

The Repertoire of the Kingdom
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Galatians 5:16-26
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- I. We began our series on “Singing Songs of the Kingdom in the Midst of the Kingdom of the World” by talking about “Singing in the Reign” two weeks ago.
- A. Today I want to have us take a look at the repertoire of the kingdom.
 - B. I am defining repertoire as “Those songs which a performer or group has selected as fitting its style, which it has developed to performance level, and which it frequently performs before audiences.”
 - C. When you go to a concert, you expect that the songs will come from the group’s repertoire—that is that they will be in a certain style, they will be songs the group sings often, and they will be done to a concert level of perfection.
 - 1. Groups fit into a niche by the repertoire of the songs they perform—gospel, rock, bluegrass, classical, country and western, contemporary Christian.
 - 2. Most patrons would be pretty upset if they bought tickets for a concert and the group did songs from outside its expected repertoire.
 - a. There’d be people pretty upset if a heavy metal group sang “This Little Light of Mine” or “Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head.”
 - b. And there’d be quite a bit of confusion if a Bluegrass band with guitars and banjos broke into the “Hallelujah Chorus.”
 - 3. You sort of expect, and justifiably so, that people who claim to belong to a certain niche of music will perform that kind of music and will do it well.
 - 4. Which leads us to the conclusion that those who claim the name of Christ will select the songs for their repertoire from a certain group of songs of the kingdom of God.
- II. And so the question we’re looking at in today’s sermon is, “What are those songs that fit the style of the kingdom of God, which Christians are to select for their repertoire, develop to performance level and frequently perform in the reign of the world?”
- A. We can begin to get a handle on this by observing the repertoire of Jesus.
 - B. Jesus announced the songs in his repertoire in Luke 4 when he said, *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*
 - C. These were the songs Jesus would be singing for all the world to hear.
 - 1. Preaching good news to the poor.
 - 2. Proclaiming freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind.
 - 3. Releasing the oppressed.
 - 4. And proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor.
 - D. It was a wonderful repertoire.

1. It had a clear and unique style—no one else was singing songs anything like these songs—and Jesus sang them in a masterful way.
 2. It says that *When (the people) heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon.*
 3. The people were flocking to him because they wanted to hear his songs of the kingdom.
 - a. They knew there was something different about Jesus.
 - b. And they couldn't get enough of his songs.
- E. Looking at Jesus's repertoire raises the issue of what songs are in our repertoire. "What are the songs that we are to be singing in the reign?"
- III. Well, our beginning point is to observe that, just like with Jesus, the repertoire of the kingdom is very different from the repertoire of the world.
- A. Paul develops the contrast between the two repertoires in Galatians 5.
 - B. Now although I don't want to spend much time looking at what not to do, I do want to at least take a look at the repertoire of the world.
 1. Paul creates a list of many of the songs in the world's repertoire in vv. 19-21. *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*
 2. We find similar lists elsewhere in the NT which I have combined and categorized to produce this summary list of the world's repertoire.
 - a. First, there are songs of sexual impurity with lust, sensuality, immorality, orgies and various kinds of debauchery.
 - b. Second, there are songs of religious impurity with idolatry, witchcraft and the hardening of hearts toward God.
 - c. Third, there are songs of physical impurity with drunkenness, gluttony and debauchery.
 - d. Fourth, there are songs of verbal impurity with unwholesome talk, foolish talk, obscenity, coarse joking, and filthy language.
 - e. And then, fifth, there is a huge category of songs of relational impurity with anger, rage, selfish

ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, falsehood, stealing, bitterness, brawling, slander, malice, greed, and lying.

3. Now although I'm using songs as a metaphor for behavior in this sermon series, the world certainly has lots of literal songs on all these themes. It has songs glorifying every one of these kinds of impurity.
 4. But it's not the repertoire of the world that we should be interested in.
- C. We ought to be much more interested in the repertoire of the kingdom—the songs that fit the style of Jesus, and which we are to develop to a concert level of performance, and perform regularly in the midst of the reign of this world.
1. And that's what Paul turns to in vv. 22-23 when he says, *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*
 - a. What Paul has created here is a list of the top nine songs in the Christian repertoire.
 - (1) Now anybody who has even passing interest in American popular culture is aware of the Billboard charts of the top ten songs in any category—Rock, Country and Western, Blue Grass, Gospel, Contemporary Christian.
 - (2) Well this is Paul's Billboard chart list of the top nine in the "Songs of the Kingdom of God" category.
 - b. These are the songs that a Christian should most often include in his or her concerts of daily life—*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*
 2. In addition to these top nine, I want to pick up several other songs from the NT lists of the most popular numbers in the Christian repertoire.
 - a. Righteousness, *compassion, forgiveness, humility, forbearance, thankfulness, considerateness, mutual submission, mercy, sincerity, generosity, impartiality and acceptance.*
 - b. This is an fantastic repertoire. It's the repertoire of the kingdom.
 3. These are the songs of the kingdom of God that faithful followers are to be singing in the midst of the reign of the kingdom of the world.
 - a. These are the songs that will draw people to us if we will develop them to a concert level of performance and sing them in the midst of the world.
 - b. These are the songs that illustrate extraordinary love and show that

a different kingdom is present in the midst of the reign of the world

IV. Now we can't possibly examine each of the songs in the Christian repertoire, but I'd like to look at two songs in more detail.

A. First I want to look at the song of patience, or, said oppositely, the song of "Not blowing up and telling people off when they screw up and frustrate us."

1. Now I know that's not a very elegant title, but I think everyone knows exactly what I'm getting at because we so frequently have to decide about whether we will sing the song of patience or whether we'll sing one of the hugely popular songs from the world's repertoire.

2. Now the songs the world sings in response to people who screw up and frustrate us are generally quite internally satisfying.

a. These songs generally include blowing up, ventilating steam and telling people off.

(1) That's what I felt like doing two weeks ago on my trip to Lombard when the toll attendant had a conversation with the driver in car ahead of me in toll booth.

(a) He crossed his arms across the half door of the booth, leaned on them, and looked like he had hours to discuss the Cubs' prospects for coming season.

(b) Cars were streaming through the booths to the right and left while I was trapped and couldn't go.

(c) I was on a tight schedule, not sure if enough time.

(2) The song that came to my mind included a solo sung through the driver's side window with automotive horn accompaniment.

(3) I'm sure I would have sung some version of that song to Jeananne if she had been with me.

b. The songs the world sings in response to frustration call for blowing the horn, socking it to them, hitting them back, suing them, scorching them, letting them know you're not going to put up with this unacceptable behavior.

c. These are songs that value the blazing retort, the devastating comment, the lyrics that say "I won't put up with this!"

d. But songs like that don't belong in the repertoire of the Christian.

e. In case you're wondering, I didn't sing that song in the toll booth.

(1) I'll guarantee you I wanted to.

(2) But what I had preached about singing songs of the kingdom just 24 hours earlier came to mind, and I simmered myself down and waited until the driver and toll attendant finished their conversation and I could go on.

3. Now we already find songs for the Xn repertoire in the OT—in Proverbs.

a. *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

b. *A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a*

patient man calms a quarrel.

4. And in the NT we find such songs as these.
 - a. *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*
 - b. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?
 - c. *If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.*
 5. The kingdom song of response to frustration is the song of patience.
 - a. It's usually not the song that springs to mind first—at least not to my mind.
 - b. But it is because it is full of understanding and compassion that people from outside the kingdom appreciate it.
 - c. It's a song that's unique to the kingdom of God.
- B. Second, I'd like to look at the kingdom song of generosity with one's money.
1. Now when it comes to money, the world has lots of songs in its repertoire.
 - a. Songs of consumption and of acquisition. Songs of greed and selfishness. Songs of piling up as much as one can get.
 - b. Jesus quotes one of these songs in the parable of the rich fool when the rich farmer sings, *You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat drink and be merry.*
 2. In contrast Jesus quotes one of the songs on money in the kingdom repertoire by singing, *Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.*
 - a. Songs from the Kingdom repertoire:
 - (1) Emphasize giving rather than holding on.
 - (2) Emphasize contributing to the work of the kingdom.
 - b. Songs from the Kingdom repertoire emphasize sharing God's gracious gifts to us with others in need, realizing that we are the channels through which God is providing for them.
 - c. Songs from the Kingdom repertoire emphasize proportionality with the OT standard being 10% and with a NT commitment to God's kingdom motivating us to even higher percentages.
 - d. Songs from the Kingdom repertoire emphasize first fruits, meaning that we give off the top, not out of what's left.
 3. So the kingdom's song in response to money is a song of generosity.
- C. There are many more songs from the kingdom repertoire we could examine, but they all follow the same pattern of extraordinary love and compassion toward people and extraordinary commitment to the advancement of God's work.
- V. Now I want to invite us to use the scale in the bulletin to evaluate the repertoire of the songs we sang this week.
- A. Position one says, "Well, to be quite honest, I sang the songs of the world. I leaned on the horn. I told people off. I kept most of what God gave me for my own use."

- B. Position five says, "I was a pretty nice person. Although I sometimes sang songs of the world, I kept it under control and tried to do the best I could."
- C. Position ten says, "I sang the extraordinary love of God in each and every circumstance. People knew when they'd been with me that they had been in contact with a compassionate, caring presence."
- D. As you think about the concert you sang with your life this week, were you at 1 or 5 or 10? Was it maybe more of a 3 or a 7?
- E. As you think about the concert you'll be singing this coming week, what songs might you incorporate into your repertoire to move you one notch in the direction of 10? What song of the kingdom are you going to add to your repertoire and bring up to performance level, starting this week?