

Online Lesson - Sunday, April 12, 2020 pm

“Let him sing psalms”

James 5:13

Singing is an integral part of our worship to God. It can and should be part of our public worship, as we read in Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 14:15. In these texts we find it to be something done together as we are teaching and admonishing one another.

But it is also something we can do in praise to God at other times, such as in our homes or even when we are apart from brethren. Our text (James 5:13) notes that if one is joyful, let him sing psalms. Acts 16:25 finds Paul and Silas in prison singing praises to God and praying. Prisoners were listening. A study of the psalms and the Old Law showed it was something done often, again both publicly and privately.

Because of our present circumstances we are apart from one another and unable to assemble as we normally do, but we can still worship and that includes singing. So with that in mind, in this lesson I want to notice a few of the songs we sing from time to time when we are together, but they are also songs that can be a source of encouragement to us in our homes or even when we are alone. That will be our study for tonight.

NOTE: I would like to post these songs and even lead us in singing them, but there are copyrights laws that I am unsure of. While our songbook has many songs that are now public domain (free to use in copying and sharing), copyright laws are technical and the law – something we should NOT break. I am not sure which songs (or verses) are which. So, let me encourage you to consider the message of these songs and perhaps in your homes, with your families, sing them together. If you do not have access to song books, just ask and we will get you what you need somehow.

Unlike when I pick a single song and examine the message of each verse, in this talk I’m just going to talk briefly about some songs and perhaps highlight some of the wording. I will then pause for a few seconds and if you like, pause the video and sing the song, or just wait for the message to resume. The numbers are from Sacred Selections, the book we typically use.

I. Songs of Faith

- a. #477 – **Blessed assurance** – There are times in our lives where our faith is being tested, some times are greater than others. How do we do on those occasions?

Many of the songs we sing deal with our faith, some directly and many indirectly, but they serve as reminders that we need a strong faith.

What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 reminds us that Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The NASB says, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for”. The point is our faith is based upon our belief of and trust in God and His word. Truly it is a “Blessed assurance”. Hebrews 10:22-23 notes that because Jesus Christ is our High Priest, we can draw near to God with full assurance of faith.... Such gives us hope.

This reminds us of how we can with complete assurance (trust) believe God and His promises of a place much better than this one – in heaven. Are we waiting for that and will we tell others about it? On quick observation – in vs. 2 we read about “visions of rapture now burst on my site.” The word “rapture” today is associated with a belief that there will be a sudden disappearance of the godly while the rest of the world is left behind. I do not believe that is what scripture teaches. It teaches that there will be one day of judgment for all mankind – Jesus Himself taught that in John 5:28-29, where He said, *ALL who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

But when this song was published in 1873 by Fanny J. Crosby, that was likely not the meaning. The word “rapture” simply means an ecstatic or overwhelming feeling or emotion. The point is one thinking about how wonderful heaven is going to be. When we think about the blessed assurance of heaven, may that enter our minds. Now consider the song, “Blessed Assurance”

- b. #33 – **My faith looks up to Thee** – Hebrews 12:1-2 speaks of how we are to run the race of life looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. This song reminds us of that fact. Within we find He is the

source of our sins being removed. We also find a request that in Him we be strengthened in zeal. And finally, in vs. 3, a commitment to let Him guide us even in the darkest of times. (Cf. Hebrews 13:5, we live without covetousness, and in contentment looking to His promise, “I will never leave you nor forsake you”).

Now consider, “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

- c. #231 – ***Faith is the Victory*** – 1 John 5:4. We live in a broken world, filled with sorrows and even much evil. The Bible addresses this battle that we are in – Ephesians 6:10-18 describes the nature of our battle and encourages us to put on the armor of God. As we fight this battle we need the shield of faith. And our faith is a tool that will help us overcome the world. This song reminds us of the armor of God as we engage in this spiritual battle.

Now consider, “Faith is the Victory”

II. Songs of Hope

- a. #120 – ***The Solid Rock*** - Not only do we have faith as we live this life. We need hope. This morning we addressed the importance of our hope, now more than ever, if you will.

Sometimes, as we sing songs can remind ourselves of the source of our hope.

One such song is The Solid Rock. It reminds us of the solid foundation that our hope is built upon. 1 Corinthians 10:4 while addressing Israel in the wilderness, it notes that they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, “and that Rock was Christ.” Without going into great detail about this text, let us note that Jesus is a solid foundation upon which we build our hope. Remember how Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount with the parable of two builders (Matthew 7:24-27). Upon what are you building your hope? This song reminds us there is nothing more solid to depend upon than our Lord. Everything about Him, from His sacrifice, to the stormy times, to His promises, and ultimately His return. Are you standing on the Rock.

One quick observation about the final verse, When He returns we want to be found in Him. The expression “dressed in His

righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne” should not mean that we have no part in our salvation – for we **MUST** remain faithful and take care of our sins. **BUT** in all understand, forgiveness would **NOT** be possible if it were not for His perfect righteousness that made an acceptable sacrifice. **NOTE 1** John 2:1 – He is the righteous.

Let us now consider “The Solid Rock”

- b. #495 – ***We have an anchor*** – Hebrews 6:19.

Another song about our hope is We have an anchor. It reminds us that in all we do in this life, our hope and faith need to be anchored at the throne of God in heaven. In other words, we let our hope of heaven keep us steady throughout this life.

This is a song that describes this anchor and why it needs to be our anchor.

Let us consider, “WE Have an Anchor”

III. Songs of Love

- a. #28 – ***My Jesus I Love Thee***, 1 John 4:17-19 – we love Him because He first loved us. In these times (and always), we ought to consider our love for God and Jesus. We consider how He loved and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20, John 3:16), and how we ought to love Him and let that govern our conduct and attitudes. This song reminds us how we ought to love Him at all times.

Let us consider “My Jesus I Love Thee”

- b. #112 – ***Angry words***. In addition to loving our Lord, we need to love our brethren. That doesn’t change because we are not able to see each other as we would normally do. This song reminds us of the second greatest commandment (Matthew 2:37-40 – and the first). Remember John 13:34-35 where Jesus gave “a new commandment”. Be reminded that in this Jesus is saying the world is watching and they have the right to judge us by the way we love each other. This song reminds us to think about our attitudes, actions and words. Let us now consider this song, “Angry words”

1 Corinthians 13:13 tells us, “And now abide, faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” We have considered some songs of faith, hope and love. Let us conclude with a few more songs that can be of great encouragement to us in times like these.

IV. Miscellaneous songs

- a. #361 - ***This World Is Not My Home***. We know of the uncertainties of this life. Everything in this life is vanity. As we are seeing, the best of prosperity can evaporate in a moment for so many. Be reminded that our life is a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away (James 4:14). But as Christians, we live knowing there is something better waiting for us on the other side of eternity. Be reminded that here we are merely sojourners and pilgrims – 1 Peter 2:11.

This song reminds us that this world is not our home. As the attached verse notes, Where is your treasure? (Matthew 6:19-21) Let us consider, “This World is Not My Home”

- b. #483 - ***After the Shadows***. This is a song that reminds us to remain faithful. It also reminds us that whatever face in this life is temporary. As the psalmist said in Psalm 30:5, *For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.*

This song is a great reminder when we are going through troubling times. WE may be experiencing storms, shadows and battles, but afterward, all will be well. If not in this life, if we remain faithful, it certainly will in the life to come.

Let us consider, “After the Shadows”

- c. #561 - ***It is well with my soul*** – a song we sing quite often is a beautiful and a favorite of many. The back story adds great meaning. It was written by Horatio Stafford in 1873 after much tragedy. Living on the shores of Lake Michigan, he lost everything in the great fire of Chicago in 1871. Two years later, planned a European trip for his family. As they crossed the Atlantic, the ship his wife and 4 daughters was on was struck by another vessel and sank in about 12 minutes many perished including his 4 daughters. When his wife arrived in she wired him a message, “Saved alone”. As Spafford

immediately left to join his wife, when they came near the location of the ship wreck, Spafford was told about it. At that time, the words to "It is Well" were penned.

As you think of troubling times, remember, it is about attitude. This song reminds us that no matter what happens, It is going to be ok. And we need to accept that as we trust in God and live in faith. Let us now consider, "It is well with my soul."

And there we have a few songs of encouragement. It is my hope that in this lesson we can see the value of song, especially spiritual songs, as we go through this life as Christians. I would like to conclude with one final song. #633 - ***Prepare to meet thy God***. Times of troubles always remind us that life is uncertain and we do not know when our Lord is going to return. Therefore, we must ALWAYS be prepared. If you are not prepared to stand before God, let me encourage you to take whatever steps you need to take. We are ready to help you with this if that is your need. Let us now consider this final song.

Thank you for joining us in this study this evening. If you would, let us pray. The lesson is yours.