

A Song of Victory

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Exodus, Exodus chapter 15.

Exodus 15, and we're reading it again from the beginning. 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.

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 Him. The Lord is a man of war, the Lord. Is His name. If you've ever been to a stadium to watch a match, whether it's a football match, or a rugby match, whatever takes your fancy, or even if you've watched it on the TV, you'll know that when tens of thousands of fans gather into a stadium, when they gather into a stadium, one of the things that they all do is sing.

They all sing. They sing all these upbeat and uplifting songs in support of their team. They sing in order to, you could say, energize and encourage their team all the way to victory.

[1 : 38] But, you know, when it comes to the greatest victory in human history, the victory of Calvary, the victory of the cross, the victory of the empty tomb, the victory over sin and death, you know, what always amazes me is that as we gather for worship this Lord's Day morning, we gather to celebrate the victory of Calvary.

And although we may be gathering as a small number of people living in a rural community on the west side of the Western Isles, and yet what's remarkable is that we are gathering today, not with thousands or tens of thousands, but with tens of millions of other peoples, languages, tribes, and nations throughout the world.

We are gathering with them. Some are gathering in large places. Some are gathering in small pockets. Some are living in peace. Others are facing persecution. And yet what's amazing is that when we come to church, we are gathering with them in worship.

And, you know, that's why it's so important for us to come to church, because we're gathering together in worship, and we're gathering to sing in union with them and in unison.

We're gathering to sing a song of victory to the Lord. And, you know, that's how we began our worship this morning. We began by singing a song of victory to the Lord.

[3 : 11] We began in Psalm 98. O sing a new song to the Lord, for wonders he hath done, his right hand and his holy arm, him victory hath won.

But, you know, it's not only the church on earth who are singing a song of victory. The saints in glory are singing a song of victory. And the angels in heaven are singing a song of victory.

But this morning we come to Exodus 15, and we see that at the banks of the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites were also singing a song of victory.

And I'd like us just to consider this song of victory. And I want us to think about it under three headings. The subject, the substance, and the Savior of the song.

The subject of the song, the substance of the song, and the Savior of the song. So first of all, the subject. The subject of the song. Look again at verse 1.

[4 : 14] It says, And you know, what ought to stand out and strike us in the opening lines of this song of victory, is that the subject of the song is the Lord.

The subject of the song is the Lord. Because as this congregation, and it was a congregation of nearly three million people. You would never fit them inside a stadium. It was a congregation of three million people, and they've come together to sing these songs, this great song of victory.

And they're giving this symphony of sound. And the words that they sing are, I will sing to the Lord. The Lord is my strength and my song.

The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name. And as you know, the title Lord, in capital letters, it's the covenant name of God.

Because He's not only our Creator King, who has made all things, and sustains all things by the word of His power, but He's also our covenant King. He's the Lord.

[5 : 41] He's the one who keeps covenant. So He's a covenant-making and a covenant-keeping God. He makes promises to His people. And He keeps His promises with His people.

Because He's the Lord. He's the Lord, and He's the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the one who keeps covenant. And so as our covenant King, and so when we talk about covenant, always think of it as a marriage.

That's what a covenant is. So He's our covenant King. He's married to His people. And He makes promises to us on the pages of Scripture. He promises us, if you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness and to create within you a clean heart.

He promises that if you believe in your heart that He is Lord and confess with your mouth that you'll be saved. He promises, I will be your God and you shall be my people.

He promises to bind up your broken hearts and heal your wounds. He promises to bear your griefs and to carry your sorrows. He promises never to leave you and never to forsake you.

[6 : 55] So He said to the children last week about the pegs. There are over 7,000 promises in the Bible because the Lord is a covenant making and a covenant keeping God.

He makes promises and He keeps every single one of His promises. That's why we are called and even commanded in the Gospel to claim these promises and to cling to these promises and to confess these promises because they're all the Lord's promises to us.

They're the promises of the one who keeps covenant. The one who makes promises and keeps promises. And you know, that's what the Israelites came to discover because the Lord had promised His people that He would fight for them.

He promised His people that He would be on their side. He promised His people that He would defend them. And we've seen that throughout the book of Exodus. We saw that in the 10 plagues of Egypt where we were all standing ringside and we were watching and witnessing the Lord going 10 rounds with the gods of Egypt.

And the Lord was fighting for His people. The Lord was defeating and defending and destroying all the gods of Egypt. And the Lord, He was one who demonstrated and displayed to His people the impotence and the ineffectiveness of all these gods.

[8 : 23] And so when it came to crossing the Red Sea as we saw last Lord's Day, the Lord promised His people again. He promised them as the sea was going to part before them, He promised them, fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord which He will work for you today.

For the Lord will fight for you. The Lord will fight for you. Why? Verse 3, The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name. Now when we see all the devastation and the destruction and all the death that has taken place because of the war in Ukraine over the past, we've seen it over the past few months, we automatically view war as a negative thing and rightly so.

But when the Israelites describe the Lord as a man of war, they do so because it's the Lord who protected them. It's the Lord who provided for them. It's the Lord who proved faithful to all His promises.

That's why they say, The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name. He's the one who keeps covenant. And they're saying here in verse 3, The Lord is a warrior.

[9 : 45] He is our warrior. He's our commander-in-chief. He's the captain of our salvation. He's the Lord of hosts. He's the Lord of hosts.

And that's a familiar phrase to us, The Lord of hosts. It literally means the Lord of the armies. And that's what we were singing about in Psalm 46. We were singing about the Lord of hosts.

Because in Psalm 46, the psalmist's world, it has been turned upside down. And he confesses in Psalm 46, he makes that opening confession. God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble.

But when you read through the psalm, time and time again, the psalmist confesses, the Lord of hosts upon our side, doth constantly remain.

The God of Jacob is our refuge, us safely to maintain. So he says, The Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies, the Lord is a warrior who fights for his people.

[10:48] The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. But what's interesting is that the psalmist in Psalm 46, he exhorts us.

We were singing those words. He exhorts us and he encourages us to come. Come and behold the works of the Lord, he says. Come and behold what the Lord does.

Because what the Lord does is that he defeats and destroys all our enemies. It's the Lord, he says in Psalm 46, who breaks the bow and cuts the spear. It's the Lord who makes wars turn into peace. It's the Lord who defends his people. Come and behold the works of the Lord. Come and see what the Lord has done. And you know, you might ask the psalmist, well, where do we look if we're to come and see?

Where do we see what the Lord has done for us? Where do we focus our eyes and fix our hearts? So that we know how much the Lord of hosts loves us.

[11:56] And of course, friend, we look to the cross. We look always to Calvary. We look to the glory of the gospel at Golgotha. Because it's there that the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies, the Lord, the man of war, it's there that our Lord Jesus Christ, he defeated death, he conquered the grave, he brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

And for that reason, the Lord is to be the subject of our praise. The Lord is always to be the subject of our song of victory.

But then secondly, we see the substance of the song. So the subject of the song, that's the Lord, the covenant king. But then the substance of the song.

Look at verse 4. He says, 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.

[13:15] It consumes them like stubble. If you remember last Lord's Day, we said that many of the liberal theologians, they claim and they confess that Moses and the Israelites didn't actually cross the Red Sea.

They crossed the Reed Sea. Because the Reed Sea, it's a marshy area of land just north of the Red Sea. And the big difference between the Red Sea and the Reed Sea is that the Red Sea is very deep.

The Reed Sea is only a foot deep. Therefore, liberals claim and they confess that the Lord didn't cause an east wind to divide the Red Sea at night. And the Lord didn't create a channel of dry ground with a wall of sea on either side.

No liberals would tell you that Moses and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. They walked through just a foot of water. But as we said, that would have been an even greater miracle.

The miracle that the Lord managed to drown the whole of Pharaoh's army in a foot of water. But of course, the evidence undermines liberal theology.

[14:26] And there is evidence because over the past 20 years, divers have discovered the remains of chariot wheels on the seabed of the Red Sea.

But more than that, I read an article this past week which explains, and I'm not any scientist, but they were called Scientists of Fluid Dynamics.

That's way above me. So scientists of Fluid Dynamics, they've worked out that in certain areas of the Red Sea, an east wind of at least 63 miles an hour sustained for 12 hours, according to their calculations, it could clear a path across the section of the Red Sea stretching two and a half miles long and three miles wide.

And the scientists, they work it out. I mean, I didn't know. I can't work it out. But they conclude that if Moses and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea just south of the entrance to the Suez Canal, they would have had about four hours to do it, which isn't long.

But of course, the scientific experiment was all based upon the fact that parting the Red Sea was a natural event. But as you know from the Bible, parting the Red Sea was a supernatural event.

[15:54] And that's what the substance of this Song of Victory emphasizes and explains to us, that the parting and the passing through the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army being defeated and drowned and also destroyed in the Red Sea, it was a supernatural event.

Because the Israelites, the Israelites didn't sing that Pharaoh's army drowned in a foot of water. No, they sang, as we read in the song here, that Pharaoh's army sank like a stone.

They went all the way to the bottom like lead. But you know what I love about the substance of this song is the way in which the Israelites, they describe the Lord.

They describe the Lord in verse 8. It says, 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.

So the Israelites, they sing about how the Lord powerfully parted the sea with only the breath of His nostrils. I think it's amazing.

[17:06] It wasn't even the breath of His mouth. It was just the breath of His nostrils that parted the Red Sea. It emphasizes how powerful the Lord is. But there's more because the Israelites, they say how powerful the Lord is by describing His right hand, the right hand of the Lord.

We see that in verse 6 and also verse 11. Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. Then verse 11.

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 and the earth swallowed them.

Now, the right hand of the Lord, it's a metaphor which describes the sovereignty and the strength of a king. It describes the power and also the presence of a king.

And of course, the king in this song of victory is the Lord. It's the right hand of the Lord because He's the creator. He's the covenant king of His people. He's the sovereign and strong king over His people.

[18:15] He's the one who declares and demonstrates His power and His presence by drowning and defeating and destroying all His and our enemies.

He is the Lord. The Lord is His name. But then we read in verse 20. We read there in verse 20. It says, 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. So Miriam there is introduced to us as Aaron's elder sister.

But she was also Moses' elder sister. They were a family, Moses, Aaron and Miriam. What's amazing about Miriam is that she was no stranger to salvation because she had watched and you remember she had witnessed the Lord preserve and also protect her little brother.

When Miriam and Moses' and Aaron's mother they placed, she placed Moses in the basket in the river Nile. She was no stranger to salvation.

[19:36] But when she witnesses the salvation of the children of Israel, this three million people crossing through the Red Sea, she sings this song of victory.

But as the song of victory comes to its climax and its conclusion, we're told that Miriam there, she led the woman in singing the chorus of this song of victory.

So they all took their tambourines and they started singing. And they were singing verse 21, Sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and the rider He has thrown into the sea.

But you know what's amazing about this? And this is what I find fascinating. So when it says in verse 21 that Miriam sang to them, it's not that Miriam sang to the woman.

No, Miriam led the Israelite women. She led them out in singing. But the them in verse 21 is the Israelite men. So you have the woman and the men singing.

[20:44] And so the women sing, they sing, they sing these words, sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and His rider He has thrown into the sea. And then the men respond by singing the same chorus, the song of victory.

They respond by singing, sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and His rider He has thrown into the sea. Now, as you probably know already, I'm not very good with music or singing.

But this type of singing here where there's two choirs, it's called antiphonal singing. Antiphonal singing where there are two choirs and they're singing alternately.

They're singing in turn. And so as this song of victory comes to its conclusion and its climax, Moses' sister Miriam, she leads 600,000 women in singing this chorus, this song of victory.

Sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and His rider He has thrown into the sea. And then Moses' brother Aaron led 600,000 Israelite men to respond by singing the chorus, sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously.

[22 : 03] The horse and His rider He has thrown into the sea. And with this antiphonal singing, both choirs of men and women plus the children, they would have sung this chorus back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

Sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. His horse and His rider He has thrown into the sea. And all the time you can imagine, as we've heard before in stadiums, you can hear the sound getting louder and louder and louder and the sound of singing is intensifying and increasing all the time until at last both choirs, both choirs come together in union and unison as one complete congregation with nearly three million voices coming together in a symphony of singing and they would sing one more time, sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously.

The horse and His rider He has thrown into the sea. And I don't know about you, but I would have loved, I would have loved to have heard that choir singing that song of victory at the banks of the Red Sea.

But you know, it should be a reminder to us that no matter what we think of our ability to sing, the Lord demands and the Lord deserves our singing.

He is the subject and He is to be the substance of our songs of salvation. And you know, we're to sing that new song to the Lord. We're to sing to the Lord as the psalmist says, with a cheerful voice.

[23 : 52] We're to sing the psalms as the psalms tell us, to sing with grace. And we're to make a joyful noise to the Lord because He is the rock of our salvation.

Do you know, my friend, in our singing, we are to attribute and to ascribe all praise, honor, and glory to the Lord because the Lord is worthy. He's worthy of our passion and He's worthy of our praise. The Lord is worthy of our singing and worthy of our songs of salvation. The Lord is worthy of our voices and He's worthy of our volume. He's worthy of it all.

But you know, what I don't understand is why some come to church and instead of standing to sing, they stand in silence. Don't stand in silence.

The COVID restrictions of singing have been removed. We're to stand and sing. We're to ascribe worth to the Lord.

[24 : 55] That's why it's called worship. It's giving our worth-ship to the Lord. We are to attribute and to ascribe all praise, honor, and glory to the Lord. And as you know, it's a known fact that singing is good for your mental health.

Singing is good for your mental health. Even when you're downcast or depressed, it's good to sing. But singing to the Lord, it's not only good for your mental health, it's good for your spiritual health. Because singing when you're struggling, singing when you're struggling with sin, or sickness, or stress, or suffering, or sorrow.

And we see it throughout the whole book of Psalms. They're all singing, whether they're in sin or sickness, stress, suffering, or sorrow. They're singing because it's good for you to sing to the Lord. And you know, that's why Paul in the New Testament, he exhorts and he encourages the Ephesians to address one another in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and make melody in your heart with singing and thanksgiving to God.

[26 : 09] Friends, we are to sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. We're to sing this song of victory because the Lord is the subject and the substance of the song.

But then lastly, we see that he's the Savior. He's the Savior of the song. So the subject, the substance, and the Savior of the song. The Savior of the song.

Look at verse 2. It says there, 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 him. Now this song of victory here in Exodus 15, it's over 3,500 years old.

It was composed, and then it was sung, at the Exodus from Egypt, around the year 1446 B.C. So it's 1,400 years before Christ was born.

[27 : 11] They were singing this song of victory. And as we've discovered, the subject and the substance of this song of victory is all about the Savior. It's all about the Lord.

It's all pointing us to Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ. But you know what I find fascinating about verse 2? It's that it says, The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

And what's fascinating is that these words, which were sung at the Exodus from Egypt in 1446 B.C., they were also sung at the Exodus from the exile.

the Exodus from the exile in Babylon. 700 years later, so from 1446 B.C., 700 years later to the 8th century B.C., Isaiah is there.

And Isaiah is prophesying in Isaiah chapter 12, and he's prophesying about a time when the Israelites will go into captivity in Babylon. Babylon. But when they come out of Babylon, they will sing this song.

[28 : 17] And he says in Isaiah chapter 12, he quotes from Exodus 15, The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. Isaiah prophesied that this would happen.

And it did. Because what's remarkable is that these words of Exodus 15, verse 2, they were still being sung 500 years later.

So, in the 5th century B.C., they were singing, The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. So, when you work it out, it's an amazing timeline when you work it out. They're singing at the Exodus from Egypt. They're singing about it before they go into exile in Babylon. They're singing about it when they come out of exile in Babylon.

Because in Psalm 118, which was written 300 years after Isaiah, they were singing these words, The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

[29 : 19] And what's amazing, if you follow the timeline of history, right down to the 1st century A.D., Psalm 118 was still being sung. And it was being sung during the Passover meal, which means that the last words that Jesus sung on this earth were these words, The Lord is my strength and my song.

He has become my salvation. And it's all the way through history that the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

And you see, my friend, these words have been sung for thousands of years, and they will be sung again today in our closing item of praise, which ought to be a reminder and a reassurance to us that whether we're in the past, the present, or the future, whether we're at the exodus from Egypt, the exodus from the exile, or the exodus from the empty tomb, whatever generation we are living in, whatever generation we're living in, the Lord Jesus Christ is our personal Savior who gifts and guarantees to us a personal salvation.

He's a personal Savior who gifts and guarantees to us a personal salvation. And that salvation comes to us. We are saved when we believe, but also when we confess.

And what we must confess is these words of the song of victory. We're to sing this song of victory. We're to believe and confess that the Lord is my strength.

[31 : 02] The Lord is my song. The Lord has become my salvation. So whatever generation we're in, that's what the Bible is calling us to do.

We're called to believe and to confess the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. We all need to sing this song of victory because the subject, the substance, and the Savior of the song points us to Jesus.

It points us to Jesus. And you know what Exodus 15 is reminding us then? We need to make this timeless confession.

It's a timeless confession. It's been confessed throughout history. So friend, you need to come to the Lord and say, the Lord is my strength.

The Lord is my song. And the Lord has become my salvation. You must believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

[32 : 12] Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee that even despite the passing of time and all the changes that have taken place where generations have come and generations have gone, O Lord, we give thanks that the Lord won who has not changed, that as it was for the people at the Exodus and for the people at the Exile and for us who are now living post the empty tomb that we are still able to confess that the Lord is my strength, He is my song and He has become my salvation.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to believe in our heart. Help us to confess with our mouth because when we confess with our mouth, the promise of the gospel is that we will be saved.

Lord, do us good and we pray, go before us. Bless the Lord's day to us. Help us, we pray, to remember that it's the Lord's day, a day of worship, a day to sing the songs of victory, to ascribe all glory, honour and praise to Thy name.

Keep us, then we pray, go before us, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing in Psalm 118.

Psalm 118, we're singing from verse 13. It's in the Sing Psalms version on page 156. Psalm 118 and verse 13 down to the verse marked 20.

[34 : 05] It's on page 156 of the Blue Psalm book. And this is a song of thanksgiving. It's a hymn of thanksgiving. It was the last psalm that was sung at the Passover meal, the last words that Jesus sung before His crucifixion and death.

And it's amazing when you sing it in light of that, understanding that Jesus sang this. Verse 13, I was pushed back and nearly fell.

The Lord Himself gave help to me. He is my song and source of strength. The Lord gave me the victory. Triumphant shouts of joy resound in places where the righteous dwell.

The Lord's right hand is lifted high. His mighty hand does all things well. I shall not die, but I shall live. The Lord's great works I will proclaim.

The Lord severely chastened me, but rescued me from death's domain. Throw wide the gates of righteousness. I'll enter and give thanks to God. This is the gate of God through which the righteous come before the Lord.

[35 : 13] So we'll sing these verses of Psalm 118 to God's praise. Psalm 118 I was pushed back and nearly fell.

The Lord himself gave help to me. He is my soul and source of strength.

The Lord gave me the victory. thy open shouts of joy resound in places where the righteous dwell. the Lord's right hand is lifted high. His mighty hand does all things well.

I shall not die, but I shall live. The Lord's great works I will proclaim.

[36 : 54] The Lord severely chased me, but rescued me from death's story.

through wide the gates of righteousness I'll enter and give thanks to God.

This is the gate the gates of God through which the righteous come before the Lord.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.