

# Sing to the LORD

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, songs are often used to celebrate various situations because they engage our emotions, don't they? And it helps us to feel the weight or the joy or the lament of the various situation.

And our apologies to those online. We have a streaming license, but YouTube still plays havoc, so you're not going to be able to hear this. But for the rest of the room, see if you recognize where this song is from and try and feel the occasion of it.

Thanks. We all got it?

I didn't do that at nine o'clock. It's okay. I don't think they were going to get it. Star Wars. But songs like that, it actually gets you into the movie. It helps you to feel the occasion, doesn't it?

But songs also don't just help you feel the occasion. They also celebrate victories and praise those who won them, like this next one. That was just before chapter 1.

[ 1 : 18 ] I think I've made two people happy and the rest are out to get me. Well, today we come to chapter 15 where Israel sings a song that celebrates God's victory over the Egyptians and praises him for it.

It's actually their second response to the rescue. Last week we saw their first response was to fear God, to reverently fear God. But today the second one is to sing in praise to God.

So look at how it starts in verse 1. Do you see what word it starts with? God's just rescued them. Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord.

It's a response, you see. Although probably it started with Miriam. So skip down a moment to the bottom of your page, to verse 19. Verse 19 again summarizes what happened.

So it's kind of like a double take. And it says, Miriam is called a prophet probably because she wrote some or perhaps all of this song which prophesies, it speaks truth about God.

[ 3 : 00 ] And so what some people think happened was that Miriam, the oldest sister of Aaron and Moses, a sprightly 90 year old at this point in time, starts singing and dancing with other women following her.

In overwhelming praise for God. And then she calls on them, verse 21. She sang to them and probably not just the women who followed her, but Moses and the men as well to sing with her. So it's kind of like verse 21. Sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted. Then Moses and the Israelites saying, I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted. And perhaps as the song went on, Miriam repeated her refrain at different points.

That's what we think happened. It's hard to know, but it doesn't really matter. Having said all that, what matters is the song they sang, which is why our writer begins with it.

It's a victory song that firstly sings about who God is. So verse one, I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted, both horse and driver, he is hurled into the sea.

[ 4 : 13 ] The Lord is my strength and my defense. He's become my salvation. He is my God and I will praise him. My father's God and I will exalt him.

The phrase in verse one, he is highly exalted, can also mean he triumphed triumphantly. In other words, it's a victory song. Hence the next line about horse and driver being hurled into the sea. God is one. But it also praises God as their personal God who saved them. Do you notice all the pronouns, the my and I's? You know, my strength, my defense and so on.

You see, as we heard last week on the next slide, the people, when they saw what God had done, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses, his servant.

And so now God is not just their father's God, you know, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He's now become their own God. And not just as a nation, but as individuals.

[ 5 : 17 ] My strength, my salvation. That's who he is to them. They each have a personal relationship with God. And it's the same for us today, isn't it? For when we put our trust in God and Jesus, his son, God saves us and becomes our God.

But it's even more personal for us than it was for them because we get to call God our heavenly father. And I know you know that, but we're so used to it, we forget what an extraordinary privilege it is.

It's a privilege the Jews did not have. He is our personal God, our heavenly father. And as a father cares for his children, so God cares for us.

Working for our good, even when we can't sometimes see it. I had one of those experiences yesterday, actually, when one of my children couldn't understand what I was saying was supposed to be for their good.

I won't tell you what happened next. But this personal God who saved them means Israel praises him. Not just corporately as they sing this song together, but individually too.

[ 6 : 26 ] They sing, I will praise him. I will exalt him. Who is God? Their personal God who saved them. But he's also their warrior God who fought for them.

Verse three. The Lord is a warrior. The Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea.

The deep waters have covered them. They sank to the depths like a stone. And notice the word Lord in capitals there. It's Yahweh. It's God's personal name that he gave Israel.

The name that reminds Israel he is their God. But their God is called also a warrior. Verse three.

You see, Pharaoh's chariots were like the military tanks of the Middle East.

His best officers were like the special forces troop. The military might of Egypt was overwhelming.

And yet when they came against God, there were no match against this warrior.

[ 7 : 35 ] It kind of reminds me of this image on the next slide. So I had to kind of cover them up a bit to make them a bit more modest. But who do you think is going to win here?

I mean, it's not the kid, is it? The kid is no match. So to Egypt was no match for God. God is the warrior ward.

The song begins by singing about who God is. He is their personal God who saved them. And he is the warrior God who fought for them. And it's this second aspect that the song seems to focus on as they move from singing about God to singing to God.

That is how the pronouns change and they start to address God. So point to verse six. Your right hand, Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, Lord, shattered the enemy.

In the greatness of your majesty, you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger. It consumed them like stubble. By the blast of your nostrils, the waters piled up.

[ 8 : 39 ] The surging waters stood up like a wall. The deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. And notice, by the way, in verse six, that the Egyptians are called the enemy.

That is Israel's enemy. But verse seven, they also oppose you, God. In other words, the enemy of God's people is also the enemy of God himself.

And you remember what Jesus said to Paul on the road to Damascus. Paul's persecuting the church. Jesus says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

But again, such opposition was futile. For God shatters them like a piece of glass that is easily shattered. Or he consumes them like they're simply stubble so easily consumed by fire.

And with just the breath of his nostrils, the waters congeal like walls of jelly. And with another breath, the waters cover over them. So they sink like lead. Verse 10.

[ 9 : 42 ] But you blew with your breath and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. With such a decisive victory. No wonder they go on to say, verse 11. Who among the gods is like you, Lord?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? You see, such a decisive victory over the enemy shows that there is no one like God.

He is the warrior, Lord, the true God, the king, verse 18, who reigns forever and ever. And yet celebrating and singing about this warrior God who obliterates this enemy.

I cannot quite sit right with us, can't it? Or at least feel politically incorrect. Because, but if that's the case, then I think it's because we've forgotten how arrogant and evil this enemy was.

You see verse 9 that we skipped over? The enemy boasted, I will pursue. I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils. I will gorge myself on them.

[10:59] I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them. You see the arrogance? You see their evil plans?

Not just to pursue and overtake them, but to divide the spoils and gorge on their flesh. Is that not evil? Not to mention their previous abuse of Israel or the genocide of their infants.

Hitler and the Nazis arrogantly claimed to be the master race, I'm sure you remember. And they committed unspeakable acts of evil, including genocide against the Jews.

And so when the allied forces defeated this evil enemy, there was great celebrations. In fact, even singing and dancing in the streets.

And there was no sense that those celebrations were inappropriate or politically incorrect. For this arrogant and evil enemy had been defeated.

[12:05] And the soldiers could now go home. Well, so too here in this song of praise. You see, it is right to celebrate God's just victory over evil enemies.

That's why those already in heaven are singing that song of Moses and of Jesus. As they watch God's just actions, just judgment even, go out.

I mean, we know that to ourselves. I remember driving down Doncaster Road. It was just outside Tunstall Square, Coles. It was around that area.

And a guy came up at the inside and then kind of cut across. And you know the inside that goes off Warrandyte. Anyway, he cut off, nearly hit me. And I was tempted to blow the horn. In fact, I think I might have actually blown the horn.

But it was really annoying. I was quite miffed. Anyway, I was driving further down, just past the aged care centres. And a cop had pulled him over.

[13:08] And I drove past. Yeah. I mean, when we see justice, we know it's right, don't we? I mean, imagine a judge letting evil perpetrators go.

We'd be up in arms. Now, there is nothing inappropriate or politically, well, it might be politically incorrect, but it's not incorrect itself about this song. But what's more, this decisive victory over Egypt guarantees the journey home for Israel.

Point three, verse 13. Here, the song moves from the victory over the Egyptians to God leading them and how the surrounding nations will respond.

In your unfailing love, you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength, you will guide them to your holy dwelling. The nations will fear and tremble. Anguish will grip the people of Philistia.

The chiefs of Eden will be terrified. The leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling. The people of Canaan will melt away. Terror and dread will fall on them.

[14:13] By the power of your arm, they will be as still as a stone until your people pass by, Lord. Until the people you bought pass by. You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance.

The place, Lord, you have made for your dwelling. The sanctuary, Lord, your hands established. The Lord reigns forever and ever. Here they sing of how the surrounding nations like Philistia, the Philistines and the Edomites, the Moabites and so on, react to God's decisive victory.

And how do they react? They're scared stiff, aren't they? Do you notice all the words to do with fear? No trembling, gripped with anguish. Verse 15, terrified, seized.

Verse 16, terror and dread. Such that they will be as still as a stone. Scared stiff. And that means Israel's journey home to God's dwelling place in the promised land is certain.

It's guaranteed. So certain, in fact, that Israel sings with a mix of past and future tenses. As though it's already happened.

[15:24] So even though this victory has just happened, you know, they're still on the side of the sea. They actually sing. It's literally that nations have heard, even though it's just happened.

And will tremble. Anguish has gripped the people of Philistia. The chiefs of Edom are terrified. The people of Canaan have melted away.

You see, God's victory is so decisive that they sing with such certainty that the nations will be scared that they use past tense.

They're so certain that they're so certain that they're so certain that they're so certain that they're so certain that they're so certain that the nations will be scared stiff and allow them to pass through that their journey home is guaranteed. Again, it's like World War II.

On the 6th of June, 1944, was D-Day, as you know. Well, I'm sure you remember. When the Allied troops landed in Normandy, France, and defeated the Nazis.

[16:23] And this day is famous. This particular victory was famous because that victory was so decisive it guaranteed the outcome of the war. Yes, battles continued as pockets of German resistance continued for almost a year until VE Day, Victory in Europe Day, 8th of May 1945.

But you see, D-Day was so decisive it guaranteed VE Day. And here, God's defeat of Egypt was D-Day.

It was so decisive that would guarantee he would bring them to their promised land. Although, sadly, they refused to trust as the story goes.

But at this point, this guarantee means they sing praises to God. They're so certain of how the nations will react. Of course, like last week, this victory points us to an even greater one through Christ for us.

For our enemies are not evil Egyptians, but death and the devil. People say death is natural. I don't know if you've ever heard people say that it's a natural part of life, but I'm not sure it really is.

[17:40] It's not, you see, how God designed us to be. He designed us to live in relationship. And death, then, is evil.

For it begins taking life from us through disease and decay as our bodies break down. You know, when you're sick, you get life taken from you at that point, don't you?

And then it takes life from us completely at the end. And in doing so, destroys relationships, causes heartache. Death is an evil enemy.

And so, too, is the devil. Because his mission is to make us or to see us suffer eternal judgment. I mean, that's not nice.

And the way he does that is to tempt us with lies like, oh, this God stuff can't be real. Or look how much you're suffering. You can't trust God anymore. That we might walk away from him and miss out on life eternal.

[18:42] And he also accuses us of being sinners who deserve eternal judgment. So we might suffer for eternity. I mean, he's evil, isn't he?

But he is right about us being sinners. And yet, at the cross, Jesus paid for our sin and rose again to prove he defeated both death and the devil. You see, if Jesus paid for our sins, then, well, the devil has nothing left to accuse us of.

He no longer has any grounds to demand our eternal judgment. Jesus has dealt with it, paid it for us. As the Bible says on the screen there, God forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us.

And so, at that point, the devil had a leg to stand on. But now, he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And so, having disarmed the powers and authorities, the spiritual powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Here is the greater victory. The charge of sin we've committed has been nailed to the cross, where Jesus paid for it. And in doing so, Jesus triumphed over these spiritual authorities, including the devil.

[20:02] He disarmed them of their power to accuse us of sin and demand our judgment. It's like that story I may have told you before about the famous preacher, Billy Graham.

When he was a young minister, he was driving through a small southern town in the US and he was caught speeding. He didn't realize that at the time, but admitted the guilt.

And the police officer who pulled him over said he had to appear at the local court to pay his fine.

When he got to court, the judge, without raising his head, actually just said, guilty or not guilty?

And Billy said, guilty. The judge replied, that'll be \$10, a dollar for every mile you went over the speed limit. If only fines were that cheap today. Actually, just don't speed and you won't worry.

But suddenly, the judge looked up and recognized this preacher who was growing in fame. And he said, you have broken the law. The fine must be paid, but I'm going to pay it for you.

[21:02] And he took the charge, the speeding ticket, and attached it, nailed it, so to speak, to a \$10 bill from his own wallet. Had there been a county prosecutor, they would have had no more power to demand Billy pay the fine.

Because the judge had paid it for him, you see. And so the judge declared, Billy was justified in the eyes of the court and free to go. And the judge then actually took him out for a steak dinner.

Our charge of sin was attached or nailed to the cross. Where Jesus paid for it, not from his wallet, but by his blood. In doing so, the prosecutor, the devil, has no more power to accuse us or demand our judgment.

Instead, we're justified in God's eyes, which means we're free to go. Free to not just enjoy a steak dinner now, but enjoy life after death, later.

To rise again as Jesus did and enjoy life eternal in the new creation. With all our loved ones in Christ. You see, the cross of Christ is our D-Day.

[ 22 : 12 ] The decisive victory over our evil enemies of death and the devil. And like Israel, is that not worth praising God for? What's more, this decisive victory guarantees our journey home to our promised land, the new creation.

Oh sure, like VE Day, it'll take some time and we'll have to fight some battles of temptation and suffering. Along the way, the devil is defeated, but not yet destroyed.

Yet just as God's decisive victory over Egypt guaranteed the journey for Israel, so too the decisive victory at the cross guarantees our journey home.

Jesus himself said, I give them eternal life on the next side and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. How's that for a guarantee? I bought a new frying pan last week.

It boasts long lasting, durable, non-stick surface. With a tagline like that, guarantee, five years, ten years, twelve months.

[ 23 : 24 ] How's that for a guarantee, says Jesus? No one can snatch you out of my hand. Once he gives eternal life by the cross, that's it. He'll bring us home to enjoy it.

Or as Paul writes on the next slide, those he that is God justified, he also glorified, past tense.

Those he made right in his sight by the cross, well, it's so certain that he'll bring us home that Paul writes it in the past tense.

Just like the Israelites. I mean, Doncaster's nice, but it's not that nice. It's not glory, is it? But so certain that God, is it that God will bring us home because of the cross, that that's how Paul writes it.

That's why that famous passage, as it goes on to say, no, through all these things we are more than conquerors, through him, that is through Christ who loves us. How did he love us? By dying for us.

That decisive victory. That guarantees our journey home. Is that not worth praising God for? And so can I ask you this morning, firstly, is God your personal God?

[ 24 : 38 ] Like the Israelites, have you put your trust in him and Jesus, his son? And for us who have, will you continue?

Last week was to fear him reverently. This week it's to praise him for his victory. His victory over our enemies of death and the devil. Will you praise him that this victory guarantees our journey home?

How can you praise him? Well, firstly, by speaking about him. In conversation with your family or friends. That's what the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 3.

A sacrifice of praise. What is it? Well, the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. When opportunities arise with friends or work colleagues to say a little something.

Or perhaps with your own family to make the opportunity to say something. You know, if one of the kids or relatives is struggling with something, rather than simply try and resolve the issue without any reference to God, why don't you pause and say, oh, well, let's pray about this.

[ 25 : 46 ] Or let's remember that God is in control. He sees the bigger picture. He's a good God. Praise him in conversation by speaking about him.

But also praise him in prayer by praising straight to him. Not just praying for things we want and need, although God wants us to do that.

But also thank him and reflect on his goodness, his character, his power, his victory through Christ. And finally, praise him in song like Israel.

Like fans praise their footy team by singing the team song, even the Essendon one. In fact, the Bible commands us to sing, to speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.

I'm not much of a singer, I must confess. My kids complain. I always turn the radio off in the car.

They say, why can't you sing along to it like all the other cool dads? But I'll sing in church because in God's kindness, songs don't just praise God.

[ 26 : 59 ] They also encourage us, don't they? For they engage our emotions and they help us not only to remember the truth about God, but to feel that truth, which encourages us.

To feel who he is and what he's done. Have you ever experienced that feeling? You know, the congregation is belting out a song with music that everyone can follow and great truths about God and what he's done.

And it just kind of lifts you, encourages you. Singing in church is a way of not only praising God, but also encouraging one another and ourselves.

In fact, it's one of those things that stays with us as we get older and encourages us to persevere. I've seen it in nursing homes where people sadly are losing their memory, but you play a hymn and their eyes light up.

I remember hearing a guy who was talking to us. He was in a really dark place and he was thinking of taking his life. But a song popped into his head that he learned in Sunday school.

[ 28 : 10 ] You know the song? Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Brought him back. So even if you're not a singer like me, can I encourage you to still sing at church?

Others will drown you out anyway. It's okay. And can I sincerely thank all those involved in our music? It's a really important ministry. And if you listen to music lots, can I also encourage you to put some good Christian music in your playlist as well.

Even if you don't sing out loud in the car or wherever, but just as the verse says, you know, make melody to the Lord in your heart. It's still a way of praising God, but also remembering what God has done and who he is.

Not just remembering actually, feeling it too. Well, it was almost a year ago when an autistic boy called Will Callahan was lost in the bush north of Melbourne.

I don't know if you remember this. His enemies were the freezing temperatures and his isolation. But a volunteer called Ben Gibbs saved him from them in a decisive victory or rescue, if you like.

[ 29 : 27 ] A news headline read, Will Callahan's mum full of praise for just awesome rescuer. How much more so ought we be full of praise for our awesome warrior God, whose victory at the cross has defeated our great enemies.

Let's pray. Our gracious heavenly father, we do praise you for who you are. We thank you that you are our own personal God, our heavenly father who's interested and cares for us.

We thank you also that you are our warrior God. And through Christ have made the decisive victory over death and the devil. That we can be brought into your kingdom and have the certain hope of life eternal.

And so, Father, help us, we pray, to be full of praise for you. Whether in conversation or prayer or song. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.