



The Music of Christmas

Matt VanCleave
December 4, 2022

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will spend some time reading and rereading Luke 1:5-25 looking for what stands out to me
- I will actively pray over things that God has placed on my heart, knowing that God responds
- I will reflect on areas that feel broken in my life and look to be restored like Elizabeth
- I will focus on one of the truths and help this truth shape my spiritual practices as I prepare for Christmas

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

Every week when we gather together as a church, we sing songs. Why do we do that? Why do we sing? And does what we sing have any importance to our day-to-day walk with God?

Music is a part of every culture and has, for a long time, been a part of every culture. Music and our ability to sing and hear music are a part of what it means to be human. As long as there have been mothers and babies, there have been lullabies. As long as people have fallen in love, there have been love songs. As long as hearts get filled with joy, you have to sing. When we're happy, we sing. When we're desperate, we sing.

It's because music communicates in a way nothing else can. And that's why music is always associated with Christmas. Something about Christmas makes the heart want to sing; whether it's the funny Christmas songs on the radio or the sacred Christmas songs we sing in our church, the music we hear this month uplifts us. Our December will be all about music, so join us as we reflect on the posture we take as we listen to the music around us.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your relationship to music, both worship music and secular music, today? Do you love music? Is it a passion of yours to listen or make music? Or is music not a high priority in your life?
2. Matt discusses an old saying by St Augustine that, “he who sings prays twice.” Matt notes that this reflects the idea that when you sing you pray both in your mind and in your heart. What do you think about this statement? Do you think worship is an integral part of your faith formation?
3. Read together Job 38:4-7. The verses discuss how the angels shouted for joy when the earth’s foundation was laid. How do you think these verses integrate into the idea of worship? The angels also greeted the Shepherds with a song of worship. What do you think of the link between Job and the story of Jesus’ birth?
4. Matt notes that music helps us communicate in ways that we otherwise can’t. This worship helps us lean into the wonder of God through song. How has worship connected you to God? Do you feel any similarities to the shepherds who first experienced God in the song of the angels?
5. Read Psalm 34:3. What stands out to you in this verse? Does this verse challenge you to think about worship in a different way?



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6. Worship can be life giving, but when we are struggling with God worship can also be a challenge. Have you ever had periods or seasons in your life in which engaging in worship was difficult?

7. Our posture in worship is important, and Matt discusses three postures we can engage in even when we find worship difficult. The first posture is one that brings us to our knees, focusing on the idea that **I can worship God with a humble heart**. Why is humility with God difficult for us? Why is a posture of humility helpful in our life with God? How does this posture change the way you worship?

8. The second posture helps us understand that **I can worship God with a submitted spirit**. With palms raised, we can lift up whatever is on our hearts and minds to God in worship. What do you need to submit to God this season? How does it help you grow with God to know that God is in control of everything? How does the posture of submission change the way you worship this week?

9. The final posture allows us to understand that **I can worship God with eager hope**. What is robbing you of hope this season? Why is hope so important to you as we near the end of the year? How does the posture of hope change the way you worship this week?

10. Read Luke 1:46-49. How do these verses make you feel? How can you pray these verses into your life this week?

