

## PSALM 98 SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text for this day is Psalm 98

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!  
For He has done marvelous things;  
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.  
<sup>2</sup>The LORD has made known His salvation;  
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.  
<sup>3</sup>He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;  
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.  
<sup>4</sup>Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;  
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.  
<sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD with the harp,  
With the harp and the sound of a psalm,  
<sup>6</sup>With trumpets and the sound of a horn;  
Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King.  
<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,  
The world and those who dwell in it;  
<sup>8</sup>Let the rivers clap their hands;  
Let the hills be joyful together  
<sup>9</sup> before the LORD,  
For He is coming to judge the earth.  
With righteousness He shall judge the world,  
And the peoples with equity.

We pray: Dear God, our heavenly Father, give us and renew in each of us a love for Your Word. We ask this in the name of Your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends in Christ.

The psalmist in Psalm 98 says, "*Oh, Sing unto the Lord a new song*".  
And sing unto the Lord we do.

At Christmas we sing, "*Joy to the World, the Lord is come*". We praise Him who was born in Bethlehem's manger.

As Easter we sing, "*Jesus Christ is Risen Today*", and we rejoice that we have a risen  
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Savior who has triumphed over sin, death, the devil, and hell.

At His Ascension, some forty days later we sing, "*A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing*" and we praise Him our risen Savior who ascended into heaven to His Father's side to reign in glory for all eternity.

Yes, we take up the words of psalmist and make them our own, "*O Sing unto the Lord A New Song*."

May God the Holy Spirit bless our study of His Word today as we consider Psalm 98

The Psalmist begins...

**Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!  
For He has done marvelous things;  
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.** (Psalm 98: 1)

Throughout the psalms and throughout Holy Scripture, God invites His people to sing praises to Him. The adjective *new* makes us consider that which is *old*, its opposite.

The “*old song*” of man’s efforts to try to save himself is a sad song of misery and futility. The work righteous efforts of people, the invention of physical idols of wood and stone, and idols of godless philosophies and belief systems such as evolution and humanism all lead to hell. Because all of humanity by nature is lost and condemned in sin, (Psalm 51) God Himself must remove the obstacle of sin to make a sinner’s praise acceptable. He is the Lord God, the God of free and faithful grace, who kept His promise to send a Savior from sin, so that by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ, sinners are enabled to sing a “*new song*” (Psalm 33:3; Psalm 40:3; Psalm 96:1; Psalm 144:9; Psalm 149:1; Isaiah 42:10). Therefore, our Lord and God deserves thanks and praise, for salvation clearly comes only by His grace: Yes, “**His right hand ... His holy arm ... worked salvation for Him.**”

Moses as we heard in the Old Testament lesson for this day, was led to sing of the power of the Lord’s right hand when God accomplished an amazing victory over Pharaoh and the Egyptian army (Exodus 15: Psalm 44:3). For all sinners on earth, the Lord has accomplished “**marvelous things,**” namely, His amazing grace and mercy in bestowing the blessings of salvation through the work of the coming Christ (Isaiah 52:10). When we consider all the Old Testament prophecies that clearly point to the work of Christ, we are truly amazed: the promise that the Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), the promise of a Suffering Servant (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53), and even the

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wonderful promise of the resurrection of the Christ (Psalm 16:10). Although this promised Messiah would not appear for hundreds of years, the past tense (“**He has done**”) assured the Old Testament believers that in God’s eyes His promises were certain and true, as good as done.

We cannot help but think of the singing of the angels that pierced the darkness of a world lost in sin on the night God the Son was born into this world in fulfillment of the Lord’s promises. The angels’ heavenly song is a wonderful example how to sing a “*new song*” to the Lord by giving glory to God in the highest and praising Him before others for His wonderful gift of salvation. We look forward to singing this “*new song*” with all the saints in the glory of eternity (Revelation 5:9; 14:3), as we were reminded in the Epistle lesson for this day.

The psalmist continues...

**<sup>2</sup>The LORD has made known His salvation;  
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.  
<sup>3</sup>He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;  
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.** (Psalm 98: 2-3)

The Lord does not want His incredible mercy and grace for the world to remain hidden. God first proclaimed and revealed His precious gospel to Adam and Eve cowering in the fear and guilt of sin in the garden after they had eaten of the forbidden fruit. Sometime later God called Abram to be the father of a special nation. Think of the many faithful prophets God sent to the Israelites with this message of mercy and grace in the coming Savior. However, from the time of God's call of Abram, we see that God never intended for the Israelites to keep this message to themselves. God told Abram, **"All peoples on earth will be blessed through you"** (Genesis 12:3). This wonderful, good news would be revealed to **"the nations"** and to **"all the ends of the earth."**

The gift of salvation in the Christ Child is for all people alike (Isaiah 40:5; John 1:14). The very night Jesus was born, the shepherds after beholding the Christ-Child were busy sharing the good news of Christ's birth. Through the personal witness of believers and through the public proclamation of the gospel, the revelation of God's grace continues. **"Go and preach the Gospel to all creation"** our risen and ascended Savior commands us (Matthew 28:19). The gospel in the Word and the sacraments are the means by which the Lord continues to make His salvation known throughout the world until the end of time.

Furthermore, the psalmist reminds us...

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**<sup>4</sup> Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.**

**Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.**

**<sup>5</sup> Sing to the LORD with the harp,**

**With the harp and the sound of a psalm,**

**<sup>6</sup> With trumpets and the sound of a horn;**

**Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King. (Psalm 98: 4-6)**

We sing, *"Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King"*. This mighty Christmas hymn reflects the joy of believers shouting praises to the Lord. All the earth is invited to shout to the Lord, for the salvation won by Christ is for all people.

Yes, we surely praise our Lord most gladly and joyously in special festival services, such as Christmas Eve, Easter, and Ascension services. But what about our worship life the rest of the year? Sometimes our joyful shouting begins to tarnish and lose its luster. At times Christians can all too easily forget the joy that comes from the gospel. God encourages New Testament Christians: **"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord"** (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Together with Luther, Christians realize that music is a gift of God. Whether it's the harp, the trumpet, the blast of a ram's horn, organ music or piano leading God's people in praise, the gift of music and instrument is given by God to mankind that we might have a means of praising Him. The praises of God's people, though imperfect, are sacred because God accepts them for Jesus' sake. In heaven our praises will be even more glorious as we join the heavenly chorus to worship the King of kings.

Lastly, the psalmist reminds us...

<sup>7</sup> Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,  
The world and those who dwell in it;  
<sup>8</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands;  
Let the hills be joyful together  
<sup>9</sup> before the LORD,  
For He is coming to judge the earth.  
With righteousness He shall judge the world,  
And the peoples with equity. (Psalm 98: 7-9)

Not only human beings but everything that God created was made to give Him glory and praise. All of creation is to worship the one Creator. In our modern, urban society

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and technological world, it is easy to focus on the things man has made and miss the beauties of God's wondrous creation. The roar and crashing of the ocean's waves and the gentle lapping of water on the rocks and banks of a river sound like people thundering and clapping in applause (Psalm 96:11-13). Majestic mountain peaks towering into the sky appear as a mighty choir ready to sing God's praises (Isaiah 55:12). These are but a few reminders to us of the magnificent wonder of God's handiwork.

But pollution and natural disasters in God's creation remind us that this world groans under sin's curse. We think of Saint Paul's description in Romans chapter 8 that "**creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed**" (v. 19) and that "**the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God**" (v. 21, 18-25). How beautiful the new heavens and earth will be (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1)! The child of God has always been waiting for the second advent, the second coming of Christ. New Testament Christians know that since Christ came as promised the first time, He will surely come again as promised the second time. The Lord will come to judge because He has conquered sin and death and has risen as mighty King overall. Yes, He lives!

God's people need not fear the Last Day. Jesus said that when believers see the many signs announcing the end of this present world, they are to "**stand up and lift up their heads, because their redemption is drawing near**" (Luke 21:28).

Yes, this psalm-psalm 98 calls God's people to rejoice with pure, exuberant praise. God revealed His salvation to all the earth in the humble sight of the Savior-King born in a manger. We find the reason for His lowly birth in the message of the law: the sin of the human race. The entire world stands in need of salvation because every man, woman, and child is lost and condemned by a sinful nature, inherited by their first parents. There is only one acceptable response for those who understand by Spirit wrought faith, the meaning of Christ's birth, His perfect life, His innocent death, His glorious resurrection from the dead, and His triumphant ascension into heaven to God's right hand, and that is : joyous thanks and praise!

Psalm 98 reminds us not only of the first but also of the second advent of Christ. The King will come again. The King will come to judge the world with righteousness and

equity. For it is only Spirit-wrought faith in what Christ accomplished through His first coming which makes us ready for His second coming. When He returns in glory, all believers will join together to sing His praise forevermore.

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Yes, with the psalmist of old we sing,

*Sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him...for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.  
Amen.*