

Leaders:

This week's lesson is on "Why We Sing in Worship."

First it is important to note that Jim ended up giving this sermon to Adam. With this switch Adam was free to preach on the Psalm of his choosing. Thus, we are not looking at Psalm 3 but Psalm 40. Eric's video and the sermon really are two separate pieces, though they do hang together.

Because of this I have divided up the lesson a little differently. We begin by looking at some of the themes brought up in the sermon, move to the video and what "worship" is all about, and conclude with looking at Psalm 40, going back to the sermon. The "Live It" section goes back to the video. In this section I ask to prepare to do some "worship" as a group next week. Be sure make arrangements for this assignment.

Second, this is topic that could easily digress into what songs we sing. Please guard against this tendency. At Glenkirk we are trying to offer something for everyone, no one will be happy 100% of the time. One thought that occurred to me as I read Adam's first draft was that often we sing songs we are afraid to pray. If that is true, worship should not always be comfortable. In the midst of our discomfort maybe God has something to say.

Finally please let me know how these lessons are working. The goal is help your groups apply to their lives what the Spirit might want to be doing in the midst of all of us. If there is some way to do a better job of this, please let me know.

Have a good week. Betsy

PS Phillip Cross did some additional thinking about Adam's sermon and Psalm 40 this is what he came up with:

Psalm 40 expresses how God has, previously, redeemed David and how he praises God accordingly. "He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire" (1), "He put a new song in my mouth a hymn of praise to our God" (3), "many, O Lord my God are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you" (5), and "I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly" (9).

At the same time, one can speculate that there is a contrast with these verses, demonstrated above, and the following verses:

"Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord: may your love and your truth always protect me. For troubles without number surround me" (11-12), "be pleased, O lord, to save me; O Lord, come quickly to help me" (13), and "Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay" (17).

The contrast I observe is how the Psalmist speaks of God's works and praises God regarding those works. At the same time, he is praising God for how He has redeemed

him (the Psalmist) in the midst of him needing to be redeemed. This bodes very well with what Adam said in his sermon:

"We sing songs of the greatness of God at funerals, we sing of God's healing at the bedside of those in hospice, we sing of God's guiding hand driving in rush hour traffic knowing that we will receive a pink slip and be laid off at the end of the week. We sing of God's forgiveness when we can't kick a sinful habit so dark we fear to share it with our spouse. We sing because Jesus has already won the battle over evil in this broken world."

In other words, we praise God concerning the specific circumstances that are, once again, relevant to us now. "We sing of God's healing at the bedside of those in hospice," and we do this because his "healing" demonstrates the power God has and has used for us in the past. It is a method of giving hope in a time of need. In this way, worship is a method of giving hope in a time of need.

Neither Adam nor the Psalm is saying that "worship" or "singing" is for us alone, for it is also used to recall to God our faith in His work to come. Our praises demonstrate to God that we believe He has done it, so we believe He will, once again, do it.