statement in chapter five: “Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise” (v. 13). “Cheerful” is an emotion we experience when we see, feel or reflect on positive things. It’s almost a cliché to say that those who are happy will sing (although I’m reminded of the adage that says “one does not sing because he is happy he is happy because he sings”; I think both are true). Notice that James doesn’t say to just “sing” when you are cheerful, but to sing *praise*. When we’re happy and things are going well, sing — but remember the source of your happiness and what your God has done for you.

Singing is a great joy and a great blessing that God has given us. I feel pity for a person who doesn’t like to sing or never cares to listen to music — I think there is something missing in that person’s life. He may have the lyrics, but there is no melody, no sweet sound that balances that person out. Music adds vitality to our lives and is especially uplifting when we can sing praises to the God who has blessed us in so many ways.

The vitality of a local church can be measured by how it sings. I just finished a meeting in Oakdale where there was an attendance of 70 on Sunday morning — in a building that has can hold over 400. But they sang more like 400 than 70. I couldn’t help but feel that those people, few in number as they are right now, love the Lord and their singing expressed that love.

I never *look* for this, but when I happen to see someone who, during the singing, seems bored (yawning several times is a clue) or is just mouthing the words while looking around auditorium, I really have to wonder about that person’s spiritual condition. The last time I looked, Jesus was still telling us to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24). At the very least, that includes singing with interest and enthusiasm.

We’re going to spend the next few days singing and learning to sing more effectively. What better way to spend the next few days?! Please arrange your schedule so you can be here each time to “teach and admonish one another in all wisdom...” (Colossians 3:16).

dp

The church of Christ

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Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30 AM
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.

Private classes arranged
at your convenience.

For more information,

visit our web site at:

www.folsomchurch.com

Webmaster: Richard Harvey

Agenda

The Lord's Day, April 13, 2008

9:30 AM: Worship: Singing, Lord's Supper, Preaching

Sermon: Singing

☪ Preaching: Tim Stevens

5:00 PM: Lord's Supper, Meeting.

No classes tonight.

Monday—Wednesday, April 13-16

7:30 PM, Tim Stevens on Singing.

Notes

Most sermons are available in MP3 format on our website (www.folsomchurch.com) or on CD (see a deacon).

Robert F. Turner on Songwriting

Out west some brethren are having a wonderful time, and doing something useful, by trying their hands at song writing. Brent Lewis has produced a singable hymn; and bros. Bolton, Worley, and Stevens have written several spiritual songs and hymns, available by writing Claude E. Worley...

I couldn't resist telling them the following story, from my earlier days when I taught some singing schools. An aspiring song-writer brought three manuscripts, no names attached, asking my judgement. Singing through the first, I found it a bit awkward — so with a little "hemming and hawing" it was lain aside, and the second examined. This too was not smooth, and the melody was rather dull, so with some limited commendations we moved to the third.

This one had it! It was singable, well planned, with a lilt-ing pleasant tune; yet neither "jazzy" nor too complicated for congregational use. I began to praise the song, and congratulate the man for an excellent job — and was amazed that he seemed rather unhappy about the matter.

"What's wrong with the others?" he asked, and put them into my hands for explanation.

I replied that in my opinion they just didn't "jell" — the feel, the touch was missing.

"But one out of three is an excellent average. We can't expect to "hit" on every sermon, article, or song we write. You have done a marvelous job on this third song, and you may scrap the first two with no feelings of regret."

The man's feelings were unchanged. In despair he explained, "But bro. Turner, I didn't write that third song. It belongs to Bro. Teddlie."

I wonder how many trial runs, bits and scraps, whole songs, bro. Teddlie threw into the waste basket before he produced the singable version. Once in a marvelous while we come up with a first-run gem — usually the cream of many months of musing and study, even though we may not be aware that the idea grows beneath the surface. But most good things are the product of luck, spelled "hard work." The public sees the condensed, pithy, challenging and action-producing end. (Oh, how we hope!!) But we clean out an overloaded waste basket, and wonder where we'll get the next one.

Plain Talk, "Stuff About Things," Vol. 8, No. 1
March, 1971

A Trilogy, by Jon Gardner

The Seed

The Lord doth gently quilt the world with cloud
As raindrops fall beneath its mystic shroud.
From sun and moon and stars is veiled the view
Until the lingering storm has travelled through.
The rain-soaked seed awaits the light of day
That it might see and feel its warming ray.
Then from the germ that deep within it lies
Springs forth new life as lo, the seed pod dies.

The Savior

The light grew dim as darkness gathered fast.
No more was seen the cross-shaped shadow cast.
With weeping wail, the holy veil was rent
As on the cross, a final breath was spent.
The freely flowing blood splashed to the ground,
And swirled around the seed of man it found.
The hope of man rose up where it had lain
To see the Son of God, who had been slain.

The Sinner

My life was filled with darkness – ruled by sin,
Although for light a yearning burned within.
With eyes closed tight, in faith I took a breath
And held it while immersed into His death.
I then rose up without my guilt and shame
To walk in light and wear His holy name.
And looking back upon the aqua grave,
I saw the Old Man slip beneath its wave.