

A Pastor's Brief Explanation on the Choosing, Ordering & Purpose of Sunday's Songs

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When we gather on Sunday, we praise the Lord and extol His greatness (Psalm 145:1). We bless our God for all that He is and all that He has done (Psalm 103:1). In this brief write-up, I've taken the music-set that has been diligently and prayerfully selected for this upcoming Sunday (May 31, 2020) and I endeavor to briefly explain the choosing of, the order of, and the purpose of the songs.

As of now, we plan to corporately sing 5 songs as a church congregation this weekend, four before the sermon and one responding to the Word preached.

1. Behold our God (come and praise!)

The first song comprises a call to worship! Behold our God calls on the worshipers to come and behold, to consider, to contemplate, to think on the majesty, Kingship and power of God. This song ably gathers the congregation together and serves as a wonderful way to begin our corporate worship as we sing to God and to one another in remembering, reminding, and requesting one another to come and praise our Triune God!

2. Lift High the Cross (come and raise!)

The next song we'll sing leads us directly to Calvary. Lift High the Cross consists of a hymn that pleads with believers to lift up the cross of Christ, to proclaim His saving and sovereign love, and to share the gospel with a needy world as long as we're here on earth. It's a reminder to come and raise the gospel-banner! It's a summons to courage, to boldness, to joy, and to single-minded resolve to magnify and laud Christ with our lives and with our lips.

3. Come behold the wondrous mystery (come and gaze!)

After our public reading of Scripture and pastoral prayer, we will then sing Come behold the wondrous mystery. This song quite simply and biblically walks the worshiper through the gospel story. The song begins with the incarnation of Jesus, to his perfect life of obedience, to his substitutionary and atoning death at Calvary, to his powerful resurrection! Indeed, the final stanza leads the mind to the second coming of Christ when believers will see Him and be forever glorified and made like Him! Come and gaze upon the Savior! See and sing of the plan of redemption!

4. Power of the Cross (come and be amazed!)

As we prepare for the preaching of the Word and the partaking of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (after the sermon), we will then sing the Power of the Cross. The previous hymn walked through the life and ministry of Christ on a macro-level surveying the fullness of his life, person & work. This hymn, however, zooms in on the passion week, indeed, the last few hours of Christ's life. It shows us the work of Christ, the power of Christ, the forgiveness of Christ, the

security of Christ, the propitiation of Christ, and the marvelous grace of Christ! Oh be amazed! Oh the intention is for worshipers to be gripped as their minds are drawn to Christ in theological truth and in rhythmic form so as to be affectionately wooed to His love so as to serve Him, to enjoy Him, to delight in Him, and to feast upon His Word that is about to be preached.

5. Arise my soul arise (come and respond!)

The conclusion of the worship service will be the song Arise my soul arise. After we have heard the Word expounded from Ephesians 5, and after we have taken the Lord's Supper together, we will then respond to the Word and to the ordinance of communion with the response of confidence in Christ! This hymn is a response of the heart in self-counseling to rise up, bless God, look to Christ, and stand upon His effectual and constant Priestly intercession for His elect. This will be the theme by which we conclude the worship service. It will, we trust and hope, bless the people of God.