

5/13/12 Sermon – Psalm 98:1–4 | Ascension Batavia

Grace and peace be to you
through the mighty but merciful hand
of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Psalm 98:1–4 (NKJV) A Psalm.

1 Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

2 The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.

3 He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

4 Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.

Our Song is New! ... Yet It Never Changes.

May the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight,
O God, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.
In Jesus name, dear fellow redeemed,

Maybe some of you can remember when Casey Kasem used to rate pop music's countdown of the top songs on the radio. How many of the top songs of the 70's or 80's or 90's can you still recall? How long did such songs stay "new" and "hip"? The thing about pop culture is it rarely lasts. Bands like the Spice Girls, the Backstreet Boys, and other 90's hits were so popular back then, but where are those songs today?

What makes things popular in our culture today will likely be tossed aside in a year to two at best. It needs to be new. It needs to be fresh. But it doesn't need to last. Today we sing a song that doesn't wear out. It is the newest, the freshest, and yet also the oldest, most enduring. It is not influenced by popular culture. In fact, this song is not all that popular at all to the world. But to us it is brand new everyday as we sing of His new victory and His old faithfulness.

1. We sing of His new victory

1 Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

What is so new about our song of God's victory? After all this psalm was written over 2500 years ago. Maybe new could be thought of as more of a relative term. Perhaps we can view newness not so much in reference to time, but in reference to freshness. Perhaps "new" is seen in contrast to something old and dead. Compared to a wilted and leafless flower that is not a few seasons aged, a sturdy 30 year old oak that just budded in your front yard appears new. We sing the newness of His victory.

Isaiah 42:10 (NKJV) — 10 Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise from the ends of the earth.

What is significant about this parallel passage is that all of Isaiah chapter 42 centers around the promise of the coming Messiah. Chapter 42 of Isaiah begins, **Isaiah 42:1 (NKJV) — 1 “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.** Here Isaiah points the reader to the promised Servant of Jehovah, Jesus, who will come to bring justice to all nations.

And so Isaiah qualifies this “new song.” **Isaiah 42:9–10 (NKJV) — 9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.” 10 Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise from the ends of the earth.**

Notice how the “new song” is a result of the new things that God causes to spring forth. The newness is set in contrast to the “former things.” Paul says as much in **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) — 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

And now we see what makes this song new. It is the newness of the created life that God has put in your heart. This is new for us every time we gather around God’s word. It is like the new life that we see in that 30 year old oak tree, that brings newness to the song of creation every spring. This is Christ’s resurrection becoming your own – life, growth, and fruit. ... “old things have passed away.”

Or have they? Have the old things passed away? Is this just a one time pop song that is good for a while but fades away. The Spirit rightly describes our sinful flesh as our old man. It serves the old ways. Day by day our old man rises up, tempts us with the former things. Day by day we find ourselves slipping into that old song, the song of death.

In our psalm, the victory rests totally in the right hand of our God – the strength and valor of our LORD’s arm. How often aren’t we inclined to think more in terms of my own own valor? We find ourselves lifting our own arm of victory. Too often we rely on our own might to achieve what we want in this world. And it all centers around my selfish wants. We put ourselves right in the line of fire, walking into situation in which we know we will be tempted – thinking, I can survive another attack. This is our Achilles heal and will lead to defeat. We sing of what we want rather than what our spouse, parents, or neighbor needs.

These are our old ways. But our victory does not lie in our strength or lack there of. God’s right hand and holy arm have gained Him the victory! The resurrection of His Son has brought forgiveness and new life. In Christ, your old sins have passed away

and God sees only His new creation. Sing a new song! In the midst of our personal defeats comes forth this song of God's victory – brand new all over again.

2 The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.

But who sees this victory? As we look at our lives, as we look at what surrounds us, as we look at a world filled with sorrows, who sees victory and salvation?

We read in our Epistle reading for today, **1 John 5:4–5 (NKJV) — 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

While still in this world, it is our faith that sees what God has uncovered. In the preaching of the gospel, this hidden victory is uncovered. This victory will be seen by all eyes, whether with the eyes of faith in this world, or on the last day when all eyes will see the full revelation of God's salvation.

1 ... **He has done marvelous things.** Our Song is New! ... Yet It Never Changes.

2. We sing of His old faithfulness.

Contrary to much of popular music today, a song that will prove its value will be rich in content. Whether it is a song by the Beatles or Bach, the longevity of a song is usually judged by how well the music conveys a story. It could be simple instrumental story or a choral arrangement with a poetic theme. It must endure criticism and deliver something meaningful for generations to come.

We sing of His old faithfulness.

3 He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;

If you didn't know Jesus Christ and His work of salvation, the idea of God remembering would be a very frightening thing. It is inherent in an eternal and perfect deity that He never forgets. To the sinner this at first seems frightening. You mean He remembers that thing I did when I was in high school ... or when I was in college ... or last week? You mean that on the Last Day when I stand before His judgement He will remember all the wrongs I have ever done?

Without Christ, this would be a fearful thing. But in Christ ... "He has remembered His mercy and faithfulness." These two words, "mercy" and "faithfulness" are often found side by side in Old Testament passages. These two words emphasize a relationship is going on. And in the context of God and the house of Israel this is a emphasizes a covenant relationship. By covenant we mean, God has bound Himself to a promised

agreement. God does not forget His promises of blessing and mercy. This is why the psalmist can sing of victory, even though, in his day, the Messiah had not yet come.

Psalm 25:7 (NKJV) — 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your [steadfast love] remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O Lord.

When God remembers His faithfulness, it means He remembers your sin no more. He remembers His enduring relationship with you for whom He has given up His Son. What is old, God makes brand new for us in the hearing of His word. The faithfulness of God is as old as time, it does not change, and yet to us sinners, it is new every morning.

The other day it was raining outside ... It was cloudy and gloomy. Yet just outside my office window I heard birds singing. Why were the birds singing when it was so gloomy outside? I certainly didn't feel like singing. The birds sing because they know the end of the rain is almost at hand and the worms will be pushed to the surface of the soil. Soon the clouds will pass and they will stand in the warmth of the sun, and hop on the freshly nourished grass.

This is the joy that lies in the heart of a Christian. We know that what ever gloomy rain is passing over us right now, the clouds will clear, and heaven will be opened. We can trust our faithful God that the warmth of His Son will visit us as we study His word and ultimately, as He carries us to the eternal songs of glory.

We have reason to **4 Shout joyfully to the Lord ... Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.**

This new song is not have to do with what is popular today and what is gone tomorrow. It is in fact not based on tunes at all. It is based on content. It is based on an enduring message of God's faithfulness. Sing your faith. Live your song.

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NKJV) — 22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

He remembers you. When the Bible speaks this way, it is not to say that God at one time had forgotten about His faithfulness. The Spirit speaks this way to emphasize God's memory in action. That which He remembers, is that which He also does. For the Old Testament believer in the 6th c. B.C. this passage meant everything. Those believers that were carried captive into exile by the Babylonians were clinging to God's faithfulness. If God didn't return them to the land of Canaan, then how would the Savior be born of David's seed, in Bethlehem? God's faithful memory meant even though Jerusalem was laid siege and conquered, His victory was not in doubt.

In the midst of one of the most trying times for Old Testament Israel, God tells them to sing a new song. Despite all outward appearances, the victory remains His.

Despite all outward appearances, we too have reason to sing a new song. We are His New Testament Israel. We have reason to shout joyfully.

Shout joyfully! In serving your spouse with faithful devotion, caring for his or her needs, showing unconditional love for them in word and action; perhaps it is silently obeying your parents, whether you agree or disagree with them; perhaps it is trusting God, when His good purpose remains hidden and you don't understand it; – in all this, we shout joyfully

Shout joyfully! Unlike the pop charts, we sing a song that endures the test of time and eternity. It is old, yet it never grows old. It is new, yet it never changes. Sing a new song, the LORD has gained the victory! Amen.