

What's the sound track of your life? What's are the tunes that keep going through your head or that you find yourself humming in the car or singing in the shower? I used to enjoy Camelot:

Camelot! Camelot!
In far-off France I heard your call.
Camelot! Camelot!
And here am I to give my all.
I know in my soul what you expect of me,
And all that and more I shall be.

Like Lancelot, that was before the faults obvious to others were obvious to me.

What's the sound track of your life? Have you ever thought about the power of music and how it reflects our moods, our values, our life circumstances? It has been said that Luther's hymns saved more souls than his sermons. I don't doubt it. The power of music is even more obvious today, as teens and young adults have ipods and download song selections on computers and are constantly surrounded by songs. For some of them, a sound track for life might be:

The Good Life by Three Days of Grace

All I want is a little of the good life
All I need is to have a good time – the good life
(repeat)

In some ways music has always been one way to express key themes of a society. In the civil rights era and Vietnam war era, songs of Bob Dylan; Peter, Paul and Mary; and many others would crackle the airwaves and roll through the minds of protestors and activists:

How many years can a mountain exist, before it is washed to the sea?
Yes and how many years can some people exist, before they're allowed to be free
Yes and how many times can a man turn his head, Pretending he just doesn't see?
The answer my friends is blowin' in the wind, the answer is blowin' in the wind.

There is something about music that helps us remember words and the words bring images of special times or important events, or help describe an issue we are facing in our lives. What's the sound track of your life?

You might be surprised to discover that music has a significant role in the Bible. The first lesson that I chose is one of the earliest versions of a song – Miriam's song of praise to God after the Israelites were rescued by God – I wish I had the music to that song. The Psalms, of course are among the best known songs of the Bible. We've added our own tunes to some of them – The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, He makes me down to lie . . . (brother James' Air)

Why is it important to encourage our children to sing in the choirs? Why is it helpful to have children come to worship or participate in singing Christmas carols to shut-ins? Because this is where we learn God's songs to his people. This is where the sound tracks of people of faith are played over and over again so that God's Word can be rolling in our heads when our life circumstances are similar to those of the hymn writer.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see. . .

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
As thou hast been, thou forever will be . . .

And I will raise you up on Eagles' Wings, Bear you on the breath of God
Make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of my hand.

Oh, I could go on for a long time – you know I could . . .

These hymns tell stories – stories of God’s faithfulness; Stories of lives changed by God; Stories of people praising God and giving thanks for God’s presence in the midst of life’s most difficult times. But you have to sing them, you have to hear them over and over again, you have to have those words rolling in your head so that in those moments of life when you need a sense of God’s presence and power; when you are looking for something to hold onto or a Word of assurance, a familiar tune will float through your head, words will appear in the back of your mind – God’s Word – there for you, just as God will be there for you:

Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come;
‘Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

That’s what we do in church, we teach the sound tracks of the life of faith -- we add God’s sound track to our life situation. And there are always new songs being written, new tunes being sung – to rap and by rock groups and country and western – today’s musical styles for today’s young people. We have to learn them – we have to sing them – we have to remember that some of our favorite hymns today were once new and strange to us, and some of the old favorites now seem sort of slow and out of place. That’s the wonder of music – always changing, always evolving and yet, as an expression of our faith, it continues to proclaim the old, old message first sung by Miriam – Hymns, sung by Paul and Silas while in prison – telling the story of God’s mighty Acts – telling the story of God’s work in their lives:

Praise to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, horse and rider he has thrown into the sea --
Praise to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, bringing his people to a land where they’re free –
Praise to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, raising his Son who was nailed to a tree.

Praise to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, though I hardly believe it, he even loves me.

(Sing) Through all the tumult and the strife , I hear that music ringing, It finds an echo in my soul, How can I keep from singing?

God wants his sound track to give meaning to your life?

Amen.