

# Songs in the Night

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[0:00] In St. Mark chapter 14, we read at verse 26, Like when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

Word for word, this is exactly the same as what we would read in Matthew chapter 26 and verse 30. The verses are word for word exactly the same.

When they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. Now, exactly what they sang, we don't know. It is likely that it was something from the selection of Psalms 113 to 118, because these are the particular songs that were used at different stages of the Passover.

And of course, it was a Passover meal for which they were gathered. Some commentators believe that the culmination of the Passover involved the singing of Psalm 136.

That is possible. Again, if you look at it, you know, you thank God to the Lord, for he is good for his mercy and do it forever. That's possible. And I'm sure those who know more about these things than I do might have good textual reasons for saying that.

[1:11] Personally, when I look at Psalm 118, it seems more appropriate, more telling, more applicable to the sort of combination of things for which Jesus was preparing himself.

And how the Lord might well have taken all that Old Testament beauty and strength and depth of the Psalm, which was written, of course, hundreds of years before our Lord's crucifixion.

And yet brought that to that very night when they sang together before they went out to the Mount of Olives. When they had sung in hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Now, hymn simply means a song of praise. It doesn't necessarily mean something other than the Psalms, nor is it necessarily confined to the Psalms. It is almost certain, you know, 99.9999999% that what they sang was not something that they had composed themselves.

It would be, in a Passover context, one of the Psalms, whether it was 136, whether it was 118, whether it was something else. That is what they sang almost certainly before they went out then to the Mount of Olives.

[2:27] Now, what is significant about this verse, and its corresponding verse in Matthew, of course, which is the same and accounts the same incident, is that this is the only record of our Lord's singing when he was on the earth.

Now, of course, we could say, well, as he's singing in glory, in Revelation, we have accounts, of course, of songs being sung in heaven. In Revelation, several of them will come to those in due course.

But we don't actually read of the Lord himself on the throne, singing himself. So, whether it's on earth or whether it's in heaven, we don't read of Jesus, enthroned in glory or on earth, singing, other than on this particular occasion.

We have an instance, which again we'll come to also, of the Lord himself. God, not specified as to which person the Trinity is in the Old Testament, rejoicing over his people with singing.

Zephaniah will come to that also. But this is the only recorded instance of Jesus singing during his earthly ministry, certainly.

[3:37] Now, of course, we might say, well, why on this occasion? He's going out to be betrayed. He's going out to the Mount of Morgans. He's going to die very soon.

You know, if he had sung on the Mount of Transfiguration, when he's been glorified and transfigured before, that's an occasion to break forth into singing, isn't it? Or perhaps when he was coming into Jerusalem on a donkey and everybody's shouting, Hosanna, the son of David, he could have sang then with great joy.

But, of course, the thing is that singing and music and song is not simply for joyful occasions. We have music and song on so many different aspects of our lives.

You know, it has an incredible power to affect us. Music and song can express great sorrow. Or it can lift the spirit wonderfully.

You know, if you think about armies used to use it in battle. If you've got a whole army of soldiers marching, or they're really trudging along, and they're weary and foot sore, and then maybe the sergeant or somebody else gets the wee drummer boy to beat up a sort of a motivating kind of beat on the drum, and it maybe gets the flute players or pipe players to start up the regimental march, or in Scottish regiments, more normally, the bagpipes, once they start going, then the spring comes into the step, the shoulders square back, and they start marching instead of time to it again, because the music has lifted spirits that were drooping.

[ 5 : 15 ] They don't have any new surge of physical energy. They haven't been given an injection of vitamins or anything like that. There is no new input.

It is simply that their spirit has been lifted by the music, the beat of the drum or the music and song. It's not for nothing that in the 18th century, after the Jacobite Risings, the bagpipes themselves were banned by the government as a weapon of war.

And the only people who were allowed to utilise that weapon of war were the highland regiments in the government's own armies. So it was recognised the power that there was for martial strength in music itself.

Now, of course, in many aspects, football fans will sing to encourage their team or to pour scorn on the other side. You know, love songs might be happy and joyful, but they might just as easily be very sad and speak of the breaking of the heart.

You know, we sing when couples are married in church. We sing when babies are baptised. We sing when we lay loved ones to rest at funerals and so on.

[ 6 : 37 ] So whether it is at the beginning of life or whether it is at significant places and stages of life or whether it is at the end of life, there is music and there is singing in all these stages.

It is not simply something that is charted out on a happy occasion. Well, yes, we use it on a happy occasion. Some days on birthday, we all say happy birthday to you and so on.

But music and song is there to punctuate and to resonate with all significant stages and aspects of life. It involves and inspires the mind and soul in a way that few things do.

And it punctuates the major events of our lives. Now, we mentioned a moment ago how Jesus and his disciples are almost certainly singing one of the psalms at the time of their Passover, before they went out to the Mount of Olives.

But, of course, these aren't the only songs that we have specified in the Bible. If we're to go back to, for example, the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, we read in Exodus 15.

[ 7 : 46 ] Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord. And states, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him in habitation.

My Father's God, and I will exalt him. Notice how the Lord is the focus of that song of triumph and of joy. It's not in the psalter, but it's a song of joy and triumph in God.

And the greatest songs we will ever sing will be those that will glorify God, just as Jesus was singing. What he was singing was glorifying to God. Numbers 21, verse 17.

Again, we read, Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it. What was the context there? Numbers 21, The people had been smitten by the Lord with a plague, because they had been unfaithful to him.

[ 8 : 52 ] They had gone away from him. They had gone committing acts of fornication and idolatry with the people of the land, and so on, and the Lord had smitten them. Then you had the brazen serpent on the pole, and then there was no water for the people.

So the Lord led Moses and the people to Beersheba, where there was water. From thence they went to Beersheba, that is, the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, gather the people together, and I will give them water.

Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it. Such joy they had, because they had water again. A basic thing, a necessity of life, God provides, and it is occasion for blessing.

When Deborah and Barak defeated the enemies of Israel, which were attacking them, all the Canaanites and so on, that were opposing them, we read, Then sang Deborah and Barak, the song, the son of Abednego, on that day, saying, Praise ye the Lord, for the avenging of Israel, when

the people willingly offered themselves.

Hear, O ye kings, hear, O ye princes, I, even I, will sing unto the Lord, I will sing praise, to the Lord God of Israel. So far, so joyful.

[10:08] But remember also, that David composed a lament, when Saul and Jonathan died, how of a mighty folly, and the weapons of war perished. Now, we're not told explicitly, that that was a song.

It could simply have been, a lamenting poem, but it is more likely, to have been accompanied, with music, and intended to be portrayed, as a song.

Likewise, with the death of Abner, these in 2 Samuel, chapter 1, and then again, in chapter 3. All these occasions, when there is, biblical song, biblical music, being used.

And we think, okay, well, that's, that's occasions of lament, occasions of sorrow, yes, but whatever may be the situation, we are taught, to utilize, praise, to God.

Ephesians, and Colossians, as I'm sure you'll know, the verse as well, in chapter 5, verse 19, Ephesians, speaking to yourselves, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, and making melody, in your heart, to the Lord.

[11:13] And it's corresponding verse, in Colossians 3, 16, where we read, let the word of Christ, dwell in you, richly in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing, one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace, in your hearts, to the Lord.

Now again, the context there, is not so much as to, whether it's from the psaltery, or whether it's, something else. The context is, that the apostle, is seeking, to convey to the church, whether in Ephesus, or Colossae, but not to be led away, with the things of the world, with the spirits, that people drink, and intoxicate themselves with, but rather be filled, with the spirit of Christ.

If you want to sing, don't make it their drunken songs, of worldly revelry, make it the songs of the Lord. Make it psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, that which will glorify God, that which will honour God.

It is the Lord's songs, over against, the drunken songs, of the world, and it's revelry, that are to be sung, that are to be, the source of our joy, and blessing.

Incidentally, here's a little aside, you mean, if you think, these two verses, are so similar, in Ephesians, and in Colossians, if you were just, to see them written, how would you know, which was which? Well, a little rule of thumb, is that you'll notice, in Ephesians says, speaking, to yourselves, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.

[12:39] Speaking is E, speaking, an E, Ephesians, whereas Colossians, admonishing one another, there's an O in admonishing, there's O in Colossians, it's just a little rule of thumb, I'm sure you all are much better, for knowing that rule of thumb, but just as you see it, you think, I wonder which one that is, is it Ephesians, is it Colossians, there's a wee rule of thumb, for remembering it.

But, James also says, of course, is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. And again, what's significant there, is that where it has the word merry, and you may or may not be aware of this, but where the word merry is used in scripture, most of the times that it is used, it is narrating, or describing a situation, where revelry, revelry or drink, is involved.

If somebody's heart is merry, then it usually means they're on the way to getting drunk. But if it says, is anybody merry, doesn't mean obviously, are they half cut, in that sense.

But if your heart is filled with joy, then let them sing to the Lord, let them sing psalms. If anyone's afflicted, let them pray. If anyone's full of joy, let them sing psalms.

Here's a context where merry doesn't mean, intoxicated, except with the spirit, and the joy of the Lord. Let it be the Lord's song, that is sung.

[14:06] And this again, is the message, throughout scripture, that God is to be glorified, in the things that we sing. You know, obviously, other aspects of creation, also sing.

You know, the birds sing, on the branches of the trees, and maybe, whales and dolphins, may sort of, sing to each other, as they communicate. Maybe there are other kinds of, of musical communication, in creation, that we just don't know about.

But, mankind, is unique, in that he is, enabled by this, to compose, words and music, that will convey, a far deeper, and more diverse meaning, than any of the other creatures, that the Lord has made.

God has put a living soul, within man. A living soul, which is a gift from God. That which makes us, if we may say it reverently, like God.

And the Lord desires, that we be like him, in as many aspects, as possible. Lord, it's not just, as we say, times of joy, that, songs are for.

[15:20] It is for, every occasion, and every situation. If there is darkness, then we can sing, to raise our spirits. We mentioned about, if armies are, drooping in their shoulders, and weenies, they're trudging, then they would, crack out the drums, and the music, in order to, lift their spirits, and get them going.

And if they're going into battle, they might play, the regimental march, or the particular, regimental tune, that would encourage, the troops, as they go forward, into battle.

They still use the bagpipes, even right up to, and including the first world war. And maybe beyond that too. But if we think also, of you know, Paul and Silas, in prison.

What had happened to them there, in Philippi? We read in Acts 16, verse 22, the multitude rose up together, against them, and the magistrates, rent off their clothes.

They didn't just, un-dress tidily, and then get beaten. They tore their clothes, to shreds, and commanded to beat them, and when they had laid, many stripes upon them.

[16:24] So they were bleeding, and torn, by the time they finished, whipping them. They cast them into prison, charging the jailer, to keep them safely, who having received, such a charge, thrust them, into the inner prison, and made their feet, fast in the stocks.

Now the inner prison, means an inside cell, probably, almost certainly, without windows. So it's in the depths, in the dark, the complete, inside inner cell.

Other prisoners are there, there in slightly better cells, maybe with a window, maybe with a bit of light, and here they are, in the inner cell, with their feet, hard in the stocks, their backs, their backs, bleeding to shreds, their clothes, all torn to bits, and having been so completely, unjustly treated, and at midnight, in the depths of the night, Paul and Silas, prayed, and sang praises, unto God, and the prisoners, heard them.

Now, this is their context, of humiliation, of ongoing pain, and suffering, and yet, they sing to God, in the midst of it.

And it's not, they're just trying to keep their spirits up. What is it they have here? They have here, this sense of, despite, all that they have endured, and all that they have suffered, there is a far greater joy within, for what they know is theirs, than all that their outward sufferings, could ever take away from them.

[17:56] I can't really give, a worldly example, that would make it understand, the only thing I can think of is, say you have a sporting event, let's say your team is in a cup final, or something, in a sporting contest, and let's say you're 4-0 up, and you know you're going, that clock is ticking away, and that trophy is just looking like, it's so much, and maybe you have five minutes to go, the other team scored a goal.

So now it's 4-1, instead of 4-0. Are you downhearted? Does it make you think, oh no, now it wasn't, no, you're still 4-1 up, you're still going to win, yes they've got one measly goal, but here you are, with your victory still secure, if you were singing before, you're still singing, if you were going to win before, you're still winning, yes there is a negative, there is an adversity, yes they've scored a goal, yes they have, they have done something bad to you, and yes they have whipped, Paul and Silas, yes they have thrown them into prison, but such is the triumph, that is before them, that they cannot keep, the songs of joy done, they cannot silence their prayers, they cannot stop, their songs of praise, remember the Israelites say, spring up, oh well, the water that bubbled up, from beneath, when the Lord brought them, to the wells of water, that would save their lives, and the Lord brings us, to the wells of salvation, that bubble up, within, that save our lives, not only for time, but for eternity, eternity, now when we think about Jesus, and the situation, he is facing, he knows, the betrayal, that is ahead of him, he has already said, one of you is going to betray him, he knows, how he is going to be treated, by the chief priests, and their followers, he knows, what the Romans do, to crucifixion victims, they would all have seen, many, many crucifixions, take place, up and down the holy land, the Romans, were utterly brutal, in their occupation, so you'd see them, at the sides of the road, poor souls, whatever they had done, were there, crucified, and died, they knew exactly, what was involved, and yet, we read,

Hebrews 12, for example, verse 2, of Jesus, who for the joy, that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now is set down, at the right hand, of his father, in glory, I would suggest to you, this is one reason, why Jesus, is able to sing, with joy, and triumph, even, as he faces, the darkness, of both crucifixion, and the temporary, separation, from his father, which he

endured, on the cross, my God, my God, why hast thou, forsaken me, he knew, what was coming, but he also, knew that the victory, was assured, he also, knew that he, would be given strength, to endure, that whatever, happens, God, would triumph, and he, would triumph, in his father, because, although, music, and song, is not simply, for occasions, of victory, or of joy, or of triumph, with the Lord, there is, always, that, undercurrent, of certainty, there is, always, that, definite, victory, simply, waiting, to be fulfilled, there is, that, scoreline, which, cannot be, overcome, there is, the ticking clock, as we wind down, nearer, and nearer, to the culmination, of all things, and the trophy, looks more, and more, like it is, in your hand, and the prize, closer and closer, to being awarded, and all, that the enemy, throws at you, they may, fight hard, and they may, inflict many a wound, as they did, on Paul and Silas, but they, cannot, overcome, the victory, which is, already, secure, it is, almost, and I don't mean, to reduce, the things of God, to, to worldly, banal examples, it is, almost, more certain, than simply, watching the clock, take down, it's almost, like, watching the, recorded highlights, and being able, to know, exactly, in advance, what the result is, and even, when you see, on the highlights, you see, the other team, gaining points, or scoring, against you, and you, you see, the difficulties, that are faced, in the struggle, you know, what the result is, because it is, already accomplished, and it is, already achieved, and that, which Christ, has done, is already, achieved, for us, it is, already achieved, for him, he still, had to go, through it, of course, but the result, could not be, in doubt, from all eternity, he sang, at him, with his disciples, before he went, out, to the Mount, of all, us, because singing, is part, and parcel, not only, of our worship, of God, as we find, with Moses, and Deborah, and David, and also, in glory itself, and we, if we skip forward, a bit now, to Revelation, we see, for example, in chapter 5, verses 9 and 10, where they sung, a new song, saying, thou art worthy, to take the book, this is that, that the seals are broken, from the book, by the Lamb of God, they sung, a new song, saying, thou art worthy, to take the book, and to open the seals, thereof, for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us, to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us, unto our God, kings, and priests, and we shall reign, on the earth, they sang this new song, and there's another new song, of course, it's mentioned, a little bit further on, in chapter 14, in Revelation, where we read, they sung, as it were, a new song, before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders, and no man, could learn that song, but the 144,000, which were redeemed, from the earth, you might think, well that's a bit strange, why wouldn't you want, everyone to do it, why wouldn't you want, everyone to share the song, well, how can we explain this, I almost think, in terms of, supposing you had, say, a husband and wife, and say, in the early days, of their courtship, there was a particular song, that was special, for them, that whenever it was played, it made them think, of the other one, and it reminded them, of their courtship, and it was always, special to them, that was, in a very real sense, their song, between that particular, couple, that particular, bride and groom, maybe not necessarily, just at their wedding, but, but something, that maybe they heard, or was played, early on, helped to bond them together, now, one of the, one of the ultimate, acts of betrayal, you might say, if one of them, were unfaithful, to the other, would be, not simply, that they, allowed their heart, to stray to somebody else, but maybe, they shared, their special song, with somebody else, something that was, private, something that was, personal, something that was, intimate, to this, particular couple, was just, shared with everybody else, or shared with another person, who wasn't part, of that intimate relationship, that's the only way, I can kind of, describe it, if it's special, to these two people, then it stays, between them, now what do we have here, in Revelation, we have the lamb, we have the bridegroom, and his bride, the church, the 144,000, you'll notice, elsewhere in Revelation, they're specified, as being, 12,000, runs through each, of the 12 tribes, of Israel, and 12,000, are sealed, from each of them, so, whether or not, this is a literal, 144,000, which it may be, as a sort of, core within, the redeemed, or whether it is, illustrative, and symbolic, of the, of those, who have suffered, most for the Lord, those who have been, most through, most for the Lord, all the people of Israel, who are his, you know, time will tell, eternity, will tell, but the point is, that this, is almost like, a secret song, this is a, a new song, this is something, which binds, the intimacy, of the bride, and the bridegroom, this is their song, this is special, to them, they sung, as it were, a new song, before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders, no man, could learn that song, but the 144,000, which were redeemed, from the earth, now when something, is kept, exclusive, it is, the more special, it is the more precious, is it not, you know, what do we, what do we think of, anything that is, is valued, is precious, one of the things, that makes it special, is, very few people have it, you see, at one stage, of course, if, if people were to receive, say, honours from the queen, or OBEs, or VC in battle, or something, that's,

that's rare, so because it's rare, it's a great honour, now if you want to, devalue something, then, you don't necessarily, ban it, you just, flood the market, you just give out, the OBEs, to everybody, and give out, the VCs, to every soldier, that manages to, shine his shoes, or tie his bootlaces, or whatever, just give them out, indiscriminately, what does that do, does that make, everybody special, or does it make, nobody special, you cheapen something, by making it, widely available, because now it's not special, now it's not exclusive, now it's not simply, intimate, between a very few people, and here this song, is intimate, special, exclusive, between the bride, and the bridegroom here, and a little further on, of course, in chapter 15, verses 2 to 4,

[ 28 : 13 ] I saw as it were, a sea of glass, mingled with fire, and then they had gotten, the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, and on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and they sing, the song, of Moses, the servant of God, and the song, of the Lamb, saying, great, and marvelous, are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true, are thy ways, thou king of saints, who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thine, for thou only art holy, for all nations, shall come, and worship before thee, for thy judgments, are made manifest, the song, of Moses, and the Lamb, is a song, which is the property, as it were, of all the redeemed, all those, who are Christ's, shall sing, this song, of Moses, and the Lamb, at the last, and notice, that there is no dichotomy, Moses is pointing forward, in the law, to the fulfillment, of the law, in Christ, and the Lamb, is the fulfillment, of all that is gone before, there is perfect, harmony, no pun intended there, but there is perfect harmony, in the music, and the song, and the objective, of all that is sung here, and the ultimate objective, is to glorify God, you see, the thing with our voices, is that yes, we can use them, to speak, we can use them, to pray, we can use them, to communicate, yes, but such ability, as our voice box, has been given, to sing, or to make music, with the voice, at all, the highest, application, to which that voice, can be put, is the praise of God, there is no, higher application, than to glorify God, with the voice, that he has given you, that's, ennoblement, of the human voice, that glorifying, of the instrument, of the voice box, the highest, application, to which you can, ever put it, is, the praise, and glory, of the living God, and you see, this occasion, when Jesus, and his disciples, sing, before they go out, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples, in all fairness to them, do not know, what is going to happen, that night,

Jesus has said, you know, one of you will betray me, and that probably made, about as much sense, to them, as all the times, he had said, that he was going to die, and then rise again, and say okay, he's saying it, but we don't, we don't get what he means, we don't really understand this, we don't know why he's saying, he keeps banging on about it, but we don't understand, what he means, and they went out, into the Mount of Olives, and the disciples, almost certainly, did not have a clue, about what was going to be, fall that night, but Jesus did, he knew exactly, what was coming, and still, he sang, on this, the only, recorded occasion, that we have, of Jesus singing, and this tells us, of the deep, gladness, the deep, seated, divine, joy, that was in the heart, of our Lord, under all, his griefs, and sorrows, he knew, about the agony, he was about to enter into, he knew, about the dark, shadows that waited, and he was, he was wise, about these things, he knew, what he was about to enter, and he went out, towards the darkness, with, a song of praise, upon his lips, just, just as Paul and Silas, sang, in the dark, of the dungeon, with their backs, bleeding and torn, to shreds, and their clothes, ripped to pieces, and all the humiliation, and injustice, that had been heaped, upon them, they sang, to God, because the triumph, of God, is greater, and more certain, than all the adversity, that his children, may endure, here, and now, and in this, we learn, something, of, a lesson, that is first of all,

Christ's great heart, of love, because the joy, that is set, before him, that we mentioned, in Hebrews 12, there, the joy, that is set, before him, is, the ingathering, of his children, to himself, the gathering, of those, with him, around the throne, in glory, which is, not, possible, unless, he is prepared, to go, to the cross, and pay the price, of sin there, for their sins, in his own blood, unless, he is able, to go, and do that, and complete it, then their salvation, will not happen, and all those, who are already, in glory, the souls, of the spirits, of just men, made perfect, Abraham, and David, and Samuel, and Noah, and all the others, whose souls, would already, be in glory, before Christ, was ever, conceived, in the womb, of the virgin, it would be, on the promise, of what Christ, would do, upon the cross, and now, he was going, to fulfill it, and now, he was going, to secure, salvation, for all his children, he would be, in due course, and thoned, in that glory, with, if he can say it, reverently, the little children, of his salvation, sitting on his knee, and climbing, all over him, and giving him, such joy, as a father, and an elder brother, and the redeemer, of all these, children, of all

ages, whose salvation, he had, secured, yes, it was a horror, of horrors, that awaited him, but through, the horror, of horrors, was the ultimate, triumph, and glory, this is the depth, of the heart, of Christ's love, and we learn also, a lesson for ourselves here, that we ought, to go forward, with, if not joy, to meet ourselves, because we can't, coerce that, we can't fake that, we are probably, afraid, and downcast, and anxious, but with a sense, of anticipation, a sense, of expectation, of the certainty, of Christ's, triumph, as we go forward, into the dark, we ourselves, bear the light, with us, and if we are Christ's, we bear the light, in us, thy word, is a lamp, unto my feet, and a light, to my path, we go in the strength, and with the guidance, of the word of God, but more than that, Jesus said, of his followers, ye are the light, of the world, and if you would, illuminate the darkness, then you must, go into it, and where you go, you bring, the light, with you, because if you are, in Christ, you are, that light, you bear, that light, you represent, that light, you bring, that light, and where the light, goes, the darkness, needs, must, recede, we have the, the illustration, from nature, from itself, if you were, to take a lamp, one of these, old fashioned, lighted lamps, with the glass covers, and so on, into a dark room, that had absolutely, no light, wherever you go, with that lamp, into whatever corner, it illuminates, that corner, that portion, of the room, and the darkness, recedes, before the light, the light, shineth in the darkness, and the darkness, comprehended it not, and good, as so ever, we go, we go, with that, certainty, of triumph, because although, in a sense, we say, we are that light, it is, the light is not our own, the light is Christ, Jesus said, I am the light, of the world, and it is because, he dwells, in his children, that they shine, with that light, so we go forward, into that darkness, yes, able to sing, able to know, the joy, that is before us, we should learn, to sing, yes, as we enter, life's valleys, and shadows, it is not for nothing, that when we lay, our loved ones, to rest, and our hearts, are breaking, our eyes, are filled with tears, still, we sing, it is not for nothing, that at the times, of great stress, and difficulty, we can come to the Lord, and read, and sing his songs, that may speak, of breaking hearts, and of being, in the mighty clay, and the deep pit, from which the Lord, does and will, bring us out, one reason, why the Psalms, are so rich, is that they are not, just times of, happy, clappy joy, and superficial glee, but rather, they express, the depths, of human suffering, and experience, as well, because they are real, they describe, real lives, and a real relationship, with a real God, and any life, that is lived, without God, is lacking, that reality, lacking that force, because this world, is not, mere matter, it is not just, that which is tangible, and which can be, tasted, and touched, and felt, and seen, and smelt, and heard, it is not simply, material substance, it is filled, also, with spirit, and spirits, the ministering angels, who minister, to the Lord's people, the demons, that seek, to undermine them, the spiritual, reality, that fills, the heavens, and the earth, and we do not, know that, or experience it, if we have not, gone, in our lives, we cannot, sing, with the fullness, of knowledge, and joy, without, the Lord, it is, a great thing, to be able, to sing, yes, as we work, as we march, in the armies of God, and as, we suffer, the secret, of Christ's, song, here, was his looking, beyond, the garden, and the tears, of Gethsemane, and the agony, of the cross, he saw, the reward, he saw, the glory, he saw, the joy, and the redemption, accomplished, he saw, the triumph, if we look, only, at the sorrow, immediately, before us, we would be, overwhelmed, but the reality, is that, all creation, testifies, to what God, has done, all creation, is filled, with the knowledge, of God,

[ 39 : 19 ] Psalm 65, as you know, at the end, you know, 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, on every side, the pastures, are clothed, with flocks, the valleys, also are covered, over with corn, they shout, for joy, they, also, sing, it, it is written, to every, aspect, of creation, and the, sultry, God's people, are enjoying, more than, 60 times, over, to sing, to Him, when we sing, to God, we direct, our worship, to Him, our faith, looks upward, and onward, thankful, for the blessings, received, but looking, forward, to even greater, things to come, and I would, suggest to you, that that is one, of the main, differences, between the songs of this world and the songs of God.

If you think about it, you know, maybe let's say you hear some song on the radio and you think, oh, I remember this one. I remember where I was when this was in the charts and, oh, that takes me back to when I was young. And doesn't it do that?

You hear a familiar song on the radio or a record playing somewhere and you think, oh, I remember that. And it takes you back. And the songs of the world take you back.

And the yes may kindle your memories, but it's always back or in the midst of your situation where you are. The songs of God take you forward and upward. They take you to look on through the gloom and through the darkness and through the suffering.

To see the triumph beyond that which you may be enduring at the time. Not simply to look back. The children of Israel are often enjoying to look back to the deliverance God gave them, but not to look back into Egypt.

[ 41 : 10 ] And not to dwell there on their suffering and slavery and all the brick making without straw and all that they endured. That's just more of it. The world drags you back.

The songs of God take you forward into that which he has laid up for those that love him. And the Lord himself desires that we be like him.

I was raised, of course, as most of you know, in a Church of Scotland setting where we had hymns as well as psalms. I want you to just listen to a couple of verses of a particularly beautiful hymn that was written by John Newton who was, of course, the author of Amazing Grace.

And just a couple of verses here. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear. It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole and calms the troubled breast. It is manner to the hungry soul and to the weary rest. Dear name, the rock on which I build, my shield and hiding place, my never-failing treasury filled with boundless stores of grace.

[ 42 : 23 ] Jesus, my shepherd, husband, friend, my prophet, priest, and king, my Lord, my life, my way, my end. Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart and cold my warmest thought. But when I see thee as thou art, I'll praise thee as I ought. Till then I would thy love proclaim with every fleeting breath and may the music of thy name refresh my soul in death.

As we contemplate the end of our days, which will come sooner or rather later, the music of thy name, the beauty of the name of Jesus lifts our soul, lifts our spirit, lifts our singing because God desires us to become like him.

This is what he does. And this is the other instance, of course, of God himself singing. The Lord thy God, Zephaniah chapter 3, verse 17, The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.

He will sing. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing. The Lord delights in his children.

[ 43 : 41 ] He sings over them with love. He sings even as he contemplates the agony of the cross because he knows the triumph and the joy which will follow.

And when they had sung in him, they went out into the mount of balance. The Lord has given you a voice. It is the greatest and noblest task and purpose to which it can ever be put to praise the name of the Lord.