

Sing a new song

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[0 : 00] Almighty God, we thank you for your word, the Bible. And we thank you that you speak to us through it. And we pray for our hearts now. We pray that you'd engage our hearts with your word.

We pray if there's things that are distracting our minds, that are keeping us off you, that you might not put them completely out of the door, but help us to bring those things in reflection upon what you want to say to us, that we might bring those things to you in worship and that you might, through your word, speak into the concerns of our life.

And so that we might be built up and helped to live for you in the circumstances that we find ourselves in, so that we might live for your praise and glory.

We ask for this in Jesus' name. Amen. We give praise all the time, don't we? To things that we enjoy or things that we value.

Giving praise is not an exclusively Christian thing, but we give praise to lots of things. And our praise, when we give praise out, the majority of the time it is linked to something that we have experienced.

[1 : 21] It's normally something you're excited about, right? For those of us who have got children, you praise your kids when they do something for the first time.

If they've achieved a goal at school. Matthew chapter 15. That's the wrong chapter, mum. We're in Isaiah. We're in Isaiah, mum.

We might, if you think about it with your kids, we might praise our kids when they do something for the first time. If they've achieved a goal, done something at school, been helpful around the house.

Well done. That was brilliant. You've worked really hard. Look at the rewards. It's all paid off, hasn't it? We might also praise our kids to other people.

You know, you've got a funny video or something that they've done. You show pictures. Because we love our kids and we want to, we delight to talk about them.

[2 : 26] That's kids, but it doesn't just happen with children. We praise other things in our life. We praise things that we enjoy in our life. You think you buy a new car, you're happy with it. What do you want to do?

You want to show somebody that you've got a new car and you're made up. And say how beneficial it is. You know, you read a new book. You go see a new film.

First thing, oh, I saw this film on the weekend. It was brilliant or whatever. Wax lyrical about how great the latest Mission Impossible is. I haven't seen it. We're hardwired to praise.

That's why. We are hardwired to praise. We'll praise anything. Everybody is a worshipper. It just depends on what you worship.

The passage that we have this morning is about praise. It's about praise. But specifically what we see is about song praise. You know, singing praise.

[3 : 25] And why the whole, why all nations, why all people should sing praise to the living God. I'm going to have three points we're going to look at. Praise with a new song. Praise for God's patience.

And praise for God's servant. Praise with a new song. Praise for God's patience. And praise for God's servant. Now you might remember, I know it's quite a long time ago, two weeks ago, since we were in Isaiah.

And we were in the previous nine verses. I've told you this was called one of the servant songs, the first one that we get. I just want to remind us of a few things of what it said about the servant in verses one to nine of the same chapter.

Whilst I mentioned that the first nine verses are an aspiration for Israel, how they might serve the living God, be the perfect image of him.

Predominantly what that chapter is about is pointing forward to Jesus. Jesus is the true servant, the true image of God who would come and succeed where Israel had failed.

[4 : 30] There are a few things that he told us about him. He told us about his task. Verse four, do you see, we see his task. He will not falter or be discouraged until, until he establishes justice on earth.

Jesus' task, the servant's task, was to establish justice. Justice in the Bible more than just a justice system, but it is about Jesus bringing a perfect, just, harmonious, beautiful society.

We call that the kingdom of God. Establishing a just world is what it means when it says establish justice on the earth. That was his task. And the second thing that I want us to, so remember the task to bring justice.

The second thing I want us to remind us about is what he said in verse nine. See verse nine? See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare. Before they spring into being, I announce them to you.

The new thing is Jesus. Jesus will be the new thing. The servant bringing this new kingdom of God about in its fullness is the new thing that God will do.

[5 : 45] Jesus is the new thing. He is the word that is being declared. He's called the word of God. And so our passage this morning that we get in 10 to 17 connects because it is a response to this sort of proclamation, this declaration of this servant who will come.

Whilst being an aspiration to Israel on one side, they would never do it, but it's fulfilled in the coming of Jesus, the true servant. Our passage connects with that.

And what do we see in the response? And what do we see in the response? We see a command from God that they are to sing a new song. First point, we should praise with a new song.

Verse 10, we see that. That's what we see in the first line. Sing to the Lord a new song. What God will do through his servant Jesus means a new song will be sung.

Just like what is the thing that Jesus did when Jesus comes, it will be a new thing. In response to a new thing being done, a new song should be sung.

[6 : 54] Now we've spoken about praise and mentioned the importance of it in just normal life, how everybody praises. But the one thing is, why singing? Because you can praise things, as we do normally.

As we've mentioned, people normally praise things by speaking. I don't normally, when I'm praising my kids, sing well done to them. And I don't normally, if I'm praising my kids to someone else, sort of sing to my friends about how great they are.

It's kind of not normal that we go around singing about our car, how much we love it. So why song? Why does it, why does it specifically sing?

This week I looked up the top themed, the top slot of themes that come up on the songs that are streamed on Spotify. Ever, not just for like last week, but the top, the top, the top songs.

Five things. Missing someone. That's what those kind of came up lots. Being in love. Having fame and money.

[8 : 04] Sex. And then sort of struggling with life. Those were the top five things that kept coming up if you looked at the lyrics of songs streamed on Spotify.

Now, all those five things, you can talk about them, can't you? People do talk about those five things. But singing about them is different. Because what you hear, when you listen to a song, it's not just the raw facts about a topic, but what you hear is you hear the emotion that connects the truth with what's going on in the heart.

There is personality in the lyrics. And when the lyrics are added to a melody that played in a certain key, the notes stir something within us that causes us to feel, and not just understand, but feel what the musician wants to say.

There is something about music that goes beyond what we can cognitively explain. Because, you know, you think about music. There are melodies, chords, major and minor keys that you can play anywhere in the world.

And instantly, doesn't matter where somebody's from, anyone can tell whether that tune is joyful or sad. They could never have heard it before. But you play a certain tune and go, that's a sad tune.

[9 : 24] Because there are certain tunes that you can't play with sad lyrics. People would say, those lyrics, they don't fit to that tune.

Because that's a sad tune, and you're singing, or vice versa. You're singing, you know, really sad lyrics to a really happy tune. It depends. The keys make we get that sort of sound with that intuitively.

God has built, but it hardwired it into the way that music, we respond to it. You see, music and singing, they move our emotions.

We are complex. We are complex creations. And there are even times when, for each of us, we struggle to articulate how we're feeling.

Maybe we, you know, it's happened to me. Maybe, you know, things are going on in your life, and you get asked about it, or you're thinking about it, and you can't even talk about it openly, because you don't know how to describe it yourself.

[10 : 28] But you see, singing does something. Singing helps us to get those emotions out. It enables us, in a way, to release and feel the truth.

Because it connects the truth of who God is and what we know with how we feel. That is why singing is important in the Christian life.

It helps us to bring our emotions, how we feel in worship, to the living God. Whilst at the same time, exalting God to his rightful place. It does both. It does exactly what it does.

It doesn't mean that you can't praise with words. But what it does is, you're saying the same word, but when you sing, you connect with it in a special, intimate way with the living God. There is a uniqueness.

And there is a special place when we make music to the Lord, because it stirs our hearts, so that we can praise him in a way that moves us. The command here is to sing a new song.

[11 : 30] Because God in sending his servant Jesus is doing, and now has done, the new thing. At the time of writing, these things were declared before they had happened.

They were waiting for Jesus to come. He says, what did he say? New things I declare before they spring into being, I announce them to you. Before they've happened.

But now Jesus has come. And so we have a new song to sing. Singing helps us regain our sense of wonder at what God has done and at what Jesus has completed.

As we praise Jesus, not just with our heads, but with our hearts. We're all different people. We have different personalities.

Some of us are naturally kind of more expressive and outwardly passionate. And, well, still there's just bi-temperament. We're more reserved. I just want to encourage us this morning to deal with when we come and we meet in worship.

[12 : 39] When we're singing, when we're coming to the Lord, sometimes it does require that little bit of self-forgetfulness. When you lose a sense or a bit of the kind of self-consciousness about whether you can sing or not.

Because you're singing to the Lord. And when you're singing, what you're really considering and focusing on is the servant who brings the just world.

That's who you're singing to. That's who you're singing about. And if you do that, you won't just know the truth, but you'll feel the truth.

God's people are a singing people. The heaven will be noisy with someone. And the attention will not be on you, but will be on the perfect image, the servant, Jesus.

And the number of people singing, what will it be like? Well, we see here, from the wilderness, to the cities, to the ends of the earth, to the settlements, from the mountaintops, the whole earth will sing of his glory.

[13 : 53] So sing a new song to the Lord. Praise God to the new song. What do they sing about?

We've said that they sing about the Lord's justice. There's a few other things that come with that that we sort of flesh out a little bit as we think about what God has done. Second thing I want us to look at is the kind of things that they sing.

Second point, praise for God's patience. That is one of the things. Everybody is impatient, I think.

Some more than others. But people are impatient, aren't we? If you think, oh no, I'm not really impatient, here's a test for you. When you're waiting for a lift, and you look, and you see the button already lit, do you go and press it again to try and make it come faster?

I definitely done that. I think I did that yesterday. When you're at the pedestrian crossing waiting for the green man, how many times do you press the button? I always press it about seven times.

[14 : 59] It only needs to be pressed once. I'm kind of the worst at this. I was once in Primark. I'd spent half an hour going shopping. I'd got a full basket of balls. I'd spent a decent time.

I saw the queue. It was massive. It was massive. And I just put the basket down and walked out. I'm like, I'm not waiting for that. I don't have patience for queues. I'd rather go without than wait.

Look what we hear. Look what the living God says in verse 14. For a long time. That word for long time is actually for an eternity.

For a long time I have kept silent. I have been quiet and held myself back. There is praise in God for his patience.

His patience with us and the world in general. That patience stretches. Actually, you think the patience of God stretches all the way back to the garden.

[16 : 05] Adam and Eve in the garden, when you think of what goes on after they've sinned, there's questions that we're kind of left with. You know, the Lord God, you know the command to the man, you're free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

For, here's what happens. For when you eat of it, you will certainly die. When they go against him, you think, oh man, it's curtains for them, right?

He says they will certainly die. And they will, that is the curse. But he doesn't say when. They live. If you think about it, what he says and then what happens, there's kind of a gap, isn't there?

Because they actually live for many years. And then eventually die. He still holds to it. They're kicked out of the garden and the curse begins. They suffer.

But they are not judged eternally at that point. God is patient with Adam and Eve. And he's patient with his people. We've mentioned before, this passage in Isaiah is written to God's people when they're kicked out of Israel.

[17 : 17] And yet, he doesn't completely get rid of them. He would be within his right to have wiped them out. But he doesn't forget them.

But he sends them away in exile to Babylon and gives them the opportunity to turn back to him. He holds himself back. Each one of us.

Born with that sinful condition. Each one of us would rightly be judged because of the way that we've lived. But God is patient.

He has been quiet and held himself back. Every breath you take is God's grace to you. Your life is in his hands. 2 Peter 3.

We know this is not just true for us, but is true for everyone. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promises. Some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you. Why?

[18 : 20] Not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. His patience for us. Is there to give us the opportunity to turn to him.

He doesn't just say, stuff you. You've just, I've had it. I've just had it with you.

I've been waiting long enough. That's it. No, it says he's waited for an eternity. He's kept silent.

For a long time. Being quiet. Held himself back. And the point is, he is that character of the living God. To be patient with his people extends to us.

We still going to, even now, as we know and follow the Lord, we still go our own way. And yet he is slow to anger and disciplines us with gentleness. He doesn't have a short fuse.

[19 : 17] It is very, very, very, very long. Praise God for his patience. Sing a new song because he is patient with you through all of your life and will continue to be so.

His patience with you is a reason to sing. Let the truth of his patience move the emotion of your heart. Bye.

The first thing is praise God for his patience. The second thing we're going to do is praise for God's salvation. Praise for God's salvation. What we notice is that God has been patient.

We see that in verse 14. After we've seen that, held himself back. He says, but now. But now. It's like he's been patient, but the time has come.

The time has come to redeem. The time has come when his servant will arrive, will accomplish and bring this just society. Bring about the kingdom of God. When he will bring about his salvation plan.

[20 : 26] And we get two images given here. Picture language to help us understand. The first one we see in verse 13. See it says, the Lord will march out like a champion.

Like a warrior he will stir up his zeal. With a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies. The Lord has waited, but now is the moment he will triumph.

It's like a military plan waiting for the perfect moment to bring a military success. A surprise, an ambush in the middle of the night in an unexpected way.

The victory will be loud and clear. It will not be, in one sense it's kind of, when the Lord announced, brings this about. It's not going to be quiet like the servant.

Remember the servant from last time? He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice. Verse 2. But the Lord's victory. It's like an ancient military battle.

[21 : 22] Before a battle, the commander or military leader would give a battle cry or a war cry, you might say. You know, Mel Gibson, with the worst Scottish accent known to man, gives the battle cry in Braveheart.

What's in the effort? It's there to stir to troops, readying them for battle. But there's something different here, isn't there? Because this battle is not in doubt.

There's not kind of, let's see who wins. It's not, it's kind of, it's not a, there's no contest. Because the Lord's battle cry is followed always by victory against his enemies.

And the victory we see is humbling. It is a, it is a victory that brings the proud, lo, that humbles. You see what the victory looks like?

Verse 15. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and drive all their vegetation. I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. It is a picture of a once prosperous nation that has, that is proud of everything that they've done.

[22 : 40] They've got, they've got everything going for them. They've got, they've, they've, but they're doing it in their own strength. They're full of life, teeming with great agriculture. Laid, laid the mountains.

They've got all the gods on top of their mountains. Their false gods, their Baals and the Ashtraps. All these things. Full of money and prospering amongst all the other nations.

And the Lord says where there was lush life. Lush vegetation. Where there was rivers. Where people put, it's picture language of people prospering in life. It will dry up. It's, it's the picture of you imagine seeing a river and the water disappears.

But leaves the riverbed like an island in the middle. Now above the water. Like creating islands that were once teeming with fish and life. The Lord has the victory and he humbles the proud.

Makes them low. Their egos gone. Verse 17. He says, Those who trust in idols, who say to images, You are gods, will be turned back in utter shame.

[23 : 51] It's like they turn up to a party without an invite. Try to sneak in the back door. God turns them away. Anyone who's substituted him for something else. It will be a great humbling for the enemies of God.

Those who are opposed to him and his ways. He does that to make the just society. That is justice, isn't it? That is part of this, the making, the just society.

Is all those who have turned away from him. Who go their own way. Who invert the natural order with God at the helm. And everything underneath him. Who've tried to flip that round.

They will be judged and turned back in utter shame. Praise for God's salvation. His justice. That's the first image.

So I can worry that. The second image is God like a woman in childbirth. Quite a strange image. Verse 14. We see that we said the but now. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant.

[24 : 58] Quite a strange image, we might say. For God to say that he's like that. When a woman is in childbirth, in labour. If you were stood on the other side of the door to where that was happening.

And you didn't know what was going on on the other side of the door. And you heard the noise. You didn't know. You would not guess that life was beginning.

You would not guess that. That would be the first thing. I know what's happening in there. A baby's being. But you would not guess that. Because it sounds like the opposite is happening.

It sounds like someone's dying. If you stand on the other side of the door and you didn't know. If you were on any other ward than the labour ward.

And that was going on. There would be medical professionals running to that noise. But what we do know is that when a woman is in childbirth.

[26 : 03] Is in childbirth. It's not death. It's the beginning of new life. Redemption and the establishment of the kingdom of God.

The just world through God's perfect servant Jesus. Do not come without personal cost and effort. That is the good news of the servant's work.

Because if you look. If you were stood at the cross. On the day it happened. You wouldn't look there and say. Oh yeah. Life's happening here.

That's not the thing that you would say. Because there really is a man dying. And yet. It's through his death.

And resurrection that life comes. It doesn't look like life is coming at the cross. But that is exactly what happens. And like.

[27 : 05] A woman in childbirth. Jesus cries out. And he gasps. And he pounce. The time has come.

But now. God says. The time has come. If death. Cannot stop God's plan. If actually death is the way.

That God's plan of life comes. Then there's nothing else. That he can't overcome. In verse 16. We have. Picture language.

Of what it means. To be far from God. To be far from God. See. See. There's four kind of pictures. They all kind of come together. And mean the same. Thing. You see. See verse 16.

To be far from God. You see. It's like being blind. Not physically. But spiritually. A spiritual impairment. People who can't see. And accept. And acknowledge Jesus.

[28 : 03] So it's like being blind. To be far from God. Is to be. The next one you see. Is to be ignorant. Not knowing where to go. How to get there.

Like taking a wrong turn. An unfamiliar path. Ignorant of the correct rule. It's like being blind. It's like being ignorant. To be far from God. We see. It's like being in darkness. Needing light.

To know where to travel. Like driving with broken headlights. You can't see. The end of where you're going to travel next. Being. It's like being blind.

Like being ignorant. Like being in darkness. To be far from God. It's like traveling on rough. Uneven ground. See that. He says. He like traveling on rough places. Like trying to cross uneven ground.

You're going to trip over. And stumble. And not get up again. It's what it's like. To be far from God. But what does the living God say? He said. I will lead the blind.

[28 : 59] By ways they've not known. Along unfamiliar paths. The ignorant. I will guide them. I will turn the darkness into light before them.

Those who cannot see. And make the rough places smooth. The things that trip you up. Will be gone. These are the things I will do.

I will not forsake them. There are lots of things. There are lots of obstacles here. But however blind and dark. Things get in people's lives.

They are never too far. From the Lord's ability. To rescue them. To be led and guided. By him. All these obstacles.

Are used to be far from God. They're all the same issue. The same problem. But coming from different perspectives. It was all. We were all of these things. We were all blind.

[29 : 57] Ignorant. Living in darkness. With temptations. Too hard to resist. But we stumbled. And did our own thing. As leaving God out of the picture. And humanly speaking. It was impossible for us.

To be near to God. If you'd have looked. If you'd have seen us. You'd have thought. No chance. We would have been left to our own devices.

Stumbling around. But now. Like a woman in childbirth. Jesus gasped. And panted. And cried out.

For a long time. God was silent. Was quiet. And held back. But then he sent his servant. The perfect image. To restore justice. To bring the beautiful. Harmonious.

Kingdom of God's society. What we would become members of. He gave us eyes to see. He showed us the way. He was a light to our path. And he gave us power. To resist the evil one.

[30 : 53] The time has come for this. But now. However blind and dark things get. You are never too far from the Lord.

Leading and guiding you. However blind and dark things get. You are never too far from the Lord. This is what I'm going to say. To connect the Lord's patience.

To connect the Lord's justice. His salvation. To connect the idea. The memory of who we once were. But who we are now. What he has done for us.

To connect the truth of what we know in our hearts. To make melody in our heads. To connect it with a melody in our hearts. That draws who we are. Our emotion. That we fit.

We don't only know the truth. But that we feel the truth. While we must join in song. We praise to the Lord. Because not only has the time come.

[31 : 52] The time's here. The time's here. Today. The victory or the sin. There is triumph in the world. The evil one is overcome. Like a champion. Like a warrior.

Jesus has won. Why has he won the both? You see. They both go together. He's a lion.

And he's a lamb. He's a warrior. And he's the suffering servant. He's like a woman in childbirth.

And like a champion. Reigning as king. And gasping. Crying out. And panting. What was death. What was death? Allow.

Let the good news of Jesus. Of the truth of what we hear. Make a melody in your heart. So that you can sing. Make music to the Lord. Now.

[32 : 50] Each of us. I don't know. There's. Well. We're all going to do different stuff. We might have found. Because. Sometimes there's. A lot of the time.

There is sorrow. In the circumstances of life. There's difficulty. But here. As we. The idea here is. Is. Is not to leave that.

As we said earlier. Is not to leave that. Behind you. And think that you can't sing. Without. Feeling that emotion. But to bring that.

In worship. In song. To the living God. And let the truth. Of who he is. And who. He's made us become. To let the truth of that.

Make a melody in your heart. So that you can sing praise. Let me pray.

[33 : 56] Almighty and everlasting God we praise you for what you've done we have so much admiration and delight and wonder we don't ever want to lose our sense of wonder at what you've done we thank you that you've been so patient with us and you continue to be we thank you that that you are the lion and the lamb that you're the warrior and the woman in childbirth that you came to reign and rule as king and that you do but you came to gasp like a long leg to the slaughter and so we want to sing we want the truth that we know in our heads to sink into our hearts and then to actually come out in the way that we live that the knowledge and the affection and the will that it would result in greater love for you and for one another and so I pray that you would help us with the truth of God and make a melody in our hearts to you ask this in the name of Christ

Amen Thank you Thank you.