Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Sing Praise

(Jerry Fite)

James reminds us that what happens inside of us has a proper expression in worship. *"Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise" (James 5:13).* Prayer is a proper expression when we need to supplicate God for strength and help, especially when we are suffering evil because of our standing for good. Singing is a proper expression of joy when we reflect upon the blessings which God has given us.

The two English words, *"sing praise"* translates the single Greek word *"psalleto,"* a verb form of *"psallo."* The word, having a broad meaning "to twitch or twang" a bowstring, a thread of hair, or even a string on a musical instrument is narrowed in its use in the New Testament to denote the action of "singing." The use of the voice in *"speaking one to another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart"* is the music God desires from His worshippers today *(Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16). "Making melody"* (psallontes) takes place from within – in your heart and finds vocal expression through words.

The exhortation to "sing praise" is a personal one. James does not write to a "collective heart" of a church saying if the majority of you are cheerful, then sing praise. Neither is the demand to sing praise only applicable to "cooperate worship," what we do when together. Sing praise applies to us individually as well. Even on Monday, or any day of the week, our cheerful heart should break forth in song, praising God.

James also reminds us that worshipping God is not regulated to a specific place. When cheerful, sing praise; not sing praise only when you are in worship as the local church. Singing praise can take place in the morning shower as you anticipate another day filled with opportunities to glorify God, or during an evening walk as you reflect on the blessings of the day.

While worship is not regulated to a physical place, it is regulated by our Lord. Jesus reminded the woman of Samaria that neither Mt. Gerazim, or Jerusalem were important places for worship, but God's true worshippers would worship Him *"in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24).* Again, from within, man's spirit which is our connection with God is the place from which worship originates. Also, pleasing worship must be expressed in harmony with revealed Truth. The popular theory that it matters not "how" you worship, just so you worship is therefore false. Jesus lays down the "how" of worship – "in spirit and truth."

Some who would not use mechanical instruments of music in worship while the congregation is gathered in song, do not believe it is wrong to sing the same songs of praise with a guitar, piano, or organ when alone, in home or in another public setting away from the meeting house of the church. Brethren think! God says, "sing praise." It matters not where you are. A cheerful heart is to find expression in worship to God through singing – making melody in the heart – not on a harp.

When men and women feel comfortable singing and playing praise in their private or individual capacity, how long will it be before they personally want to, or allow the same form of praise to be introduced in corporate worship? "Sing praise" is what James commands. It can be obediently applied individually, regardless of place.