

City Life Church
A New Song for a World Without End
Psalm 96

I can remember music being a draw to me for as long as I can remember. I can think of my dad drumming on the steering wheel to songs from the band Boston as we drove around Dallas. I can think of feeling envious when I saw my cousin practicing while he was in drumline in high school. I picked up playing drums when I was in the 4th grade and I never looked at another instrument. When I was in high school, I was playing in a punk rock band called Hardcore Jellyfish. We mainly played old Rancid and Anti flag covers. We were so punk while living in our small town and raising a ruckus. When we would play, I would have the task of tuning my snare drum as high as it would go in order to get the maximum volume and piercing tone. Our goal was to immerse the audience in our sound and to have our audience's ears ringing for days.

The Psalmist opens this morning's text with a call to a new song. It is the result of his immersion in the presence of God, and an attempt to immerse Israel in the the hope of a glorious King who is sovereign over all. Let's see how this psalm captures him, how it should captivate us, and how it compels us.

Let's pray.

Captured

V1. Oh sing to the Lord a new song

Oh is adding emphasis to the word Sing. Now Sing here is not just any sing. This isn't humming along to a tune, this is not whistling as you walk, this is an all out guttural sing in the shower type of action. The call is to sing to the Lord (YHWH). The LORD who was, is, and is to come. The true name of God as He revealed it to Moses in Exodus. Sing a new song. This is harkening back to Psalm 33:33 in which the Psalmist is describing national and religious cry after the restoration (Isaiah 42:10). This restoration was a response to God as His people, under His rule, for a new life for Him after being slaves in Egypt. A new identity in light of freedom. You can see why they would sing; it's not entertainment, it's conviction. That's why it's guttural.

Think about Israel walking away from the Red Sea after Pharaoh and his army are washed away. Consider the awesomeness of that moment. You are a people not only ethnically but also a remnant of Egyptians who worshiped the God of Israel. There's no turning back and a pillar of fire is guiding you forward. Step by step away from the identity of captivity into a new life. Think about where God has brought you from. Who would you be without him? What would life look like? Where has he been evident in your life and those around around you?

V.2-4 Sing to the Lord, to be feared above all Gods.

We are to declare and sing his glory. Why? That command is grounded in verse 4 For GREAT is the Lord. Not just Israel, but the entirety of creation, all nations, singing this song to our King. Saved daily, from a life without him and without His presence.

[SLIDE HERE]

My wife has a cousin who is a missionary with Ethnos360 in Indonesia focused on unreached people groups. Unreached people groups are distinct peoples within the world who have no

access to the Gospel or even Christians around them. Matt and his wife Emily (Dani's cousin) specifically have a focus on tribal missions. One tribe that they connected with was a week's journey from the closest city. This journey included airplanes around mountains, boat rides across rivers, strenuous hikes into the dense dark jungle. Once they arrived at the village, they would seek to live with the tribe to serve them in education, health care, and aid. This tribe in particular had no written language. As a way to build reading skills, Matt and Emily used linguistic techniques to map out their language, produce a written version of their language, and translate a bible into their native tongue. The goal would be to see a self sustaining church rise out of the tribe supported by their own leaders. One of the first lessons that they walk through is through the idea of the world created by God. They start with a simple map of the village. They identify homes, people, the boundaries of the camp. They then move on to another map of the village and the nearest city. The tribe is able to orient themselves to the map and they move onto another lesson of the island within Indonesia that they live in. Many in the tribe have not left the Island, so they assume that this is the world as it exists. Matt and Emily zoom out layer by layer until the tribe sees the world. Their village a small dot on a massive earth. The sheer scope of which is amazing. Their identity and world view of life contained within the Island under the sacrificial distant god that they know is now very small.

Where are we zoomed in? Where do we make God small, not great, by dismissing or failing to see his greatness?

Maybe it's that you are tuned into the oldies. You are fixated on where God once moved, but that seems a distance memory and He seems far away.

Maybe it's that you have been tuned into jock jams. You're the center of the story. If you work hard, you keep yourself riding high, you will be happy.

Maybe it's that you are playing music to simply drown out a deeper unsettledness in your life.

The Psalmist is pointing out that the songs that have us at the center are not worthy to be sung. Our lives are no longer ours, the lives that we try to construct and uphold by our own strength are not sufficient for our joy, happiness, and flourishing.

Follow the logic of the author. He is great because He is above all things. He made all things. He is the creator of all and creation itself. If creation is beautiful and evokes praise, how much more do we praise and owe praise to the one who created all things. Gods here uses the word Elohim. This is a word for deity and not the personal name that God uses. Another way of saying this is that God is the true God over all created things. He reinforces this point in v.5. The phrase worthless idols is a play on words that worthless things are worthless. These are made things with no inherent worth. These idols are not God and they do not have dominion or power over creation as a created things. They are not glorious. God is. They do not bring about good. God does. They are not for all. He is.

V.6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

All authority, honor, and glory flow from Him. The Psalmist is getting at the idea of the otherness and awesomeness of God. We see this used to describe the Messiah in Zechariah 6:13. The word for majesty is also used within Proverbs 31:25 for describing the dignity of a good and capable woman. What is a capable woman? An expression of majesty is imparted and given on women as they are in communion and relationship with God. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. His meeting place is pure strength and majesty. It is where our hope lies and where our affections are captured. This is the root of this song over Israel and through Jesus, for those in Christ. Our hope, identity, our contentment rests in the God over all and for everyone. His strength keeping us and his beauty leaving us in awe. What else is worthy of singing about?

Throughout this series, we have looked through the treasury of scripture, to see how the Psalms guide us to God through trial, through lament, through repentance, this morning we see the reverberating overcoming song that washes over us. Set in motion by the Father, secured by the Son, and sustained through the spirit.

Songs are a beautiful picture of what is coming out our hearts. It's a connection of the emotional and physical. What's the melody in your mind this morning? Are we trying to find our name related to the things around us drawing us further inward or are we looking at the One over all and for all and pulling us outward?

Captivated:

The Psalmist now challenges Israel to join him; calls us to ascribe. Ascribe means the root of, before all, Glorious and worthy of response. This is a reinforcement of the first five verses and continues the logic that YHWH the one true God is the God of all and for all is drawing us to himself. This truth is inwardly transformative and externally oriented.

V.7 O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. This is a call to not just all tongues but all tribes. This addresses division between nations. The pride of nations is under the God over all; with glory and strength. Glory is often used in the Old Testament to describe the wealth and might of kingdoms. The Psalmist is pointing out that the God over all is sovereign over all peoples. He is worthy of all praise, all glory, and all of our affections. He is bringing all people to himself and rules over previous divisions. V.8-9 is a call to worship God as one unified people. All tongues, tribes, nations, colors throughout the spectrum. This offering from Gentiles would bring us into this courtyard of the temple. Through Christ's life, death, and resurrection this brings us into a forever communion to worship God. Not just once but for all time.

What does this life look like? I recently finished Good News About Injustice by Gary Haugen. Gary founded and currently runs the largest NGO (Non Governmental Organization) in the world called the International Justice Mission. Their mission is to end slavery. Small goal, right? Gary describes the drive to counter injustice stems from a description of Jesus in John 11. Jesus "snorts" (v.33) with anger in the face of death and then "weeps" (v.35) over the bereaved. "If only we could be like Jesus, indignant toward evil and compassionate toward its victims. This drive helps IJM break apart prostitution rings in the darkest corners of the earth, bringing their owners to justice and the victims into rehabilitation and out of bondage.

The injustice in our world of racism, genocide, slavery, criminal organizations who exploit the least in our society will be dealt with. (v. 9) The Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! Death, sorrow, sadness has an end. Tears will be wiped away from our eyes and we'll behold our King who is making and will make all things new, even us.

I have a friend that raises money in private equity. He was raising money in Midland and connected with several older gentlemen were in the oil business for decades. The refrain of the conversation was I will come to God and participate in His work once I have enough success in the business world. My friend mentioned a course called Perspectives, which is a survey around Global missions, to these older men. It invites churches to connect with ministries and missionaries to learn about what God is doing in all corners of the world. As the men heard about Perspectives, they went to a local chapter in Midland. After attending the class, one of the men indignantly told my friend that His life is changed! These men saw God's faithfulness in tribes like Matt and Emily's and they saw how they could help them with the skills, capital, and networks of their business contacts to further spread the gospel.

This God of all and for all calls us to join his work of redemption. This includes our time, talents, and treasures. Maybe for some it's joining the work of our ministry partners in the

10/40 window and sharing the gospel with unreached people groups, maybe it's joining a mercy ministry in our city and bringing the gospel to bear in word and deed, maybe it's engaging our city counsel and participating to advocate for those without a voice. It's not a question of if this work will get done. It most certainly will. The author is pointing out that the response to this song of the redeemed, is a drive to external action. Where is calling you to come alongside this redemptive work? Where is He calling your family to go? He is worth it Church! Let's participate in His call with open hands.

(v.10) The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

The Lord over all, carries the idea from Genesis 1, that before creation itself, God the creator over all hovered above the unformed earth. He always has been and he has always been presiding. He established and created. The Psalmist continues that the God who created all, establishes that which he created and governs justly. What is created cannot preside over what is created. That's why God is uniquely qualified to rule over all. That who is love, mercy, and beauty is uniquely qualified to uphold justice.

The Psalmist is continuing to reinforce the God over all of existence and his specific care over us individually. What else is worthy of worship? How else would we respond other than to come and lay at His feet in awe? We have nothing to give that is not his. Yet, we are invited in as His beloved.

Commissioned:

V.11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; sing for joy.

The Psalmist is showing the groanings of creation are celebrating God's redemption and restoration of all things. Every aspect of creation celebrating the full, good, and complete restoration of the true King over all. Over the heavens and angelic beings, to the earth in all peoples, and throughout all creation. He is bringing about the redemption by ending the curse on the ground itself and restoring the desert to bloom (Isaiah 35:1). The longings of the earth itself reunited with its creator is expressed with Trees waving their branches like hands, the seas roaring, and the rocks crying out.

V. 12-13 before the Lord, in His faithfulness.

This world under God's creation is then judged. The implication here is with presiding over this world without sin. Without lesser loves vying for our affections, without the idols that we carry hoping that they make us happy, without the shame that we carry that we cannot seem to give to the God who loves us relentlessly. Judge is discussing that the world is upheld by his character for those in communion and relationship with him. And here's the kicker to the text, his people are judged in HIS faithfulness. Not your attempts to pull yourself together. Not your attempts to make yourself right before approaching him. When the Father looks at his Children, the Father (YHWH) sees Jesus. His perfect life. His obedience to His father to be the sufficient sacrifice for all whom he predestined and loved. If you are here this morning, would you sit under the weight of the Father's love for you. His relentless love to pursue you when you were running away, he brought you back. When you were once dead in your sin, he brought life, hope, and his presence for all seasons. Not only that, He is coming again to bring a complete redemption and restoration that ends all hurt, shame, and injustice.

Church, he's drawing us to something better than we could imagine or build for ourselves in himself. We have been bought with the blood of Christ, his body broken for us as the pure, sufficient, and lasting offering.

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.
Zephaniah 3:17 ESV

Let's sing to the One who is over everything and for everyone. Would that spur a new song for us and for all? Would that cause us to look to Christ and ask for wisdom and opportunities to allocate our time, treasures, and talents for his kingdom. We pray that He would rise up new leaders, more families, more graces for our city, our country, and to the ends of the earth. Join with us this morning as we celebrate this new song in communion!

Let's pray

Explanation of communion