

110622 Sermon "**Sing to the Lord a New Song**" Psalm 98:1-4

It is known there is a hymn for everyone:

The Weatherman and woman's Hymn—There Shall Be Showers of Blessings

The Contractor's Hymn—The Church's One Foundation

The Tailor's Hymn—Holy, Holy, Holy

The Politician's Hymn—Standing on the Promises

The Optometrist's Hymn—Open My Eyes That I May See

The IRS Agent's Hymn—I Surrender All

The Electrician's Hymn—I Saw the Light

The Shopper's Hymn—Sweet By and By

The Realtor's Hymn—I've Got a Mansion, Just Over the Hilltop

Is there a hymn for you?

In today's Psalm 98, we are not told to sing your favorite song, but rather sing to the LORD a new song. Because God has done marvelous things. Verses 1 to 3 joyfully praise God's salvation in the past. Verses 4 to 6 praise the great King. And verses 7 to 9 consist of anticipation of God who will come in the future.

If we do not count what we do not have, but count the items of grace we have received from God one by one, we will experience that complaints are turned into gratitude and sighs are turned into praise. Frederick Lehman wrote a song called, "The Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell." In verse 3 he sings, "Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made; were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill, and ev'ryone a scribe by trade; to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky."

The fact that God chose Israel and saved them from many difficulties and the fact that He sent Jesus Christ into the world was God's sovereign providence and proclamation to make God's righteousness known to the whole world. Psalm 98:3 says, "He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God." This tells us that God's salvation is not based on human merit or righteousness, but is entirely based on God's steadfast love and faithfulness. That is why it is appropriate to live a life that praises God. In praising God, what I want to focus on today is what a "new song" in verse 1 really is.

First, a new song is unfamiliar to us. The lyrics of a new song are unfamiliar and the melody is unfamiliar. It is very difficult to experience God's grace while singing unfamiliar songs. Usually, you experience God's grace when you sing a song you know well, a song you're familiar with, right? Nevertheless, in today's psalm, we are told to sing a new song. This does not mean that God is pleased if you sing a song you do not know. The word "new" here is derived from the Hebrew verb [hadash], which means "to rebuild, to renew, to repair."

The true meaning of those words is to sing with a new heart, not same old same old. Renew your mind and spirit before you sing. The Bible verses we normally read without any inspiration and the hymns we sang without any emotion must be restored. There were many Yale University students in my previous church where I had served for 9 years. Once, when the students graduated and we had a service to send them off, the members of the church sang a song together to bless them. It was a song that I usually sang vigorously, but I remember when we sang this song as we let

go of the members of the faith we loved, it turned into a sea of tears. I cried and everyone cried. This is because, unlike usual, we sang it with special inspiration, and it became a new song. Likewise, even if you read Bible verses that you normally read without much inspiration, sometimes as you read them, you realize that these words are for you, and you really get tears in your eyes as you read them.

No matter how old a psalm is, if you read it with a new heart at that moment, it becomes a new song. Even if it is a song that has just been written and composed, if you sing it with an old heart, it is bound to be an old song. Conversely, even an old song becomes a new song if you sing it with a renewed mind!

When I was in high school, my school held mandatory classes for seniors on Sundays. But I didn't want to miss church on Sundays, so I made an excuse to my teacher and attended the 8 o'clock service and then went to school. At that time, I was in the church youth choir, which was precious to me; I experienced God's grace through the anthems and hymns that I sang.

I went to school later than others and studied, but I think the efficiency was much better than others. The song I sang as the choir was a source of great strength and comfort throughout the whole week. How wonderful it was to reflect on the lyrics and be comforted by the grace of God each week!

The opposite of the new song is probably "a tired heart". Living in a harsh world, same old same old makes it easy to fall into mannerism. It's just

repeating the same thing over and over again without any inspiration. The same goes for your work, study, and church life.

David who wrote many psalms praised God in times of trouble and tribulation, not to mention when his life was glad. David said that giving praise and thanksgiving to God is better than giving an ox or a bull with its horns and hoofs. This is to say that David considers a sacrifice of heart and soul better than a religious sacrifice. David was able to sing praise in the midst of suffering because he knew the value of praise.

There were so many hardships and tribulations in David's life, but he did not fall because he lived a life of praise. In Isaiah 43:21 it says, "the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise." Think of all the many praises in those many Psalms. David lived a blessed life by honestly laying his situation before God and gaining new strength through praising and glorifying God.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, I hope and pray that your journey will be a journey of new songs like today's Psalm. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.