

Message for Music Sunday – June 3, 2017
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Singing, music, and making a joyful noise to the Lord are all through Scripture. There's a whole book *just dedicated* to songs in the Bible – it is the book of psalms
So often the psalms themselves are about singing, and dancing and making a joyful noise to the Lord with instruments...

What we are doing today is exactly what God tells to do today on this music Sunday!
Praising God with our voices, with our instruments, with our exclamations and praises

So if music is such an important part of the Bible we need to ask the very pertinent question ...

What does music tell us about who God is and about how God works in our lives?

Now in order to answer that question I am indebted greatly to Jeremy Begby who is a theologian and a professionally trained pianist. You can go on You Tube and see him do a similar talk that Gary and I have taken and re-worked for our time with you this morning.

1. The first thing we learn from music is this....

Cod can make the most wonderful things out of the most unlikely material.

Jesus was a master at taking the most unlikely stuff and transforming it

He took 12 ratty disciples – uneducated fishermen and transformed them to be the pioneers of the Christian church

He took a child's lunch – and blessed it – and fed 5,000

He took a cross – an instrument of torture – and changed it to become a place of healing and forgiveness for millions.

God can make the most wonderful things out of the most unlikely material.

Let Gary show you how music illustrates this point.

(GARY: Talk to the congregation and play. Explain as you play the simple weird or tacky tune you are starting with, then show how it can be transformed into something incredible)

2. The second thing we learn about God and how he works in our lives through music is this...

Even the worst that happens can be woven into God's purposes

Sometimes when we make a mistake in life we can think "that's it!" Its over. Everything is ruined.

And in some ways when you play the piano – or any instrument - if you make a mistake on one of those 80 keys if it's the piano, you soon find out that *there is no delete key in the mix.*

A mistake is a mistake.

But I have found out that there is something called a "passing note"...which can be used when a mistake is made...and lead to something far better...then if the mistake had never occurred.

Let Gary show you...

(Gary TALK TO THE CONGREGATION and play. Show them how a BIG MISTAKE can actually become a *passing note* – and lead to something far better – than if the mistake hadn't happened to begin with)

In our own lives, the Holy Spirit takes what we do wrong, our mistakes, and innovates a creative solution for us time and again... the mistakes we make can often create tension.

But the innovation of the solution can bring us to an entirely new place.

Its a kind of tension and release – that actually musically speaking can be more satisfying then a bland performance that has no dissonance...

I believe that is true in life as well. How many times have I heard someone say to me – It was the hardest time in my life, but now I can see God's purpose in it, and I wouldn't have traded it for anything.

3. The third thing that we can learn about God and how he works in our lives through music is...

God does things in an orderly way, but God's order is not static or boring

Sometimes as Presbyterians we like to say that things need to be done "**decently and in order.**"

How many of you have heard that phrase in relationship to Presbyterianism?

We have an *order* of service

We plan ahead for the Sunday worship experience

We aren't just flying by the seat of our pants...all that you see here today has been put together in an orderly fashion

There is an order to the church year from Pentecost to Christmas to Easter and we try to celebrate that order...annually

This is meant to reflect a definite order to the universe that God has put into effect,

there is an order to each day,

there is an order to our bodies...

and because there is an order, things are able to function effectively and well together.

However, *sometimes* when we talk about order in church it connotes boredom, repetition for the sake of repetition, and drudgery.

Nothing could be further from the truth...in terms of who God is.

God is a God of order, but God is not boring.

God is the least boring being you can imagine!

And although God does things in an orderly fashion, God's work is never boring – just as God is never boring

God's work is always lively, it is new, and it is, as we said earlier innovative

It is transformational

After all, God is the Author of life itself...what could be more exciting than that?!!

That is why I can't stand it when people say, "Church is boring!"

If church is boring we are doing something wrong folks...

We are trying to show the world who God is, and if we are boring, we might as well just throw in the towel right now...

How do we express who God is in the best way we can?

We do not do away with order because then we would have chaos
What we do is we allow the Holy Spirit to take our tradition, or our order, And dance on top of it....

Or, in essence allow Non-order to interplay with the foundation of order

If you are totally confused by what I just said...

Lets extend this understanding of order to music cause then it might become more clear

Every composer works within a tradition...and uses that tradition – or order - to create a unique piece of music relevant to context, mood and human need.

For instance a a certain kind of message can be conveyed using the same musical piece – the same order so to speak –by simply changing a few things on the surface – innovating in a creative way....

And there are infinite possibilities about how this can be done

Let Gary show you...

(Gary TALK TO CONGREGATION and play two pieces which are relatively the same, but set up in a way that conveyes a different mood – you can illustrate 3 different moods and let people know what they are and how you are creating the difference)

God uses the order of things we are familiar with, dances ontop of it, and is always doing something new within it!

4. Finally, **Musical chords help explain the “three in one” concept of God and how he adds richness and depth to our lives.**

The chords that we play that give richness and fullness to the melody we sing, is a great illustration of who God is in terms of understanding the Trinity.

A major chord is usually always made up of three notes played together in harmony

(GARY...play the chord)

Each key or note stands independently on its own,
(GARY...play each separate note)
just as each person of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - have
separate functions and expressions.

Together however, each note compliments the others
(GARY...play the chord again) –

so that together it is a powerful harmonic accompaniment to the melody

If we think of the melody as the progression of our lives,
and the chords as the tri-une God himself adding richness and depth to
our existence,
perhaps it will help us to grasp a bit more of the mystery of the Trinity

As well as giving us an awareness of how God can transform our lives in a
much deeper, rich way than we ever thought possible.

Gary will illustrate now...First...

Gary will play a melody with no chords

Then, Gary will play that same melody with chords

Then, we will close by singing with those melody and chords, words that
praise our God today who created his people the church....on Pentecost
Sunday

(GARY Talk and Play a known song without chords, then with chords, then
with chords and everyone singing to end!!)