

## **“Praise the Lord and Praise One Another”**

Ephesians 5:18-19

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### **Ephesians 5:18-19 (Power Point)**

#### **Preface**

Originally, God and human beings had a relationship in which they sang songs of praise to one another.

Human beings also had a relationship in which they sang songs of praise to one another.

However, this was broken.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit, I think, is for a person to be as a person should be—to recover the original form of humanity. And the original form of humanity is precisely a relationship in which people and God sing songs of praise to one another.

Also, people were in a relationship in which they sang songs of praise to one another—even with other people besides themselves—and, while praising God, they were in a relationship where they spoke to one another.

It was not a relationship in which they pointed guns at each other and fought.

It was not a relationship in which they pointed out each other's shortcomings or things they couldn't do, judged each other, belittled each other, deceived each other, played mind games with each other, or were irritated with each other.

#### **Part One**

When we look at Genesis, after God created all of heaven and earth and everything in it, we can see that God thought—or perhaps even said—"It was very good."

God created the other creatures before He created humans.

When He created things other than humans, He simply said, "It was good." (Of course, I believe that is also a wonderful word of praise.) But after creating all the other creatures, when He finally created humans, He said, "It was very good," as if He especially rejoiced that the being called "man" had now come into existence.

That is because, in fact, humans were a special existence to God.

Only humans were created in the image of God, in His likeness.

The "image of God" and the "likeness of God" are not about eyes, or nose, or mouth, but rather that humans were created as beings who possess God's character.

Then, what is the character of God?

When we look at the description in Genesis chapter 1, we see that when God created things other than humans, He used the singular subject "God," but when He created

humans, He said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,” not using the singular subject “I” or “God,” but instead the plural subject “us.”

The expression “us” is thought to indicate the Triune God—God the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit—and this perfect harmony of the Trinity is the greatest characteristic of the God taught in the Bible. (Although it might be inappropriate to use the word “characteristic” for the one true God,) this perfect harmony of the Trinity is, I believe, the greatest aspect of God's nature and attribute.

In other words, humans, who alone were created in the image and likeness of God, came to exist as beings who live in harmony, balance, unity, mutual resonance, and responsiveness with all beings other than themselves.

Humans were the key beings to bring forth harmony among all the creatures God had made.

And this one and only, incomparable God of the Trinity—who is harmony, who is love—declared, “Let us make man in our image,” and after creating humans, expressed His joy with the words, “It was very good,” singing these words.

I believe that God sang here.

Why do I think the words “It was very good” are a song?

It is because in Zephaniah chapter 3, there are words that say God rejoices over His beloved people “with singing.”

### **Zephaniah 3:17 (PowerPoint)**

“With loud singing He will rejoice over you”—God is the one who sings songs. And that song is directed toward humans.

God is the one who brings forth sound.

God is the beginning of music, the source of music. And the reason “Why do people make music?” is, I believe, because people were created in the image of God.

Because God is the one who makes sound, people too make sound—this is the precious passage that points to the origin of human music, and that is Zephaniah 3:17.

So, the words “It was very good” spoken by God in Genesis chapter 1, when He completed His act of creation by creating humans in the image of the Triune God, were not flavorless, scentless, emotionless, superficial words, but were like lyrics sung in joyful praise.

And the first man Adam and the first woman Eve, who were created in that way and completely bore within themselves and their spirit the harmony of the Triune God, rejoiced in one another while praising each other's existence.

Truly, just like the words from today's passage in Ephesians, they spoke to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, rejoicing and singing together.

This is the first human music recorded in Genesis chapter 2—the love song that Adam sang to Eve.

### **Genesis 2:22–24 (PowerPoint)**

“This, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”—in other words, “You are me, I am you. You and I are one, we are harmony.”

In mutual resonance, responsiveness, and unity, Adam and Eve, the first humans, who were created by God to be in harmony, rejoiced in each other's existence by singing to one another.

With instinctive sounds rising up from their bodies, they made natural music and rejoiced in one another's being.

This was the original and true image of humanity, the original relationship between people, the original relationship between God and humans, and the harmonious, musical relationship between humans and all other created beings.

## **Part Two**

But how is the world today?

It is not a world where we sing songs of joy to one another, speaking with poems, spiritual songs, and praises.

It is a world where we have forgotten to praise God.

The ones who have created such a world are humans. We, the humans who have lost sight of God.

Because of humanity, humans suffer; because of humanity, flowers and plants suffer; because of humanity, animals suffer; because of humanity, the Earth, as a living being, writhes in pain. Even in outer space, there is an overflow of space debris created by humans. We have fashioned a world that is not in harmony, yet we continue to live in a state of delusion, praising humanity.

Economy, science, civilization, competition, and awards of honor – as if hiding fatal wounds, we exchange lies, giving empty praise to one another, or knocking each other down, creating a world of constant rivalry.

We have made a world that bears no resemblance to the one in Genesis 1 and 2.

It is a world where not only obvious weapons, but also words, glances, facial expressions, the atmosphere we create, knowledge, and wealth are used to hurt, kill, and compete. Each of us, as individuals, contributes to this.

It is not difficult for us to imagine people we dislike, people who anger us, people we cannot forgive, or people we think are disappointing.

So, when and where did this begin? It began from Genesis 3.

Humans, who once lived in harmony with God, broke that harmony by betraying God. Had they immediately and sincerely acknowledged their betrayal to God, this situation would not have occurred.

Instead of admitting their betrayal, they insisted, "God, I do not recall doing anything of the sort," and continued to assert their own righteousness, highlighting that they were not wrong.

They embraced the devil's temptation that "breaking harmony with God is freedom," and "freedom from restraint," and by their own will, they joined in with the devil's suggestion, thus breaking the harmony with God.

They abandoned the act of praising God.

As a result, the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve, who once praised each other with love songs saying, "How wonderful, beautiful, and lovely, you are me, and I am you," became caught in a cycle of blaming, insulting, and cursing each other.

This is called "the fall of man" in theological terms.

From this fallen couple came two sons (as mentioned in Genesis 4). The older son, Cain, became angry with his brother Abel, found him annoying, and, in his rage, killed him.

The first murder in human history took place within a family.

This was a stark contrast to the world that God had once praised and called "very good."

From that moment on, humans began to fear one another.

The most fearful being to humans became other humans, and they sought to gain power to surpass their fear of others.

With weapons, wealth, knowledge, and by treating multiple women not as persons but as objects to fulfill their desires, men showed their power.

Additionally, the music that was originally meant to praise God, expressing God's greatness through sound, was forgotten or discarded. Instead, music became a tool for competition, a means to boast of differences, an instrument of pride, and a way to release and express desires, sadness, emptiness, frustration, and anger. Music no longer reflected God, but a world without God.

Furthermore, they began manufacturing things using bronze and iron, exploiting natural resources without gratitude to God, and building an industrial culture that sought wealth, which eventually led to the transformation of those creations into weapons, thus giving rise to a culture of war.

And with all these creations – creation without God, creation devoid of harmony with God, creation that places competition, comparison, superiority, and self-assertion above harmony between humans – humans have come to call it art. In an attempt to live happily even without God, humans have continued to create a hollow vitality in a world that assumes one can live without God.

This is not what I am saying, but what is written in Genesis 4.

In Genesis 4, instead of God's words "very good" and "harmony," suddenly we encounter words that were unimaginable in the world of Genesis 1 and 2.

The words "revenge" and "kill."

### **Part Three**

Why have people become like this?

It is because they have lost the "breath of life."

It is because they have lost "the Spirit of God."

When God said, "Let us make man in our image," He made it clear that without this, humanity would not be made in the image of God.

God breathed the breath of life into humanity.

God placed His Spirit within mankind.

However, when humanity became sinful and brought upon themselves the fall, breaking their harmony with God and their relationship with Him, God's Spirit could no longer remain within them.

### **Genesis 6:3 (Power Point)**

In fact, people cannot live beyond 120 years now, can they?

Humanity has become nothing more than a mass of flesh, seemingly forgetting the Spirit of God breathed into them, immersed in "revenge" and "killing." God's Spirit could no longer remain in them.

Was God deeply saddened to lose humanity? Was it because He is a compassionate, merciful God, slow to anger, and abounding in grace and truth? Perhaps that's why God's Spirit did not immediately depart from humanity, who had begun to turn the world by revenge and murder.

Rather, God's Spirit remained with them, but it seemed that the way they lived and their appearance no longer allowed God's Spirit to be present in them.

Eventually, God's Spirit could no longer stay within humanity, and they lost God's Spirit.

By the way, the act of "killing" is not just about physically taking someone's life or killing their body. As Jesus said, even when you call someone a "fool," think ill of them, look down on them, or judge them in your heart, it is already an act of murder.

In other words, according to Jesus and God's standard, everyone is a murderer.  
We are all murderers.  
We are murderers who have lost the perfect harmony that once existed.

#### **Part Four**

And now, the Bible passage for today.

#### **Ephesians 5:18-19**

In the last session, we saw that being drunk on wine is a way of becoming oddly bold. Perhaps the most visible and understandable manifestation of a person trying to live without God, trying to find joy in emptiness without God, and seeing their own emptiness, is drunkenness.

In contrast, being filled with the Spirit (being filled with the Holy Spirit) is the restoration of the original, fulfilling, content, and satisfied state of a human being.

It is the act of escaping from the emptiness, illusion, and mirage of joy, pleasure, and prosperity without God.

It is the restoration of the harmonious relationship with the Triune God, the harmony with God, filling the great void that could never be satisfied.

It is the act of receiving the breath of life again, receiving the Holy Spirit, and entering into a harmonious relationship with God.

It is the restoration of the true human being.

This could truly be called resurrection, or revival.

Then, we are made aware of the originally intended harmonious relationship between people, and we are invited into it.

It is the relationship of "speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."

The psalm refers to the Psalms, meaning to play prayers to God with music.

The hymn is the original song that expresses the desire to praise God, which has been restored as an instinct, set to music.

The spiritual song, whether it is well sung or poorly sung, whether it is off-key or sung with a beautiful voice, refers to all music that praises God.

In other words, "speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" is the mutual interaction and joyous relationship between people that is restored in the relationship with God.

#### **Part Five**

One of the happiest things since I became a Christian, or perhaps I should say the most joyful thing that I had not known before and was newly given, restored to me, was the joy of praising God through music.

I had always liked music before that.

I had taken piano lessons, played the bass drum in a marching band, and even joined a friend's band as a drummer when I was in high school.

I liked all kinds of music, regardless of genre.

Perhaps because my father was born when he was 50, I grew up watching shows like "Enka no Hanamichi" (the Enka Flower Road) naturally with him, and the first musician I admired was Hiroshi Itsuki.

I also like classical music, and when I was in high school, I went to a Metallica concert at Yokohama Arena. The loud volume damaged my ears, and I had ringing in my ears for a whole week afterward.

I also went to a Michael Jackson concert at the Tokyo Dome, where I was able to hear Slash, the guitarist from Guns N' Roses.

I attended TM Network's last concert at the Tokyo Dome, and when I was in college in America, I went to an Aerosmith concert.

I also liked folk songs and ethnic music like folklore.

I had always liked music and had been exposed to various types of music since I was a child, but it was when I encountered worship and praised God through music that I truly experienced the joy of music. As I sang praises during worship, tears began to flow naturally from my eyes, and at that moment, praise became music in my heart.

As we read in Zephaniah earlier, I came to realize that the act of praising God, and the fact that God Himself sings over us and rejoices in His creation, is the true form of music.

So, when it comes to praise, I want to sing loudly, dance, and listen to it forever, regardless of the style of music.

When I came to understand the origin of praise as music, I began to feel the emptiness of music without God. No matter how spectacular, beautiful, stylish, powerful, or extravagant the music is, after hearing it, I felt a certain emptiness or unsettling feeling, a loneliness, a void.

But there is no emptiness in the praise of God.

Instead, there is a sense of fulfillment, excitement, joy, comfort, healing, and encouragement that fills the inner being.

Sometimes it fills quietly, and sometimes it fills like an explosion.

Something strange happened to me after I encountered praise music. I suddenly wanted to play the guitar, and I could play it to sing praises.

Before I became a Christian, I had tried to play the guitar several times, but my fingers just wouldn't move.

But strangely, when I thought about playing the guitar for the purpose of praising God, my fingers began to move.

So, when I was in college, I gathered my friends in my apartment, played the guitar poorly, and we sang praises together while studying the Bible.  
That's when God's word became my song.  
The Lord God, Jesus, became my song.

**Psalm 119:54**

**Jeremiah 17:14**

**Deuteronomy 10:21**

**Psalm 22:3**

Before I encountered praise, I often felt a strange desire to have deep conversations with people. I used to say things like, "Let's have a slow, deep conversation sometime." But when I was touched by the love of Jesus, came to know Jesus and God, I no longer felt the need to have those strange feeling of having conversations. I think it's because the confusion I always felt about certain things for which I wanted to talk was cleared away.  
Who am I as a person?  
How can I live to feel like I am truly living?  
Where do I come from, and where am I going?  
Why do people live? What is the purpose of existence, and the mysteries of justice and evil in the world? All the confusing, empty feelings that everyone has—these were cleared up.

When I came to understand that I was created by God, that He is the Beginning and the End, and that Jesus Christ is the invisible image of God, and that I am loved, forgiven, saved, and expected by Him, I realized that I no longer had strange feeling and need of conversations.  
Even more so, I found no attraction in having conversations while drinking alcohol.

What I long for is simply to converse with each other through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, to praise God with all my heart, and to sing to Him.  
So, for me, the morning prayer meeting where we pray together, praise together, and share and interpret the word of God is the most joyful time.  
Of course, it is even more enjoyable than surfing.  
I remember that the emptiness of surfing without that time felt like a dry wind, or like the emptiness of a draft—an indescribable feeling of emptiness.

### **Conclusion**

Having been touched by the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior, and being filled with the Holy Spirit to become a witness who testifies of Jesus Christ, we



want to earnestly follow the Apostle Paul's advice to speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

As ones who has had my innate musical ability to praise God restored, we wish to wholeheartedly praise and sing to Jesus, and, instead of pointing out and judging each other's shortcomings or belittling one another, we want to encourage and praise our fellow believers, God's family, and brothers and sisters in Christ.

Since we have been given the grace to restore the true humanity within us, let us fully express that humanity, rejoice together, and live together in harmony.

Let us pray.

**Benediction:** Ephesians 5:18b-19