

He Sings, We Sing, Together

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Date: 02 December 2018

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[0 : 00] Now I'd like us to look or focus for a wee while this morning, particularly on the two verses that we have in Zephaniah 3 verses 14 and 17.

Where we have the instruction first of all to the daughter of Zion that she, personifying the Lord's people or those who truly love him, is herself to sing. And in verse 17 the knowledge that the Lord himself rejoices over his people with singing.

So in other words, we sing, he sings, we sing together. This is God's design. That his people be one with him and that he rejoices over them with singing.

They likewise sing and praise him. Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout to Israel, be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. And in verse 17 the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.

He will say, he will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing. Now one thing we should notice here is that that doesn't just talk about the singing here.

[1 : 06] Verse 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing.

Which means that in resting in his love, the sense here is almost of, like he did with creation if you think about it. When the Lord had completed his work of creation, we read that he rested on the seventh day.

Now the Lord himself of course is not in need of sort of recuperation. He's not lacking in strength. He's not lacking in ability. He doesn't need to sort of take a breather.

But rather he rests in the sense of taking in and rejoicing in that which he has done. When the Lord rests from his work of creation, he doesn't rest from his work of oversight.

His work of loving superintendence. Of caring for it all. But he has rested from his work of actually making and physically creating it. Because he is now simply, as we see in Genesis, seeing that it is very good.

[2 : 08] And as he delights in it, like you take in a scene of great beauty. Or as two lovers might stare into each other's eyes, whatever, silently. They are just drinking it in.

The Lord is taking in the goodness of what he has done and what he has prepared. So likewise as he rests, he rests in his love. And he joys over that which he has done.

He joys over his work of redemption and creation with sinning. Now the context of this chapter here, of course, is not of what we read here.

It's not simply joy from the opening moment or the opening of the chapter. We see that what the Lord rejoices over is the redeemed remnant of his people.

Those whom he has drawn from. Those who otherwise are pretty much a shadow of dross. We see in the rest of Jerusalem, we see war to her that is filthy and polluted to the oppressing city.

[3 : 07] She obeyed not the voice. She received not correction. She trusted not in the Lord. She drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions. Her judges are evening wolves.

They know not the bones till tomorrow. And the sense they know is that they don't even wait till tomorrow just to chew on the bones. They're devoting everything right away. Because the evening wolves, having been hungry all day till they finally get their prey, are the most ravenous and vicious of all.

Her prophets are life and treacherous persons. Her priests have polluted the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law and so on. So this is the state of Jerusalem, a sink of iniquity.

And it is everless. We see that no matter how much the Lord does good and purifies and sanctifies his people, human nature, if it is unredeemed, is always inclined to go back.

Always inclined to revert to time. We see that even with religion itself. We see how that which begins in the purity of the spirit in the time of the apostles and so on, or the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, how all of that quickly descends within a very short time, a couple of generations, that which is pure spirit and pure love of the Lord and faithfulness to one another and to God.

[4 : 29] And where prayer doesn't have to be forced and where fellowship doesn't have to be forced and everything is just driven by the love of the Lord. As iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold.

They don't want to abandon their relationship with the Lord altogether, but they can't grab that sense of the spirit anymore. They can't snatch it out of the atmosphere. So it becomes sort of deadened and codified.

And instead of the beauty of holiness and the law, we descend into legalism. And instead of that which is meant to be driven by the love of the Lord and the spirit, it becomes cold and dead. And that which is cold and dead is easier to violate without your conscience, but not here. And it soon becomes simply routine. And then human nature comes in and then pride and vanity and the church itself sometimes becomes a vehicle for simply exercising pride or building up wealth or whatever the case may be.

And it's always this. In every generation, in every situation, man takes and twists and perverts that which God has made pure.

[5 : 39] We see this in the prophet Ezekiel, for example, where in chapter 9, the Lord says to the man with the ink horn and the angels that have come to visit judgment on the city.

The Lord said to them, go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

And that message and what we find here in this chapter is that even in the depths of depravity, there are always those who love the Lord and truly seek to honour him.

And that is true if you go right away through even to Revelation, where you've got the judgment upon Babylon. Babylon the great whore, as it were, in Revelation 17. And in chapter 18, what does it say?

It's, come out of her, my people. Come out of her. Come, don't be partaking of her abominations. Now, that is not, it's not surprising that Babylon gets judged.

[6 : 39] What is surprising is that even at the last hour, there is still within Babylon, somewhere within Babylon, there are still those who are the Lord's people.

Whom he calls out, come out from her, my people. And so likewise here in Jerusalem, in earthly Jerusalem, which Nebuchadnezzar is prophesying, but in the sense of God's spiritual church, there's an awful lot of chaff before you actually get to the wheat.

The Lord has cut off the nations that have sought to destroy Israel, but still Israel doesn't take any warning from it. He has visited them with chastisement.

He visited them with judgment. I've cut off the nations. They're tired, they're desolate. I mean, their streets waste. The unjust knoweth no shame. I said, surely thou would fear me. Thou will receive instruction.

So their dwelling should not be cut off. How so have I punished them. But they rose early and corrupted all their doings. And then what we began to read. Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey.

[7 : 43] For my determination is to guard on the nations. That I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation. Even all my fierce anger. For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

For then will I turn to the people of pure language. That they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. Now, this is the sense we have here of the Lord gathering together all his enemies into one place.

Again, think of the parallels with Revelation there. We know all the armies of the world are gathered together to a place called Armageddon and so on. And then in less than half a verse, the Lord devours them all.

What's left? All that's left is the little remnant that have sought him, that have truly desired him.

Then will I turn to the people a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent.

Because what is in their hearts, what's upon their lips is now a purity. A desire to serve him together. Whether or not it's a physical language. Whether it's the Hebrew language that will be restored again as the language of heaven.

[8 : 52] We don't know. But Romans 15 at verse 6 says that he may with one mind and one mouth glorify God. Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the desire is that all who now seek him will call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. And the suggestion again is even his enemies.

Even his enemies will be made to bow just like we're told in Philippians chapter 2 verses 10 and 11. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth.

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Now a tongue that is confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord is a tongue that is confessing something that is pure.

It is a pure language. A pure tongue as it were. That they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. This is the desire that the Lord puts in his people.

[9 : 55] But of course we can't serve him with a pure mouth or with pure lips until the Lord himself does that. Until the Holy Spirit purifies our heart, our lips, our mouth.

We can't praise him as we may desire to do and as he deserves. Again going back to the prophet Isaiah. Remember his vision in chapter 6. Then said I woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.

And he laid it upon my mouth and said lo this hath touched thy lips. And thine iniquity is taken away. And thy sin purged. But it is only because in the vision the Lord sends his angel that purifies the lips even of the prophet.

That he is able to praise the Lord as he ought and to serve the Lord as he ought. For from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplements even the daughter of my espionage shall bring my offering.

[11 : 03] In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings wherein thou hast transgressed against me. For then I will take away out of the midst of thee them rejoice in thy pride. And thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain.

I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people. And they shall trust in the name of the Lord. You see there's the puffed upness of Jerusalem. The puffed upness of human pride in which God himself will never delight.

Because he is completely, totally unimpressed by it. If you, as I've used this illustration in the past, if you looked at a big stone and you saw an anthill. And there was lots of little ants scurrying about. And it was like a little mound there. The little ant that was on top of the mound. And it was standing up on its high legs and waving its little insect legs at you. You would think, oh my, that ant is so impressive.

It's so much better than all the other ones. Little ones running around the base of the ant there. Oh, I'm so amazed by it. I'm just so overwhelmed by how great and strong and powerful that little ant is.

[12 : 04] No, you're not. It's like a bunch of ants. A bunch of ants in the ant. The other one in top is no different from the one scurrying around underneath. And in the same way, the Lord is not impressed by whichever one of us might climb to the top of a little ant hill.

And be puffed up for a little while with power or wealth or glory. And say, oh, we're so much better than everybody else. But rather to recognize our insignificance but God's greatness.

And that's not just sort of self-loathing. Oh, I'm so terrible. Oh, I'm so worthless. And so on. It's not that we are worthless. It's that our pride has no place before God.

Because it is God alone who gives us our true worth. I will also live in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people. And they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

The Lord delights in those who are of a humble spirit. In Isaiah 66 again. You know, thus said the Lord. Heaven is my throne. The earth is my footstool.

[13 : 07] Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things have mine hand made. And all those things have been, saith the Lord. But to this man will I look.

Even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit. And trembleth at my word. You see, that's what the Lord is looking for here. I will live in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people. And they shall trust in the name of the Lord. Those who have the humility to recognize that our power, our strength is above. Not of the temple. Not of the earth we judge. It's no use to us to say, oh well I've been going to church all my life. Oh my father was a very faithful member of church. And my mother was a very godly woman. So I'm depending on them to get me into heaven. They won't. No amount of earthly blessing or earthly special treatment. Or the church or the temple or anything. Is going to redeem us.

[14 : 02] Only the Lord is ever in a position to redeem us. Only the Lord can save us. And his delight is not in those who are proud and lifted up.

But rather it is only when we lose our own pride in our own strength. That we're in a position to receive God's grace. In the prophet Zechariah, reading chapter 11. Verse 10. I took my staff, even beauty. And cut it asunder. That I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day. And so the poor of the flock that waited upon me. Knew that it was the word of the Lord. God can make special relationships and covenants with people. And he can break them. He can destroy that which is unfaithful to him. And that is what we see him doing in the early part of this chapter. But the context then, which this sets, is to underline how for those who remain faithful to him.

[15 : 06] Those who love him for himself. It doesn't matter the iniquity that has gone on around them. In that day, verse 11 again. I shall not be ashamed for all thy doings wherein thou hast transgressed against me.

For I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride. Not only will those who have been proud and sinful be taken away from those who love the Lord. But also our own hearts will be purified in that way. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity. Verse 13. No speak lies. Neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. Remember, verse 9, it's those of a pure language. A pure tongue. That they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. Neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. For they shall feed and lie down. And none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O Israel. Be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

[16 : 05] Now, we don't just sing in times of joy, of course. We don't just sing in times of happiness. Singing is something that goes through every aspect of life, if you think about it. You know, as we mentioned with the children before, we sing in the midst of death. We sing at few notes. We sing out our solos. Some of the other great love songs, for example, are songs of brokenheartedness. Of somebody who's gone away over the sea. You know, folk songs about somebody who's emigrated. Or have the heartbreak and the loneliness now of the hearth at home. Or whatever it may be. But if you think about it, that is also, even in the brokenheartedness, it's an expression about something we love. When soldiers had battle songs before they went into battle. To sort of beef up their courage a bit. And, you know, again, thinking about music. If you may remember from history, that the bagpipes were at one stage banned. Because they were reckoned to be a weapon of war.

[17 : 06] That could be used against the government of the day. Of course, they were subsequently legalized again. And actually brought within the army to be used that way. But they were perceived as a weapon of war.

Because they put strength. They put kind of vigor again into the highland soldiers. When they heard their own particular plans. Peabrochs or whatever being played. They got strength. They were collectively galvanized and gathered. And likewise, marching songs or battle songs would put strength into soldiers as they went to face death. But what were they singing about? They'd be singing about their country. Or they'd be singing about their home. Or the girl they left behind them. Or whatever. They'd be singing again about what they loved.

When we sing national anthems. We're singing about our country. Or our homeland. Or whatever. But we love. When we sing about broken heartedness.

[18:02] When we sing in times of death. We're singing out our soul. For the loss of those whom we have loved. Although, yes, some modern pop songs or whatever they may be.

Spite filled or dark or hate filled. But that tends to be the aberration. I can remember when I was a wee boy. And we used to watch Top of the Pops or whatever on TV. And we'd say to my sister who was a teenager.

All these songs that you write. And all this love and lovey-dovey stuff. And she said, yes, isn't that nice? And of course, I didn't think that was nice at all at that age. I thought I was no interest in that gooey stuff at all.

But most of the songs, even in the secular world, are songs about love. Because we sing out that which we love. Whether it's our country.

Whether it's our regiment. Or battle. Or homeland. Or the person who's been taken from us. Or the broken heartedness of separation. Or bereavement. We sing out that which we love.

[19:02] Mothers sing to their babies in the cradle. Or they sing to their little children. Again, take a personal example. I was never one for bedtime stories myself when I was wee.

But what I did want was my mum, or occasionally my dad, to sing to me. When they tucked me in. When they put me to bed. I wanted them to sing me a song. And once they'd sung me a song, I'd be tucked in.

And that would be okay. Put the light out and so on. But until I'd had it, I wasn't ready to go to sleep. I wanted them to sing to me. And parents do sing to their children, particularly when they're very small. Children sing to themselves, if you think about it.

They sing when they're playing with their toys. They sing, well, they sing at school. They sing about the things they're talking about. But they sing to themselves. Sometimes we sing to ourselves, perhaps, when we're going about our own work or whatever.

But we sing out the things we love. And if you think about it, that is the one thread which is consistent throughout almost all singing.

[20:03] Whether it is in a context of bereavement and sorrow, because we are parted from the one we love. Or whether we are singing to the Lord whom we love in the midst of our soul.

Whether we're singing about separation. Whether we're singing about a person that we're devoted to or besotted with. Whether we're singing about love in our country. Whether we're singing about needing courage when we go into battle.

Because we're serving the country that we love. Almost all those, the thread running through singing and music in general is we sing out the things that we love.

And so this is one reason why we have both. The daughter of Zion, verse 14. Sing, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O Israel. Be glad and rejoice for all the heart.

O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away her judgment. He cast out an enemy. In that day it should be said to Jerusalem. Fear not thou and desire. Let not thy hands be slack.

[21:01] The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. You don't have to worry about being weak, Jerusalem. You don't have to worry about not having any strength. O weak Christian. Because the Lord is mighty.

He's good enough for all of you. He will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love. He has completed his work of grace. He will joy over thee with singing.

This, I think, is an almost unique instance in Scripture. This is, as far as I know, the only case where the Lord is actually described explicitly as singing himself.

Yes, as we've mentioned with the children, there is the case when they all sang a hymn before they went out to the Mount of Olives. And so we assume that as the disciples sang, Jesus was there singing with them. Whether it was from Psalm 113 to 118 or whatever it may be.

Or whether it was a different hymn. It doesn't matter. The fact is they sang. And we must assume that Jesus sang too. It's the only instance that I think is recorded of Jesus singing. But here we have in the Old Testament, God the Lord is recorded as singing.

[22:09] And I think it is unique. But if God himself is uniquely recorded as singing here, we shouldn't take it. So that's the only time that it's ever in his mind or thought.

We mentioned on Thursday at the Thanksgiving service that praise need not be sung. It can be spoken. It can be written with a view to reading out loud later on.

It can be silent adoration. You know, we tend to think that the angels at Bethlehem were singing. Of course, as you know, it doesn't actually say that they were singing. You know, when they appeared to the shepherd, suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and singing.

Not singing. Glory to God in the highest on earth. Peace, goodwill toward men. And so on. Now, we assume they were singing. It's not wrong to think that there was a quiet angel. But it doesn't say they were singing.

They were speaking the praise of God. The praise of God can be sung. It can be spoken. It can be silent. Just like any kind of praise can be. But singing, if the Lord is uniquely recorded as singing, it's not because singing and music is not in his thought.

[23 : 21] It is mine. The Lord has made everything to be infused with music and song. It is part of his work of creation.

It is part of his ongoing providence in the human heart and desire. In Job 38, remember, towards the end of the book of Job, we read verse 4.

Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Says the Lord. Be clear of thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof if thou knowest? Who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof? When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

And all the morning stars sang together. Creation. Creation itself sang. Thank you, John. That's a weird state, isn't it?

[24 : 20] Quite apart from the sort of almost musical sound you get in the trees when the wind blows through it. Quite apart from the sound you can get, the wind whistles through gaps in the hills or whatever.

It is said by astronomers that with the telescopes and the vibrating instruments they've got and so on, that the power that emanates from some of these stars and suns as they're burning up their gases, there's a sort of hum.

There's a note from them that emanates as they're busy consuming all their gases. Creation itself is musical. Creation itself sings out because singing is part of God's love for his people.

And the proof is here in his word. He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing. This is the creation that he has made. Isaiah 55, verse 12, we read, You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.

The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing. And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. But what is the context of that singing?

[25 : 36] The context of that singing is God's word going forth. Because the previous verse, from verse 12 in Isaiah 55, before it says you'll go out with joy and be led forth with peace, So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth.

It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. So what brings forth this singing? This joy is God's word going out of his mouth.

It's his creative power. And the context of that in verse 11 is what we find in verse 10. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth.

You see that God's work of creation and providence is bound up with his spoken and written word, which brings forth this musicality, this singing of creation.

And what is the context of that verse 10? It's what we read in verse 8 and 9. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, said the Lord.

[26 : 49] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Our thoughts, our ways are incomplete, inadequate, always weighted down, burdened, and disfigured by sin, by our fallenness.

God's thoughts and ways are not besmirched or deformed in any such way. God is of utter purity, of perfection, and that perfection and purity has never had its joy summied by sin.

It has never had its musicality become discordant by the perversion of sin. But rather, he will turn to himself a people of a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him

with one consent, where he will joy over thee with sinning.

What God does, he expresses outwardly in creation. Although we cannot see God, we can see the evidence of what he has done.

And although we cannot hear God speak physically, though sometimes there may be, you know, as it were, a voice in your head or in your heart, that you sure can't be from yourself, but must at times only be from the Lord, surely speaking to you.

[28 : 16] Yet, we read in Psalm, for example, 65, at verse 13, we read, The pastures are clothed with flocks. The valleys also are covered over with corn.

They shout for joy. They also sing. This doesn't just mean, oh, they come for joy. And they sing as well. It says, they also sing.

What does they also? The pastures, as well as the flocks, the corn, as well as, you know, they drop down the Jew. The context of that, verse 13, is what we read in verses 9 to 12.

Again, it's about God's work in creation. Psalm 65. Thou visitest the earth and waterest it. Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water.

Remember, water was the difference between life and death in a hot, dry country. Thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridgest it all abundantly.

[29 : 11] Thou settlest the fowls, thereof. Thou makest it soft with showers. Thou blessest the spring, thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness. And thy paths drop fatness.

They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness. And the little hills rejoice at every side. And that's the context of the pastures are clothed with flocks. The valleys are covered over with corn.

They shout for joy. They also sing. Although we cannot see God, we see the evidence of what he has done. And what he has done, what comes out from him, evidence is what is there, what is within.

If I were to walk into the bedroom of, say, a teenage boy that I didn't know, and plastered all over the wall were pictures of, say, his favorite football team and their colors and scarves and so on, he might not be there.

And he might not be able to say, yes, I'm a supporter of such and such a team. But the evidence would be there all over the wall. The evidence of what he has put there because of what he himself feels and thinks and loves.

[30 : 19] So likewise, if we were wandering across a moor and in the middle of nowhere, and we came across, I say, an old cottage, a thatched cottage, like the black houses we used to have all over the islands.

And there was a thatched roof and smoke coming out the chimney and glass in the windows and you open the door and there's the table set and there's the plates and cutlery and everything. You wouldn't say, oh my goodness, how this all just evolved from the primordial slag.

The stones must just have rolled down the hill and placed themselves up into this shape. And look, all the heather must have thatched itself over millions of years into a roof.

And just a little spark must have set, just this little pile of peat that was here in the fireplace and how the cutlery and the plates got there will only be evolutionists to explain. But no, the indication is somebody made these things.

Man came and he made this cottage. He put the thatch on the roof. He created the plates or bought the plates in the cutlery. He set the table. He put the peat in the fire.

[31 : 23] He lit the fire and so on. And if man had to do that which is comparatively simple, let us not get off on a tangent about all the complexity of human cells in the body and who must have made that and how it's meant to have evolved from the primordial sludge and so on.

But never mind that. The fact is because you would see the evidence of a dwelling place, you would see somebody is here. Somebody who wants a roof over their head.

Somebody who wants to buy in the great. Somebody who's allowed to eat their food. Somebody who has furnished this place. It has been prepared. It has been made. And we can tell even though we can't see the person and we haven't met them and we're not able to speak to them.

We know that somebody who lives here has done this. And they have furnished it in such a way as will reflect themselves. So when we talk about or the Bible talks about creation singing.

The cornfields sing. The hills sing. The trees shall break forth into singing. Sing, O daughter of Zion. Why? Because this musicality is in the very heart of God himself.

[32 : 33] Because we sing out by, even in our fallen nature, we sing out that which we love. We sing over that which we love.

Whether it be country, whether it be person, whether it be a broken heart, whatever it may be, we sing out that which we love. And if you think about it, that is one reason why some people will not sing certain songs.

You know, being a Scottish person, I don't have a problem singing the cloud of Scotland. But, it might be more difficult for somebody who's English to sing about, you know, a proud Edward's army being sent home to think again.

Some people who are of Republican sentiment might have a great difficulty singing God Save the Queen. because we find it difficult to sing that with which we cannot agree because instinctively we sing that which we love.

Sing, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O Israel, be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments.

[33 : 40] He hath cast out thy enemy, the King of Israel. Even the Lord is in the midst of thee. Thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not and desire.

Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love.

He will joy over thee with singing. Because he loves his redeemed children, he joys over them with singing.

It's not for any good in their part. If you're a parent and let's say your child ran away from home, let's say they were on the streets in London or Glasgow, they got involved with crime or drugs they were on and eventually as I knock on the door one wet rainy night, there they are, they're absolutely filthy, they're druid, they're shivering, they're starving.

You don't say, well, when have you been all this time? You never wrote a letter, you never phoned, you never texted, you never did a thing. You can just jolly well go back into the night. No, you're going to throw them wide at the door, you're going to bring them in, you're going to get out of those wet things and stick them in a hot bath and put a hot meal in front of them or, to use a biblical example, you'll kill the fatted calf, you'll put the best robe on them, ring on their finger and shoes on their feet and you'll start the music and dancing because this my son which is dead is alive again and was lost in his mind because that's how you feel about someone you love, that's how you feel about someone who belongs to you however far they've been away from you and this I would say to you without fear of contradictions how the Lord regards sinners, they have been far away from him, they have been in a far country, they've been in the darkness, they've been doing all the things they thought would bring them enjoyment and fulfilment only to find it has wrecked them, it has destroyed their lives because that's what sin does, separation from

[35 : 42] God always does that, but they come back eventually to their senses I will arise and go to my father, they knock and the door is opened, ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it will be opened to you because if that is how we who are sinful fallen human beings who feel about a child of ours, how much more does a perfect loving God rejoice, joy over his loss of returning children, will sing, he will rest in his love, he will croon over them and sing to them as they fall asleep in the strength and in the rest of his arms because there you are safe, there you are at home, there you have finally come to rest, to where you were meant to have been for which you were created for, from which had it not been for sin, you should never have been parted but having been reconciled to the Lord, sinner that you and I may be, we are taught to sing, sing,

O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel, because this is what he does for us, we sing out that which we love and God is constantly saying to his people, be like me, be ye holy for I the Lord your God of holy, rest on the Sabbath because I rested on the Sabbath, love your enemies because I love your enemies, forgive those who have wronged you because I forgive those who have wronged me, sing because I sing over those whom I love, the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, you don't have to worry about being too weak and not having any strength or spiritual greatness, the Lord is enough for all of you, enough for all of us, he will say, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love and you and I will be able to rest in him if we are in Christ likewise, he will joy over thee with singing, he sings, so we sing and here is the final beautiful twist, what is greater than one person singing, two people singing in harmony, and what is greater than two people singing, three people, ten people, a hundred people singing in perfect harmony, even if they're your opponents, either of your opposite ends or a sporting competition or the opposition sings, it's inspiring because it

demonstrates their unity, their love for the thing they love and their unity one in another, and this is what the Lord invites us into, this unity with him, that he sings, we sing, we sing together, because together is where the Lord wants us to be with him. Father hope, God bless them, his jsutcase, he drops supreme power Tom, when we sing song, because everyday seecómo they are like, me, until next day, by and then to beigi confusion,