

Sing to be Sung

Romans 15:1-13

Romans (no. 41 in the series)

December 11, 2022

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/sing-to-be-sung/>

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This document was prepared by Brett Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Brett know. Thank you!

Prayer

So, Lord God, we pray that we would proclaim your power and your glory. We pray that, Lord God, we would preach your word, or even more we pray that your word would somehow preach us. Amen.

Message

[Peter dances the Macarena to Los del Rio's *Macarena*]

Are you impressed? How many of you have ever danced that dance? Twenty years ago, everyone was doing the Macarena. So, everyone on their feet! Do the Macarena when I say go. Ready "Go!"

[Congregation tries to dance the Macarena in silence]

Wow, it looks really bad from up here—you're not coordinated, you're out of sync. What's wrong? No music, right. So, now let's try it with music. Ready, go!

[Congregation tries to dance the Macarena to Ave Maria]

I think maybe that was worse! It's hard to dance without the music, but it's even harder to dance with the wrong music. It's like trying to remember a song in your head, while another song is playing; that's just almost impossible. Ok, so let it all out now. Ready?

[Congregation dances the Macarena (to the right music— Los del Rio's *Macarena*.)]

Yeah, alright! You know what messed me up? I started thinking about the sermon. Enough silliness, it's time to preach, so sit down.

This is our 41st sermon from the book of Romans and I was hoping to finish before the new year, but next week we have a special Christmas Service so we're not going to make it. But today I think we can at least get to Paul's main point and then wrap up with his personal greetings in the New Year. For 12 chapters Paul wrote about the fact of our justification in Christ. And now for 3 chapters he's been writing about ethics—what we should do. But it's really not what we should do, so much as what we do, do, when we trust what God has done. ⁱ

Soren Kierkegaard said it this way:

"...too often it has been overlooked that the opposite of sin is not virtue... No, the opposite of sin is faith, as is affirmed in Romans 14:23, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." And for the whole of Christianity, it is one of the most decisive definitions that the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith."

That's where we ended last week.

Romans 14:23b-15:2:

...whatever does not proceed from faith (trust) is sin. ¹ We who are strong (that's strong in faith) have an obligation [*opheilo*: something owed] to bear **with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**

Remember Paul just told us that we are to owe no one anything but to love them. 'With' is added by the translators. When you bear with something you just tolerate it, but Paul is saying bear the failures of the weak. It's what the members of a body do, when one of the members fail, all the other members bear that failure as their own failure. Bear the failings of the weak, not consign the weak to endless, conscious torment.

Romans 15:3-4:

² Let each of us (let this happen) please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."

Now, that's a wild thought: Jesus didn't please himself; he pleased his Father, he pleased his neighbor, he pleased you. Doesn't that mean that...

- When he spoke the woes to the Pharisees, he was pleasing the Pharisees?
- And when they took his life on the Cross, he was pleasing them?
- And when he came on the clouds of heaven, as Jerusalem was destroyed below, he was pleasing Jerusalem?
- And when he allows temptations, trials, and tribulations to fall on you, he is pleasing you?

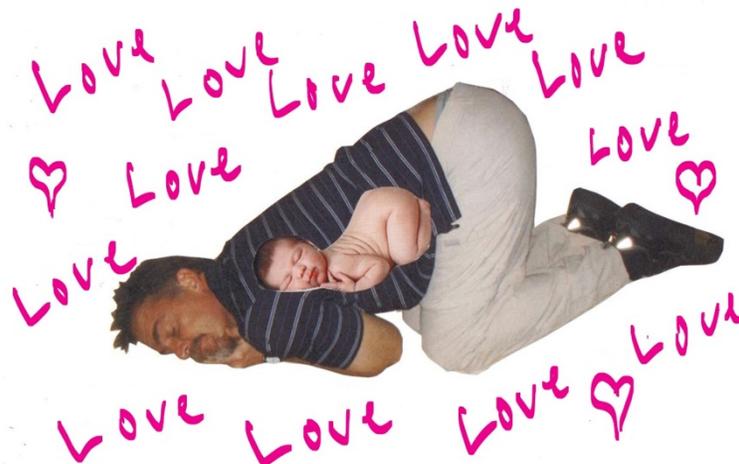
We're all a bit confused by that, and yet every parent understands that. If you're not willing to displease a toddler, that toddler will never be pleased. If you're not willing to make them unhappy, they can never be happy. It's called discipline. Parents who are so insecure that they must always please their children, in order to gain the approval of their children, aren't pleasing their children; they're pleasing themselves, hating their children, and creating very unpleasant adults incapable of experiencing pleasure. ⁱⁱ



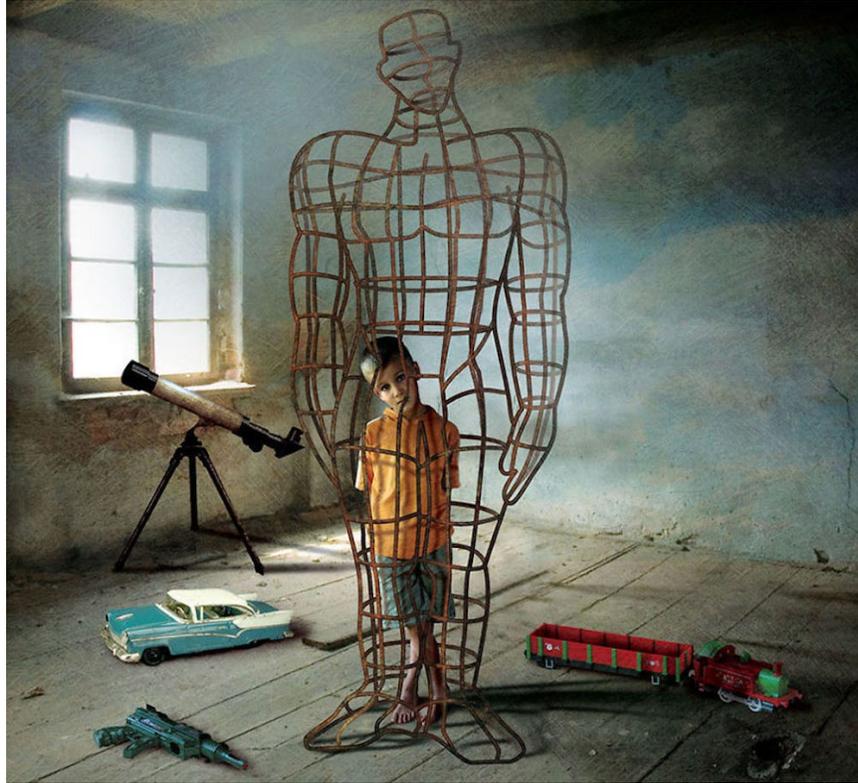
You should know that—unless there’s some sort of congenital defect—every little baby is born with a remarkable ability to receive love, and I think we could call that “faith;” they’ll look in your eyes, connect to your soul, and imitate everything you do.



But at a certain age, they begin to judge themselves, protect themselves, save themselves, and convince themselves that it’s all about them.



And even though Love is all around them, they can’t perceive Love or respond to Love; in fact, they think they are the Creators of Love (and God is Love). They are asleep in a dream that turns into nightmare, which is the most terrifying of all prisons. It’s loneliness, death, and hell.



"Morski, Igor. Press Illustrations works P013 [Mixed Media]. <https://www.igor.morski.pl/work/p013>

And in this state, it's impossible to dance. And life is a dance, it's a communion of sacrificial love,

- one cell sacrificing for another cell,
- one body part bleeding life into another body part,
- each member sacrificing its strength for the weakness of its neighbor, not pleasing the self but pleasing the neighbor and then experiencing the pleasure of.

That dance of love is life and when everyone dances its absolute joy.

You know, little children—toddlers—will dance at the drop of a hat. But Pharisees make very poor dancers. Jesus said you must become like children. And yet, Paul wrote, "I have given up childish ways"—childlike, but not childish. So, what is it that makes a child most childish? The most childish child is the child that thinks he or she is grown up. So, let me ask you? Are you grown up? How often do you just start dancing? My answer is: not very often.

Last week I shared about my Damascus Road experience, like Paul's Damascus Road experience. After Jesus decimated my ego, he revealed his unconditional love, and my heart wouldn't stop dancing, and I experienced ecstatic, unspeakable pleasure.

It turns out that Jesus is the ultimate people pleaser. He didn't please himself, and yet he sacrificed himself for the joy that was set before him—and that's an eternal communion of limitless pleasure.

Romans 15:3-4:

For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

“The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.” Paul is saying that Jesus is praying, “Father they're all angry at you and they're taking it out on me.” And Jesus isn't just praying, he's singing. Paul is quoting Psalm 69, which he already quoted in Romans 11 when he wrote, “David says, ‘let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution...’” David says that, according to Paul, in Psalm 69. But here in Romans 15, quoting the same psalm, he writes as if Christ is singing the psalm. And check out the psalm (psalm means song). It's crazy.

- In 69:21 David sings “they gave me poison for food and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink” That's obviously Jesus singing through David.
- In 69:22 it sounds like David, “Let their own table become a snare... and a trap;” he's singing his anger. But Jesus already sang about bearing the anger of all who hate God in 69:9, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”

So, check this out: even as David sings vengeance, Paul seems to think that Jesus sings along, transforming David's vengeance into the vengeance of God— “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution...” is how Paul recites the psalm in Romans 11:9. But Paul already taught us that Jesus is the stumbling block in Romans 9:33, and we know that the retribution of God is the table of the Lord—it's grace in the place of sin transforming the very meaning of wrath.

It's like David sings his song, and Jesus sings David. He sings a new David into the failure of the old David and David gives birth to a new humanity. Jesus is both the root and offspring (the seed) of David.ⁱⁱⁱ“... that we might have hope,” writes Paul

I think I danced the hardest and the best at my wedding banquet, for it was the culmination of decades of painful hope. Hope is like a container for love and life and joy, but it's created through faith in the midst of fear, doubt, and pain. Hope is space for Grace and Grace is Unconditional Love.

Romans 15:5-7:

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,⁶ that together you may with one voice [literally “with one mind, one passion,^{iv} in one mouth”] glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Harmony is what Paul's been talking about for the last three chapters.^v When singers and instruments harmonize, millions of different individual vibrations in the atmosphere come into phase with one another. Harmony in a human body is 40 trillion different cells, taking and receiving from each other, at just the right time and in just the right way.

Paul just told us that we're all one body and individually members one of another—whether we're aware of it in any given moment, or not. Heaven is a universe of diversity, perfectly unified in freedom, by one logic, harmonizing all things in each and every moment. That's "the plan for the fulness of time,"^{vi} according to Paul—*anakephalaioo*, all things unified under one head, one mind, one reason, one logic.

"The Glory of God is Man, (that is Adam, that is humanity) fully alive," wrote Irenaeus in the second century^{vii} Therefore, writes Paul, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. Paul just told us in the last chapter "welcome the weak in faith, but not to argue" And now, "welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

When did Christ welcome you? When you were a "Christian?" Or when you crucified the Christ? Welcome, *proslambono*, that literally means: "reach out and take by the hand." In other words, "Stop arguing and start dancing!" And why don't we?



Why don't we join the dance? Check this out, the next verse is all about Circumcision.^{viii}

Romans 15:8-9a:

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness. [Young's literal reads: **Christ became** [a ministrant (a minister) of circumcision for the truth of God], **in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,** ⁹ **and** [*de*: but, moreover] **in order that the Gentiles** [*ethnos*: "peoples, nations"] **might glorify God for his mercy.**

Remember that we spoke about all of this a few months ago in Romans 10, Moses told the Israelites that the Word was in their heart, and we know that the Word was all around them. And yet they couldn't do the Word—they couldn't love as they had been loved—for their hearts had not been circumcised. The word, the logic, deep in their heart could not connect with the logic all around them. So, God promises the fathers, and the prophets, that one day he would circumcise their heart (singular: one heart).

The early church stopped circumcising new believers for they believed what Paul taught us in Romans 2:28, that "...a Jew is one inwardly, circumcision is a matter of the heart." And like Paul teaches in Colossians, "in [Christ] you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through [the] faith [not "in"] [but "of"] the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."

You know Jesus is the "powerful working of God" and we're saved by his faith, rising in the tomb of our hardened hearts, our circumcised heart. It's faith that responds to love and begins to hope for more than just itself. The Jews were blessed to be a blessing, but they tried to keep the blessing to themselves; Now we are "the Jews" and "blessed to be a blessing," and we also seem to want to keep the blessing to ourselves.

"In order that the Gentiles, (the Nations, the Peoples), might glorify God for his mercy," writes Paul, as if God "consigned all to disobedience that he may have mercy on all" so that "every knee will bow, and every tongue give praise [*ekhomologeō*] to God."

Romans 15:9:

and [*de*: but, moreover] in order that the Gentiles [*ethnos*: "peoples, nations"] might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you [*ekhomologeō*: *ek+homo+logos*=out together word, "surrender praise together"] among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."

And now check this out: Paul is quoting the Song of David in 2nd Samuel 22, which David sang, "The day God delivered him from all his enemies (22:1)."^{ix} Everybody wonders, "What day was that" especially if they know David's story—it turns out that David was his own worst enemy.

And once again, it's tough to know who's singing. He sings as if he's descended into Sheol. He claims to be blameless and the head of the nations, and then to praise God among the nations. We know that David descended into Sheol. But he wasn't blameless; he was not the head of the nations; and there is no record of him singing among the nations. Well, except that we, the nations, are singing his songs right now. And Jesus sang his songs, over and over, even on the cross. He sings David's words, "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?" But isn't it more accurate to say that David was singing Jesus's words even as Jesus was singing David a thousand years before he hung on the cross?

- Psalm 22:1, "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- Psalm 22:29, "Before him shall bow all who go down to the dust."

Romans 15:9b-10:

“As it is written, ‘Therefore I will praise you among the gentiles, and sing to your name.’” And again, it is said, “Rejoice oh gentiles with his people.”

And now Paul is quoting the song of Moses, which he expects us to recognize and now connect to what he’s already told us of Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 29 and 30 Moses speaks to Israel just before he dies, and Joshua leads them into the promised land. He tells them that the Word is near them and in their hearts so they can do it, but they won’t do it for their hearts are uncircumcised.

God then tells Moses, that the people will “whore” after other gods, his anger will burn against them, and he will forsake them, but he will not forsake Joshua who is with them—Joshua is Hebrew for “Jesus”—who “will not leave nor forsake us”—his body and bride. God then tells Moses to teach Israel this amazing song, that they would sing this song, when they realize that they have been wrong (thousands of years later). The song is basically the history of humanity, and it ends with these words

Deuteronomy 32:43, Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will ~~provide atonement~~ [atone] for His land and His people (NKJ).

“Rejoice, oh gentiles, with his people.” That’s everyone. He atones for everyone, by destroying what keeps everyone from hearing his love song—and that’s us, our arrogant old selves, everyone needs to be saved from themselves.

Romans 15:10 “Rejoice, oh Gentiles, with his people.” And now once again Paul quotes from the hymnbook of the people—the book of Psalms: Psalm 117.

Romans 15:11:

And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.”

“Let them.” For 1500 years the church has taught us that some people can extol him, but we must not hope that all would extol him, for that’s impossible.

Romans 15:12a:

And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse...”

Now Jesse was David’s Father, so the Root of Jesse is the Root of David. In the Revelation, Jesus says, “I am the root of David” and “the seed of David.”^x So, if Jesus is in you, the seed of David and root of David is in you, and like David you are the anointed—in Greek that’s translated “Christos,” Christ. You are his body but are you dancing? David had his problems, but do you remember how he danced? God seemed to really like that.

Romans 15:12:

And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles [Nations]; in him will the Gentiles [Nations] hope.”

So, Paul quotes the Song of David (the King), the Song of Moses (the Law), the Songs of the People (the Psalms), and now the Song of Isaiah (the Prophet). Paul, like Jesus, has been quoting Isaiah incessantly and now he quotes the prophecy that begins in Isaiah 9 and runs through Isaiah 11. But it's not just a prophecy; it's poetry and most likely intended to be sung as a song and we sing it even today.

Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. [He’ll rule from his throne, wherever that is.] And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...” (NKJ). (That means that Hell cannot withstand the advance of his government and peace.) The song continues into Chapter 11, Isaiah 11:9, “... for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse...” (NKJ) [who will rule the nations.]

Romans 15:13:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy [not some joy, all joy] and peace [not some peace, all peace] in believing, [that is, in faith. And remember he’s spent 14 chapters revealing that faith is a gift] so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound [*perisseuo*: overflow] with hope.

Now, listen closely, I want to say this with no animosity and only gratitude for what God has done. But 15 years ago, the Sanctuary met for the first time because we had been defrocked, for simply hoping that “every knee would bow and every tongue give praise,” for Jesus, the Word of God, would accomplish that for which he was sent. We were kicked out of our old church for hoping that the savior would save. How the hell does that happen?

How is it that people read Romans, even memorized Romans, teach classes on Romans, and conclude that Paul is saying,

- NOT every knee will bow, and every tongue give praise
- NOT all consigned to disobedience will receive mercy
- NOT all made sinners in Adam will be righteous in Christ
- NOT all who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God will be justified by Grace through faith as a gift, but most will be endlessly tortured by God who is Love?

How does this happen? And how is it that we say we believe the Good news, but live like we’ve never heard it—in selfishness, greed, jealousy, disharmony, and unfaithfulness? How is it that Paul, could study Scripture as a Pharisee for all those years, obtain all that knowledge of Good and evil, and conclude that it all meant that he should find the followers of Jesus, the Messiah, and kill them?

I hope you realize that Romans is not in disagreement with the Old Testament; it’s basically a recitation of the entire Old Testament. So, it’s as if Paul had read the score, memorized all the notes, tried to play every instrument, and even taught courses on music theory, but had never actually heard the music. And it’s hard to dance if you cannot hear the music, and downright impossible to dance, the right dance, if you’re listening to the wrong song or just noise. “To what

shall I compare this generation?” asked Jesus. “It is like the children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance.’” On the road to Damascus, Paul met the Singer of the song, who circumcised his heart, and then Paul began to dance. And all the old notes were still there, but now they comprised an entirely new song, for they were all harmonized by the logic of Love, the resurrected Word of God.

If you follow the sciences, you may know that the standard model of particle physics now speaks of all reality as the manifestation of vibrations of meaning in a ubiquitous quantum field. In other words, all reality is the manifestation of a song; it’s a dance.

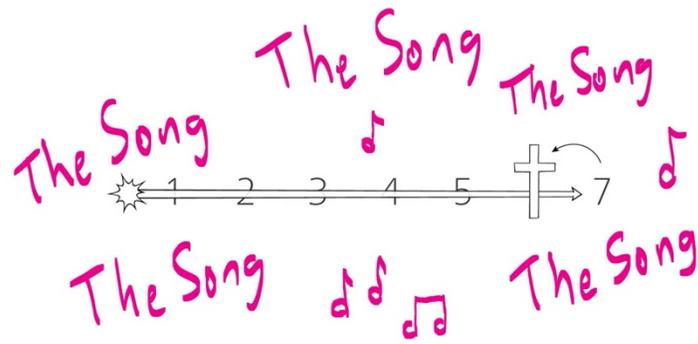
In *The Silmarillion*, JRR Tolkien describes the creation of the world as the manifestation of God’s song... but at one point the dark angel, begins to sing discordant notes, which are evil. And yet God sings those discordant notes into an even greater harmony, which is Grace; he even does it through a Hobbit named Frodo. When Frodo throws the ring of power into the fires of Mt. Doom, Middle Earth is transformed into the age to come.

In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Aslan sings Narnia into Existence. And yet there’s one man who can’t hear the song; instead, all he hears is growling—His name is Uncle Andrew, the Magician.^{xi} Magicians won’t surrender to The Word, for they seek to use The Word; they hold on to the ring of power and lust for control. Magicians and Pharisees won’t surrender to the Song; so, they can’t dance.

And, of course, Lewis and Tolkien are just plagiarizing Scripture. In Scripture God speaks all creation into existence with a word—*dabar* in Hebrew and *logos* in Greek. *Dabar* also means “thing.” And *logos* is also translated “reason” or “logic.” The *logos* is like the rhythm that undergirds all reality. And so, God not only speaks creation; he sings creation into existence. For 5 days reality dances to the sound of his voice. But on the 6th day, he speaks his word, and something refuses to dance. It’s a golem—that’s Hebrew for unformed substance, half made substance. His name is “Adam”, or should I say, “Our name is Adam.”



Scripture pictures space as something like this: a dark void, chaos surrounded by *logos*, which is the song. Creation happens when God sings his song into the void.



And Scripture pictures time as something like this, 6 ages of linear time surrounded by God's time, which is animated by the eternal song. Creation happens when eternity touches time, which is always now—You see you can only dance by surrendering to a song in the present moment.



And Scripture pictures me as something like this, the me that God has created, imprisoned in the me that I think I have created. My true self, imprisoned in a false self, that is just an illusion—the child of God, imprisoned in an ego, absolutely surrounded by the song, but unable to dance, for I refuse to surrender control.

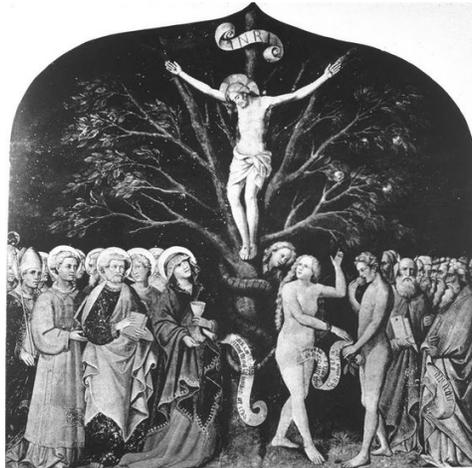
Somehow, I've come to think that control is freedom, but it's the deepest bondage. Freedom is to will what you want and to want what you will. When you're trying to dance, you're consciously imposing your will on each and every member of your body: "Step right. Step left. Clap. Spin around."^{xii}

"As long as you notice and have to count the steps," writes C. S. Lewis, "you're not yet dancing, but only learning to dance."^{xiii} But when you do dance, the rhythm (the logos) bypasses your conscious mind, or at least your conscious control, and it animates your entire body. You lose yourself in the music and find yourself dancing as you think: "Wow this is really fun." It's work that's rest and it's order that's freedom.

You can't comprehend the music—music is an insane amount of logic encoded in pressure waves, in the atmosphere all around you. You can't comprehend the music, but the music can comprehend you (know you) and bring all the members of your body into perfect harmony—a synchronicity which each and every member of your body experiences as joy.

Paul just told us that we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. Imagine if all of us were dancing to just one song. [Video montage of movie and television scenes of people dancing to Los del Rio's *Macarena*]. The lyrics to the Macarena aren't so great; these lyrics are better. [Video montage of movie and television scenes of people dancing to Walk the Moon's *Shut Up and Dance with Me*]. There are zillions of these mash up videos all over the internet. I know because I watch them when I walk on the treadmill, and they reveal that you can dance. Sometimes they make me just want to cry (in joy). I think it's the thought of all these people, in all these movies with all this drama, with which I have identified for all of my life, but now dancing to just one song, as if it were all meant to fit together from the start.

And you see, maybe it is. Maybe Heaven is like one of these Mash Up Videos. But the Mash Up Video has always been made, and is now being made, that is revealed to us, and even as us, in space and time. In Scripture Heaven is an eternal 7th day, God's Sabbath Rest, in which everything is good, it is finished, everyone is singing, and reality is a dance to the rhythm of the logos, who is a lion and lamb standing on the throne. And we each must stand before that throne: the judgment seat of God.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

As we've learned in Romans, this is the Judgment of God, hanging on a tree in the middle of the garden, in the depths of your soul, on the sixth day of creation. And so back to our question:

- How is it that Paul could know all that Scripture and conclude that he should persecute the Messiah?
- How is it that theologians could read Romans and conclude that God will not save some and in fact endlessly torture most?
- How is it that people could read Romans chapter 15 and conclude that Paul is warning us not to hope for too much for too many?
- How is it that we know about Jesus, and we don't live like Jesus—we're just not dancing?

Well, maybe we're listening to the wrong song or worse, just a bunch of noise. Maybe the snake is still whispering in our ear, take knowledge from that tree and use it to make yourself in the image of God. Use it to create yourself and so save yourself; use it to write your own song, to the glory of yourself—not Jesus, but me-sus; not God's choice, but your choice.

Maybe we're singing to the glory of me-sus, which means we're using Jesus, and so the music dies—it's like going to the symphony and trying to capture the music in a jar, it's vanity and striving after the wind; it's crucifying Christ and burying him in your soul.

Maybe, worse than trusting me-sus, we put our trust in we-sus, not the Bride of Christ, but the anti-Christ, the imitation Christ, our group—so we make our group right, by making everyone else wrong, which makes us worse than wrong and servants of the devil. We're all wrong until we see that God makes us all right.

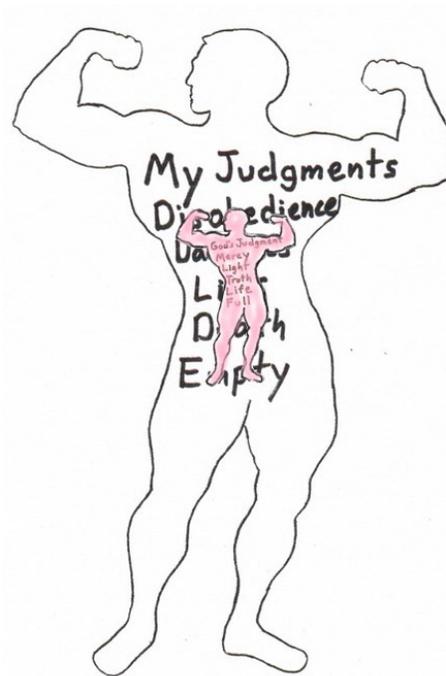
The one on the tree is the righteousness of God, the judgment of God, the Word of God, the Logos of God, the Rhythm of every song. The snake whispers "seize control." And the Spirit of God whispers "surrender control" from behind the curtain in the depths of our soul. While the one on the tree still sings, "Stop, shabbat... shut up, and dance with me." Dance with me. And you see, that's an entirely different way of knowing. That's knowing because you're being known. That's worship.

Worship isn't just singing; worship can be, and must be, anything and everything you do. Worship is a constant awareness of Love and the logic of Love, awareness of God and his song, and then beginning to sing along. Worship isn't just singing, except that everything that's anything is the song of God, the Word of God, returning to God, as worship. So, when you worship, you are being sung into reality by God. Actually, you are the dance that he is dancing. You and the person next to you. So, sing to God and you are being sung by God. But when you worry about yourself, get stuck on yourself, and try to save yourself, you're only trapping yourself deeper in outer darkness. But this is the Gospel: Jesus has gone there with you. We took his life on the tree, and yet he gives his life on the tree, and so he descends into our earthen tombs like a seed.

I hope you noticed that this:



Looks an awful lot like this:



Which should remind you an awful lot of this:



At the tree, God implants a seed of faith in you.^{xiv}

- In faith, you begin to hope to dance.
- In hope, you come back to the tree and surrender to the Lord of Love.
- In Love, you invite others to dance, and love binds all things together.

You cannot hope too much. So, imagine the entire world dancing to the Song of Love, and Love will be dancing you and your neighbor (the people around you), his body, into the Kingdom.

Communion

And so, he took bread and broke it (the Logos did), saying this is my body broken for you (and by you). And he took the cup saying this is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you.

Creation, Salvation, and Transformation is not your work. It's not work, it's worship. And you cannot dance the dance unless you do. So may you worship. In Jesus' name, amen.

Benediction

“Joy to the World the Lord is come, let every heart prepare him room.” How does a heart prepare room for grace? Isn't the room prepared by sorrow, sin, and failure. How do we not let it? Perhaps we don't acknowledge that in each other, we don't see it in each other. Let every heart prepare him room and bear one another's failures. That means when you see that room in that other heart—you see that problem, you see that sin, you see that sorrow—it's not their sorrow, it's our sorrow. Well then, what are you going to do about it?

Maybe you could let the life (love) flow—that's like the circulatory system.
Or maybe you could connect to the head—that's the nervous system (logic).

And if you let every heart prepare him room, your heart is expanded into every one of those rooms. Then “Joy to the world,” becomes a world of joy flowing back into you.^{xv}

So, by way of benediction: Believe the Gospel. I think that means that Jesus is saying, “Stop and dance with me.” [Video montage of movie and television scenes of people dancing to Walk the Moon’s *Shut Up and Dance with Me*].

Endnotes

ⁱ In the world ethics leads to justification (You do the good and someone declares you to be good), but in Paul justification leads to all ethics...

In other words, you can’t be good by trying to be good; you can only be good by believing that God has made you good.

ⁱⁱ And any people pleaser that pleases people to gain their approval, isn’t pleasing people, but using people to please themselves...

Which ironically leaves them more and more alone...

ⁱⁱⁱ And Paul seems to say that all Scripture is like that.

Hopefully you’ve realized that far from disagreeing with the Old Testament, Romans is basically a recitation of the Old Testament.

And far from disagreeing with the Gospels, Romans is more like the first gospel and source material for all the rest, particularly for Luke.

^{iv} Or one passion, or even one wrath or ardour.

^v And remember he doesn’t prescribe it so much as describe it--describe life in the church, life in the kingdom of god... that is “at hand.”

It’s something God must grant, and we must let happen, as if it’s far too complex to be describe and then prescribe with a set of laws.

^{vi} Ephesians 1:10, and the same amazing word, *anakephalaioo*, is used in Roman 13:9. These are the only places it is used in Scripture.

^{vii} This quote is attributed to Irenaeus in the 2nd century

^{viii} Now I need to remind you that because we’re a pornographic and prudish society all at once, we really struggle to translate the next verse.

Because we’ve turned sexuality into a commodity, we can barely believe that it’s the sacrament of the covenant of grace, which reveals the glory of communion in the kingdom of God.

It’s like there’s a skin that covers our hearts and numbs our souls to the joy of communion with God.

Modern translators usually translate this verse with the idea that Jesus came to help the jews, but it literally means that Jesus came to circumcise the Jews and thus cause the entire world to glorify God for his Mercy. We learned that the jews were blessed to be a blessing to all the nations of the world, but they came to believe that the blessing was only about themselves.

And now, according to Paul, we are the jews, and yet it seems to me that we tend to believe the blessing is only about ourselves—the church.

^{ix} This is also Psalm 18

^x Revelation 22:16

^{xi} He’s terrified of the song and so, in his Mercy, Aslan allows him to sleep and dream his own dreams.

^{xii} A great dance is perfect order that is absolute freedom.
It's work, and yet I experience the work as rest.
That's because I really can't make myself dance; it's the Song that's making me dance... once I have
surrendered to the music.

^{xiii} As long as you notice, and have to count the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance. A good
shoe is a shoe you don't notice. Good reading becomes possible when you need not consciously think about eyes, or
light, or print, or spelling. The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would
have been on God. C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm*

^{xiv} He is born in you and born of you as faith hope and love.
And as you surrender to his love, he makes you in his image.
Good works in you, is Jesus' dancing within you, as you, his body.
And through you, he plans to fill the whole world with himself—the logic of the song—such that everyone
would join the dance.
Joy to the world the Lord is come.

^{xv} Or does that bother you? Joy to every heart, even your enemies?
Do you remember why the older brother went to the outer darkness?
It was because he didn't like the sound of music and dancing as he approached his father's house; he didn't like the sound of
Grace.