

Song of Victory

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Preacher: Nick Lauer

[0 : 00] Well, good morning, church. We are celebrating baptism this morning, as you've noticed from the giant tank up here, right?

And we are looking at a passage from Exodus this morning that is about celebration, so it's very fitting. Would you turn with me to Exodus chapter 15, verses 1 through 21?

Exodus 15. That's page 57 in the Pew Bible, if you want to turn there. It'll be helpful to have it open before you as we look at what this passage speaks to us today.

Exodus chapter 15, page 57, if you're looking in the Pew Bible. Let me read this for us.

Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

[1 : 08] The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him.

My father's God, and I will exalt in him. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea.

The floods covered them. They went down into the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.

In the greatness of your majesty, you overthrow your adversaries. You send out your fury. It consumes them like stubble. At the blast of your nostrils, the waters piled up.

The floods stood up in a heap. The deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue. I will overtake. I will divide the spoil. My desire shall have its fill of them.

[2 : 17] I will draw my sword. My hand shall destroy them. You blew with your wind. The sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

You stretched out your right hand. The earth swallowed them. You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed. You have guided them by your strength, your holy abode.

The peoples have heard. They tremble. Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed. The trembling seizes the leaders of Moab. All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.

Terror and dread fall upon them because of the greatness of your arm. They are still as a stone till your people, O Lord, pass by. Till the people pass by whom you have purchased.

[3 : 20] You will bring them in and plant them on your mountain. The place, O Lord, which you have made for your abode. The sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.

The Lord will reign forever and ever. For when the horses of Pharaoh and his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them.

But the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand. And all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing.

And Miriam sang to them, sing to the Lord. For he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. Let's pray as we consider this word together.

Oh, Lord God, we thank you that we can gather together Sunday after Sunday. We can come together as your people. We can sing praises to your name.

[4 : 25] And Lord, best of all, we can hear your voice speaking to us from your word. God, thank you that you're a speaking God. Thank you that you're worthy to be praised. Thank you that you call us out of ourselves to know you and to see you in all of your beauty and glory.

Lord, would you do that this morning as we consider this passage? Would you help us to see you afresh in the power of your Holy Spirit? Help us to see you, Jesus. We pray in your name.

Amen. Well, I wonder what, if anything, makes you want to sing? You might be thinking, nothing makes me want to sing.

At least not in front of other people. Maybe if I'm in the shower and no one's around. Sometimes I think we sing just because we're happy, right?

Imagine the crowded stadium singing the home team's fight song when they've just scored the game-winning goal, right? Some of you maybe experienced something like that.

[5 : 25] Sometimes we sing for the very opposite reason, because we're sad. Just think of all the great breakup songs that have been written, right?

And just think of all the times those songs have been sung behind the wheel of a lonely drive home, right? Or in front of a laptop camera for display on YouTube or whatever have you.

You know, sometimes we sing just because it's the thing to do, right? Out comes the cake, candles are lit, and suddenly all the guests break out into happy birthday to you without any instructions whatsoever.

It just happens because it's the thing to do. How about when we come to church? Too often I think we sing because it's just the thing to do.

If you're new to Christianity, if you're exploring spiritual things, maybe it still feels a bit strange to you to stand in a room with a hundred or so people you've never met who then just start singing together.

[6 : 32] And if you're used to church, take a step back. That is a bit strange if you think about it. But it's more than just the thing we do.

There's actually a deep reason why we sing. In fact, when you look across the whole Bible, and church history for that matter, you see all sorts of songs.

Songs of lament at times. Songs when people are brokenhearted. Songs of praise. Songs that tell a story and frame how we understand ourselves.

We see people singing in their homes. And we see people singing in the temple. We see people singing even in prison cells in the Bible.

The people of God seem to be always singing. And here in Exodus 15, we see a great example of why. Why? Why do we sing?

[7 : 34] Why can we sing? At this point in the story of Exodus, you'll remember, the people of Israel have just passed through the Red Sea to the other side.

And there they stand on the shore of the Red Sea. Free. Liberated at last. God has rescued them from slavery.

And they sing. And we know from Miriam's response in verse 20 and 21, kind of at the end of the section we just read, we know from Miriam's response that this song that Moses teaches the people that they sing together was meant to be sung again and again.

Notice in verse 1, look at just this little detail. Notice that verse 1 says, I will sing. But now take a look at verse 21. It becomes an invitation.

It becomes a command even. Sing. Miriam's words here, calling out to the women and through the women, to all the people, telling them to make the theme of this song their own.

[8 : 50] Sing. Sing. Telling us to make it our own. So what is the theme of this song of the sea, as it's sometimes called in Exodus 15?

Well, what we see here in the song of the sea is that there's one big main point with two practical implications. One big point, two implications, two results.

First, let's take a look at what this main point of the song of the sea is. And when you take a look through the first, say, 10, 11, 12 verses of this song, you see that God is praised here.

This is a hymn of praise to God. And God is praised here, not just for sort of generally rescuing the people for bringing them out of Egypt. He's praised for something even more specific than that.

Isn't he? This is a song of praise, because God destroyed the Egyptian army in the sea. Sing to the Lord for, because he's triumphed gloriously.

[10 : 02] The horse and the rider, he has thrown into the sea. In other words, we sing because our enemy has been conquered. First 12 verses of the song, God's pictured as a mighty warrior.

Verse 3, the Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Now, at first, that might make us a little uncomfortable, right?

Are we meant to be praising some kind of angry, vindictive deity here? Some God who just sort of flies off in a rage and plays favorites?

What sort of God is this? But look again, that's not the picture here at all. Rather, we're singing praise to a God who in great might has stood up for the oppressed and the poor and has become their champion.

After all, Pharaoh and his chariots and their riders, the Egyptians, they aren't coming to say they're sorry. Right? They're not coming out to say, oh, 400 years of slavery, you know, let us give you a parting gift.

[11 : 22] They're not coming out to say they're sorry. They're coming out to what? To devour. Look at verse 9. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil.

My desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword and my hand shall destroy them.

Pharaoh's hand, the hand that had held the people of Israel in slavery for generations is now set on destroying them.

But there's a stronger hand. Verse 6. Your hand, your right hand, oh Lord, glorious, in power, your right hand, oh Lord, shatters the enemy.

Imagine how it must have felt in 1945 in London when VE Day, Victory in Europe Day, finally came when Nazi Germany finally fell.

Imagine what it must have been like living in fear year after year after year, wondering wondering when the next bombing raid would strike. Wondering year after year when the next friend or family member would be lost in combat in some ditch far away on the continent.

[12 : 51] And now imagine what it must be like to hear the news that there's peace, that the enemy has been conquered and the war is over.

historical accounts of 45 in London tell us that more than a million people packed the streets from Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace.

Is it any wonder that they rushed into the streets and I'm sure they were singing something, God save the queen, whatever they could think of king at that point.

No wonder they packed the streets and rejoiced. No wonder the Israelites sang on the shores of the Red Sea. Imagine the relief, imagine the joy they must have felt to look back and say, there's no more enemy.

He's gone. And yet friends, here's what we know. we know that there's an even greater victory that's been won.

[13 : 58] An even greater enemy that's been conquered. You see, in and behind human oppression and injustice, deep down in our own hearts, there's a power at work, isn't there?

And this power makes it such that even when we know the right thing to do, we find that we end up not doing it.

And the things that we know we ought not to do, well, those are the very things we end up doing. Have you ever found that to be true?

Good. I'm not the only one in the room. Who knows what that's like? And here's the thing, despite telling ourselves again and again, this time it's going to be different.

This time it's going to be different. Still, that same inability, that same power at work in us, deep down in our hearts is there. And the trouble with this enemy is that we can't seem to externalize it and we can't seem to separate it from ourselves.

[15 : 12] Right? Pharaoh's chariots and horsemen are one thing, scary, yes, but able to be conquered and God did it. But what about this thing in me?

This power that seems to hold on to bitterness when I know I should forgive. This power that just wants to look the other way when my neighbors are in need, when I know I should probably give them a call or show up or offer to just listen and help.

this power in me that always seems to want to bend the truth when I know I should be truthful. If the waters of the Red Sea were to come crashing down on all that, what would be left of me in the process?

Wouldn't I be swept away with it? So we ask, how could God win this victory? How could God conquer this enemy? Listen to what the Apostle Paul says in Romans 7 reflecting on all these rich themes of deliverance and exodus.

Paul says this, he says, I delight in the law of God in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that

dwells in my members.

[16:46] Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Exactly. Who can rescue us from this? But then he says, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

You see, when sin had pursued us and sought to devour us and when we were held captive by its power, a power that all of us in this room were just nodding our heads about, right?

When that was the case, Christ stepped in as our champion and as our victor. He bore the worst that sin had to offer on the cross.

Standing in our place, identifying with us, taking on our flesh, becoming like us in every way and on the cross taking on that power of sin and taking on the judgment that it rightly deserved.

Letting sin and death pour its cascade over him. And then Christ came through the waters of judgment, victorious, risen to new life, such that now sin has no claim on him and united to him by faith, sin no longer has any claim on those who trust in him.

[18:15] You see, because Christ, our victor, Christ, our warrior, Christ, our champion, has stepped in and taken hold of us and gone through the waters and come out, our sins have been forgiven.

The old is gone. The new has come. The horse and the rider he has thrown into the sea. Sin and death have been defeated and we stand on the shore of the new creation.

And that's why we ought to be a singing people. Because the battle has been won through Jesus, our king. That's why Paul tells the church in Colossi that we read earlier to sing.

He says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom and singing. Singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

With thankfulness for the word of Christ, for the gospel, for the good news that in his grace, God's forgiven our sins and triumphed over death. But here's the thing, it's not just now that we'll sing this song.

[19:26] It's actually a song we'll sing for eternity. It's very interesting, Revelation chapter 15, at the very end of the Bible, says, and they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God Almighty.

you see, this theme that in Jesus God has conquered our greatest enemies and set us free, this song of deliverance, this song of salvation, this song of praise on the shores of the Red Sea, that is a song that the church is going to sing forever with thanksgiving in our hearts to the Lord.

Now, this does not mean that the people of God, that the church never sing songs of lament. It never means that we never sing songs of crying out for help.

We sing all of those songs, don't we? And yet, running like a current underneath is this new song, this song of the sea that the horse and the rider God has thrown into the sea for us.

You know, this is the good news of the gospel, friends. You know, I think most of us, most of our friends, most of our neighbors, you know, underneath the sort of busyness of life, there's, I mean, if we're honest, isn't there just a quiet rumble of despair?

[21:05] Just a quiet, gnawing sense that the bottom's gonna drop out at some point. You're only gonna live so long. That the sort of tones that are played underneath every moment of life, even the joyful moments, end up being a tone of sadness.

And yet, here the gospel comes in and says, oh no, that's not the song that underlies everything else. let me take that song of despair from you and give you a song, give you a hymn of praise, give you a song of victory and triumph that will run like a current under all of your sadness, under all of your hardship and your moments of joy and your moments of struggle.

Come take this song, because he's done it. Christ is risen, the horse and the rider he's thrown into the sea. Now as Moses continues this song on the shore of the Red Sea, he begins to sing that of two kind of results or implications.

He sort of, he looks back and says, look at what God has done, they've sunk like a stone. God blew his nose and destroyed our enemies. That's one of the only sermons I remember from growing up, by the way, in the church that I grew up in.

The pastor gave a sermon called, what happens when God blows his nose? And it was on this text. Did you catch that? Now I'm sure there's someone who will be the only sermon they ever remember here at Trinity.

[22 : 43] This is God, this is our God, he's so great, he's so amazing, he's like you, oh God. So Moses sort of looks back and then he looks ahead and he sings of two kind of results, two implications of the fact that God has triumphed over his enemies.

And the first is this, that the surrounding nations will fear God. Look again at verses 14 through 16, in the song of the sea here. Those names, if you're not familiar with those, those are nations in and around the promised land where God is eventually going to take his people.

And Moses says that they're going to hear what God has done and they're going to tremble. God is to hear what God is God is a God who saves and God saves in such a mighty way that the nations will see his greatness and worship him.

Of course, in the Old Testament, we see only a shadow of what this means. But when the New Testament, when the New Covenant comes, that has unfolded in all of its fullness.

I've been reading the book of Acts recently in just some of my personal prayer time. And don't you see there that people from all nations don't just hear about Israel's God, but they come to trust and believe in Jesus, Israel's Messiah.

[24 : 06] They come to trust and believe in him as the world's true Savior and Lord. The nations now aren't just trembling because they heard of this mighty deed, but now they're trembling in worship and love as they take this God as their own.

Moses was helping the people of Israel to see here, something I think is very important for us. He was helping the people to see and to sing right here on the shore of the Red Sea that if God had defeated the Egyptians behind them, then the nations in front of them wouldn't ultimately be able to undo them either.

If God had defeated the enemies behind you, the enemies in front of you won't be able to conquer you either. And it's true for us today.

If Jesus has defeated sin and death, if God has made us his children and called us his own, what is there really to fear in what lies ahead?

God has to fear in God. Of course, this isn't saying that we ought to be triumphalist. After all, between the Red Sea and the Promised Land, what is there?

[25 : 25] There's a wilderness. And in that wilderness, there's going to be hunger and thirst and there are nations waiting to attack. There are hardships ahead. But here in this song, if the greatest enemy has already been sunk in the sea, then we need not be afraid.

So the first result is that the nations will fear God. And the second result is that God will bring his people safely to his dwelling place. We see this in verse 13 and verse 17.

Let me read those two verses again for us. You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed. You have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.

You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain. This place, O Lord, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.

We saw this at the very start of our series in Exodus, didn't we? That God saves in order to dwell in our midst. God rescues us so that he can be with us.

[26 : 40] That the God of the Bible is a God who comes into intimate relationship with his people. He's a God who comes near, so near that he even dwells in our midst.

And that dwelling has a future. The future for the people of Israel was a home in the land of Canaan. And eventually the temple that Solomon would build would be the place where God's glory dwelt in their midst.

But you see, the land and the temple, that was just a signpost of an even greater dwelling place that God has in store for his people. That was just a picture of what was to come. The Apostle Peter writes in his second letter that according to God's promise, we're waiting for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The promised land of the Old Testament was just a picture of a pointer to what God promises to do for the whole creation. To cover it with his glory as the waters cover the sea.

To dwell with his people and make all things new. That it wouldn't just be a little patch of earth in Palestine, but it would be the whole earth made new. You see, the song of the church, friends, is a song of victory in what Jesus has done, and it's a song of confidence in what he's doing now in the midst of the wilderness, but it's also a song of hope in what he will do.

[28 : 17] That if Jesus has conquered sin and death, then ultimately he will bring us safely home, that he will return in glory, and all the earth will be liberated from evil and injustice, sickness, and

death.

And as verse 18 says, the Lord will reign forever and ever. So what, if anything, makes you want to sing?

The song of Moses, as Miriam tells us, as an invitation. I wonder, friends, can you sing verse two? Look at that verse. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

This is my God, and I will praise him. That's very personal, isn't it? my strength. My strength, my strength, my song, my salvation, my God.

That's what it means to become a Christian, to look to Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, seated at God's right hand, the very Son of God, and to say to him, you are my strength and my song.

[29 : 44] You, Lord, are my salvation. You are my God. To entrust yourself completely to him. That's what he calls us to do, even now.

And once you've taken that step, once you've made that decision, once you can sing that as your song, Jesus tells us that the next step is to make a public profession in baptism.

baptism. Baptism is something that Jesus commands, and it essentially says, I'm identifying with Christ. He is my salvation. He is my strength.

He is my song. He is my God. And there's nothing I'm holding back from him. I'm going to get totally wet. Baptism says that he, Jesus, has gone through the waters of judgment for me.

He's died and risen again, and through faith in him, I've come to new life as well. Friends, I wonder if you're here this morning and you can sing verse two to God, to Christ.

[30 : 50] Have you been baptized? Are you ready to take on the joy of stepping into the waters of baptism and be reminded and be powerfully encouraged by what God has done and this gift that he gives you to be publicly proclaiming your union with him?

Well, this morning we're going to invite Geneva and we're going to invite Tricia to come on up, and they're going to do just that. They're going to tell us what God has done in their life, how they've come to know Christ, and then they're going to step into the waters and get baptized.

The elders have met with both Tricia and Geneva, and we've affirmed their profession of faith, and it's our privilege to bring them forward for baptism. So let me invite them to come on up. They're going to share their stories, and then we'll sing, and then we'll celebrate baptism together.

And as they come on up, let me pray for us. Oh, great God, we give you thanks that there is a hymn of praise that rumbles throughout history and has met us even here.

Thank you for our Lord Jesus Christ who has won the victory over sin and death. Thank you for bringing us onto the shores of the new creation in him. Lord, you are our strength, and you are our song, and we praise you.

[32 : 09] Lord, we pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. So Geneva, why don't you come on up, and why don't you share with us your story?

Good morning, church. Good morning. So several times throughout the Bible, God promises to show mercy to the descendants of those who love him.