

Tim Krupa - The Temple Singers

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Dear Father in heaven, hallowed be thy holy name. We certainly appreciate being here today under thy care, under Thy guidance. We are certainly thankful for the fellowship and the blessings we're receiving and that we also can be blessings to each other as we are brethren.

We ask thy strength and guidance for us. We ask thy blessing upon all of us here today and upon all not present, those in sickness or those not able to be with us, and also ask the blessing upon Brother Krupa, who is to give us a message. We ask forgiveness of all shortcomings and wish to be guided by thy Holy Spirit and all these things we ask in our dear name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Amen.

It's no small privilege for me to introduce Brother Tim Krupa to you.

He has chosen for his subject this afternoon, the Temple Singers. Brother Krupa, we're very happy to be with you here in convention, and we bring you Christian love and greetings from the friends that we meet with the friends in Portland and Washington, Washington state also. We had the opportunity to talk to the Thompsons of Kalispell last week. They wish to be remembered to the convention.

Would like to tell you that In October, the 22nd and 23rd, we're going to have a convention in Portland, and we have a new facility, and we think it's going to be very conducive to a rich spiritual feast. We have an extremely profitable program, we feel, and we would sure like to see you there. That's in the latter part of October, just when all those trees are turning orange and red.

We'd like to see you there. We have special love, really, from three of our sisters in Portland who used to live in Southern California. That's Ginger Bruce Jewell Swift and Lorraine Cunningham Walters. They're all doing very nicely and wanted to be specially remembered to you.

One of the interesting differences concerning our daily lives and the lives of the Old Testament Israelites concerns music. We're surrounded by music, but when you picture Old Testament times, you have to remove a lot of things. Because they didn't have radios, loudspeakers, phonographs, tape decks, stereo.

Their days were quieter. Now, that wasn't all bad because they didn't have to put up with these songs that were bombarded with these. These cute little ditties about hamburgers and soft drinks and shaving cream that just stick in our minds long beyond we'd like. They were spared all that noise pollution, all that bedlam. But still, after a hard day's work, they just couldn't walk into the tent and turn on some nice soothing music.

Now we are almost completely surrounded with music. We've got it in our homes, in our cars. We go into the supermarket, there's a symphony playing. We hear it on airplanes. They even have earphones now that you can walk down the street and listen to stereo.

Now, I love music, but this is madness, and it was not so in Old Testament times. It was quieter. Now, maybe someone in the family did play a flute or maybe a stringed instrument, but they didn't have a whole lot of time for that, and because there wasn't much of was special, it was a special occasion when they got a musical treat.

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I suspect for those who lived outside of Jerusalem, this would have only happened rarely. But perhaps for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they may have been fortunate, say each Sabbath to hear some music at the time of the evening sacrifice. The entire family all cleaned and dressed up for the observances of the Sabbath. They might have walked together to the temple. Now the temple would have been visible from anywhere in the city.

And as they walked together and got closer, they could see the smoke rising from the sacrifices. They could smell the burnt offerings, and then as they got closer, they could hear the temple singers.

Often There were nearly 300 singers that made up this group. 300 trained voices, softly accompanied by flutes, strings, bells, those we can well imagine, were sweet, refreshing sounds in a musically dry world, and then the priests would give the signal and the trumpets would sound, and there'd be cymbals and the voices would crescendo louder. All this would take place while the sacrifices were being made. These were stirring moments in the lives of the Israelites.

They were praising God.

Now we think of ourselves and scripturally so, as priests, and these Old Testament examples illustrate our responsibilities.

One of the very special divisions of the priests of Israel were the temple singers. In our consecrated lives, we have responsibilities similar to those of the temple singers. In Colossians 3:16, I think the apostle shows us that this was not just an old testament.

Colossians 3:16 says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Apparently Paul thought and suggests that we could help each other with psalms, songs, spiritual songs. Now that really, it almost doesn't sound difficult enough, it doesn't sound intellectual enough or rigorous enough to think that we could help each other with psalms, in spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord, that that would be a help to our brethren, and when Peter tells us that we are a chosen generation, 1st Peter 2:9 one of the reasons that we're chosen, he says that we should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness.

In ancient Israel, it was the full time job of the temple singers to praise the Lord. I think it's a beautiful picture because in the total operation of the temple, it was while the sacrifices were being made that the Lord was being praised. It means that the sacrificing wasn't a gloomy, grim affair, but through the efforts of these singers, and think of their voices, the joy they had while they did this. Think of the bells and the cymbals while the sacrifices were going on.

So we ask ourselves, in this day, while I am endeavoring, you are endeavoring to live a life of sacrifice. Am I at the same time praising God? To what extent are the things that come out of my mouth praising to the Lord? Hebrews 13:15 Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. What is the sacrifice of praise?

The apostle continues, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. The fruit of our lips is really something to think about, isn't it? Each day we do a lot of talking, a lot of grumbling, a little bit of complaining, and that question keeps haunting us, to what extent are the things that come out of my mouth praise to the Lord? I think there are some interesting details regarding the singers of

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ancient Israel that give us basis for spiritual lessons. First of all, they were originally chosen before the temple was completed.

We'd say, ah, that's nice, that makes sense. We now are chosen as lively stones being polished and prepared for our place in the completed temple. Second of all, scriptures tell us, and this is mainly recorded in chronicles, that the singers, the temple singers, had to be trained. They all had some degree of natural talent, definitely, but they had to learn control. They had to develop the singing muscles, the breath control.

They had to learn words. They had to learn the timings that were appropriate. Same with us. We need to be trained. Often the praise that we would like to bring forth comes across instead as is almost static or noise.

We need to be trained in breath control. We need to learn timings of the plan. We need to learn words of life and words of praise. Thirdly, with the temple singers, eventually they had to become skillful.

Tradition tells us that they had five years of training, but there came a point in their careers that they had to be competent. I think the same is true for us to a degree. We cannot be in the way for years on end and not show some progress, some improvement increasing in our lives. Praise to the Lord, and then lastly, as a special division of the Levites, the Temple singers lived in separate quarters.

They literally had their rooms close to the Temple. Now, this was so they were always available for service.

They were separate, set apart even from the rest of the Israelites. Same applies to us also. They had to live in harmony because they live so closely together. They had to work closely together. They had to work together in cooperation.

So I think that we can conclude that these lessons of those ancient singers apply to us. They spent almost all their energy praising God or developing their abilities to praise God. How can we put more praise into our lives? Well, perhaps there's two general ways. One would be to control the utterances of our lips.

That would mean increasing the amount of praise, decreasing the amount of dishonorable things. That would be praise to God, and secondly, as this group of singers, we should live together in greater harmony. That would be praise to God. Let's look at these one at a time.

Can we put more praise into our daily lives by controlling the utterances of our lips? The Scriptures are pretty sympathetic on this. Controlling the mouth is recognized as a difficult task. Isaiah in Isaiah 6:5 said, Woe is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and we all remember how James told us how difficult it was to control the tongue.

He said, the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. This is in his third chapter. It is an unruly evil. But still, for those who are seeking the divine nature, there are certain standards of righteousness that must be striven for. To some degree we must be skillful.

To some degree we must overcome. Matthew 12:26 But I say unto you that every idle word that men speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, and First Corinthians 6:10 talks

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about revilers. Revilers shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Now, if you think that these scriptures are aimed at you personally, and they kind of make you feel uneasy, don't feel bad.

Listen to my man. The text Ephesians 4:29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying. Why did they have to put that on September 10th?

What percent of our words are idle words? To what extent do we revile? Ephesians 4:31. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you. Titus 3:2.

Speak evil of no man.

To make this practical, I have one suggestion. It doesn't mean that there couldn't be more suggestions. It just means that I have so much work to do on this one suggestion that I could not bear to even list a second one.

It basically concerns the mouth. It's not profound. It will not be in the next edition of Bartlett's Famous Quotations. It's just one more way of saying that to increase praise in our daily lives, eliminate criticism.

Now, just so I won't get criticized too much, I hasten to add that there are times when corrections must be made for certain situations. But I suspect maybe not as often as we use this liberty, and most of our criticism really isn't even done to the person that we're criticizing. It's done to a third party. Vast majority of our criticism must be unnecessary criticism.

Think for a minute of all the things that you've heard criticized. Here's some of the things I've heard criticized. Study leaders. The volumes Brother Russell. Convention programs, Speakers, Symposiums, Question meetings.

The dawn, the Divine Plan Organization, the Herald. The rich, the young people, the old folks, the work in Japan, the work in Africa, the work in France, the Pilgrims, the meeting hall, the song leaders. We've even heard prayers criticized. The piano player. Cities.

We criticize Chicago, Los Angeles, New Brunswick, Kalispell Testimonies. We criticize the radio programs, the tv, the convention committee, the food committee. There's one we're really good at, the food committee.

Is there anything we haven't criticized?

You know, I said that I made this list of things that I've heard criticized. But I suspect down deep in my heart that this is just my list of the things I've criticized, and, you know, it doesn't have to be depressing, though, because in the few weeks that. That I've been thinking about this topic, criticism has been on my mind a lot, and I wasn't surprised at how often critical thoughts came into my mind in this time period.

But what I was surprised at was. Was really how easy it was to just keep my mouth shut. The thought came in to say something critical, and at least half the time I succeeded, and I just swallowed the words. So that was encouraging.

It wasn't all that hard to make some improvement.

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A number of years back, I read of a study by some psychologists as to what do people criticize, and they said most of the time a person criticizes in others what he himself is weakest in.

They Said that if a person was selfish, he would invariably accuse somebody else of being a penny pincher or having no generosity. Our very clever fallen natures try to cover up what we feel are our weaknesses, but we give ourselves away. Then every time we open our mouths and criticize, we have precious little time to devote to the Lord. It'd be so good if we could use that energy instead of criticizing to praise Jehovah.

We have much to talk about that is profitable in praising our studies, witnessing our experiences. Brethren are brethren in need. Praise means to glorify or magnify God, and it has a lot to do with giving thanks to the Heavenly Father.

If we can't think of anything to say when others are criticizing, I think it's best probably just to say nothing. Don't try to reprimand them or improve them, but don't agree. Just say nothing, you know, because we can praise God even without words. It's the expression on your face Brother Bruce mentioned this morning. Enthusiasm.

It's the enthusiasm with which you shake hands, with which you come to the meetings.

Wouldn't you say that Esther Binda praises the Lord? She's enthusiastic, isn't she, when she greets you? She doesn't use a whole lot of words, though, does she?

And those of us who do use a lot of words, how do we use them? You remember what James said about the fountain? Can a fountain gush New English Translation with both fresh and brackish waters from the same opening?

So this, then, is the aspect of the utterances of our lips. Now let's go to a second one. The other aspect of praising God is being in harmony with our brethren. I cannot think of temple singers and music without the thought of harmony coming into my mind. Musical harmony, music.

Harmony is an important part of music, and I think that there might be some spiritual lessons from harmony. Now, the definition of harmony means to be in accord, to fit together. It's an adaptation of parts together, agreement, and in music, it specifically means the combination of tones into accord.

And I think that almost all of us would agree that the prospective saints of the Most High should be in harmony, and that dissension and strife, these are not pleasing nor praising to God. We know that the body of Christ is to be knit together. There's to be a oneness of the body. Some of the scriptures tell us that we're to be perfectly joined together, to be of one mind, to live in peace, and Romans 15:6, in talking about this, says that we may, with one mind and one mouth, glorify God.

That's praise. That's harmony. The sounds of a mighty chorus singing as one mouth, those are beautiful sounds. Now, in a musical aspect, harmony has distinct characteristics. We might almost say it has rules.

Let me give you a musical illustration. I hope you can all hear this. First, I want to present to you a melody line with no harmony. This is a melody without harmony.

Now, a melody line, but we're going to have some harmony with it.

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We call that two part harmony. Two voices, two. Two tones. Wasn't it beautiful? It was more than double.

As far as being interesting, we can add to this. We can have four parts in harmony.

Four parts. We can add eight parts, 12 parts. We can increase this and it's still harmony.

That was nothing more than many, many single melody lines working together.

What is harmony then? It's different parts, different voices working together in a pleasing manner. I think that's really interesting. To be in harmony, then you don't all have to be on the same note.

I think it's really a good lesson for us as to how we get along one with the other.

This is not harmony.

Do we all have to sing the same notes precisely up and down the scale together to get along the. This is harmony.

Except they're at the end. What do we call that? We call that a mistake, right? My gosh, the organ player made a mistake. Well, that brings us to the point that there are some rules in harmony.

Everybody can't completely do their own thing. One of the rules of harmony is that you have to be in the right or the same musical key. Now, if I'm in the key of C and you're say, in F sharp, it's not going to sound too good.

I'm in C and you're in F sharp. We put it together.

That's called discord, and perhaps this might represent that we must have agreement on the fundamental doctrines. Very closely allied to this is staying in tune with the key. The pitch must be precise. I think this illustrates our adherence to the Scriptures.

You know, some singers can start on key and they can end up flat. Now, fortunately, I could not find an example of somebody singing off key. So we're all spared that. But we get our pitch, we get our tones from the Scriptures. We might even say that we get our pitch from the great master organist.

Now, there's one more point on harmony from the musical aspect, and that is to sing in harmony. You have to sing softly. You have to be able to hear the organ tones. You have to be able to hear the other singers and we can learn from others. Remember, they're Temple singers.

They are being led by the Holy Spirit. It takes humility to sing in harmony because there's no soloist. Remember, they were called the Temple Singers, not the Temple soloists. It's a good thing, you know, In a chorus, if you hear voices louder than others, it's a bad chorus. It takes away from the praise and the honor of the entire sound.

And I think it's fortunate that we don't have to be soloists because soloists have special trials. They're subjected to special temptations that we could hardly bear. They get an expanded view of their own importance. Let me tell you a story of how soloists lose control over themselves. This is an incident that happened a couple years ago with a marvelous young tenor with the New York City Opera.

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We had heard this man perform many times, and it was always stirring. Well, he was good. But the music critic from the New York Times. I think the critic's name was something like Schoenberg, Arthur Schoenberg. If I remember right, he printed in the paper something like this.

He said that this man was a good tenor, but he really could not sing the high B flat very well. This enraged the tenor, and a couple weeks later, in the middle of an opera, the music came to a high B flat, and he sang it as loud and as long as he could. Then he whirled around and he yelled at the audience.

And he said, that was for Mr. Schoenberg.

He couldn't handle the criticism. It destroyed the entire production of the evening.

He was released that night. We've never heard of him again.

We sing one song. It's one chorus. Even though it's the blending of many voices. Just like it's one cup. Though it's from the crushing of many grapes and one loaf.

Even though it's from the blending of many grains. You remember that from the April 12th manna, and as chorus members, we can't just open our mouths wide and sing anything we want. We've got to be in harmony with the master. Our Lord is the only soloist.

What are we personally contributing, then to this present chorus of Prospective Saints? Are we in harmony or do we sing discord? If the singer next to us is on a little different note, does that bother us? You know, in music, there are passing chords, passing notes to get you from one chord to another. They're not emphasized.

But when we hear a passing note, do we immediately stop singing and start criticizing this passing note? Or if we happen to have passing notes, do we dwell on them? These are not good for the chorus, they're not good for the total sound. Are we on key with the Scriptures? Are we singing softly?

Are we practicing? Or are we skipping rehearsals?

Is there the wrong kind of music? I suppose we could say yes. First Corinthians 13 says that without love we can sound as tinkling cymbal or a sounding brass, and there's an interesting scripture in 1 Corinthians 14, actually 6:15 in the 14th chapter that says there must be a distinction sounds. Verse 8 says that the sound cannot be uncertain, uncertain.

And verse nine says it must be easy to be understood by the listener, and I like verse 15. It says we sing with understanding. It's not enough for us to just say Praise the Lord or to wear one of these big buttons that says Praise the Lord or to have bumper stickers. Lets say Praise the Lord.

To me that's praising the Lord without distinction. But we praise with as much meaning and understanding as we can in our doctrine, through our lips and through our lives. Psalm 35:28 My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long. Psalm 145:11 they shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power. If we think 8 part harmony and 12 part harmony sounds glorious.

Think of the Hallelujah chorus of 144,000 parts.

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I hope that these few suggestions can help us all praise the Lord a little bit more. We live as singers in the temple. Joyful praising, not criticizing each other but encouraging one another with spiritual songs, with psalms, with melody in our hearts we live and praise God in harmony together.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. Praise ye the Lord.

The Temple singers thank you Brother Krupa.

Before we sing in closing for this service, the Doxology, we'd remind you that we'll meet again in this auditorium at 3:00 to listen to our brother Ken nail from the dawn. So now may we stand and sing the Doxology Sa Our most kind and gracious heavenly Father. We thank you for your bountiful blessings on our behalf, most especially for the gift of your Son, for the hope of our calling. We thank you for the encouragement of your word and we pray that your Holy Spirit would fill us and that we might more and more each day live lives praising to you. Bless the further services of this convention.

Be with our brethren the world over, especially those not as fortunate as we are and we pray that your kingdom would soon be established. We thank you and ask for all these things in the Master's name. Amen.