

Three Ways to Glorify God: Praise

Psalm 96:1–13

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Have I told you that I was in the marching band in high school? That's were Lonie and I meet. Our dating career in high school was less than stellar. I would walk the halls singing. Our ninth through twelfth grades had just under 2,000 students. I would sing Jim Croce, Bob Dylan, and Arlo Guthrie songs. Yes, I am that old.

One of my many changing goals in high school was to become a singer/songwriter/artist. That is the cool thing about being a student, the possibilities are endless. Today, when I sit in my porch and someone drives by the house playing loud music you might hear me yell, turn down the music. Or when someone walks by wearing earbuds and singing I think to myself, don't sing.

But, now I sing and play along with Norma. Randy is really good about turning down my mic when we're singing. There is a good reason for it. I sing on the motorcycle when I'm out in the country. I sing in the car with the windows up. I sing in the shower. Do you know that others can hear you when you sing in the shower? I sing not because I want to be an artist. I sing so that I can glorify the Lord and help other people sing to the Lord.

Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Psalm 96:1–6 (ESV)

There are many ways to glorify God, singing is the easiest. Some people love to sing, but not everyone enjoys it. We've heard the saying, sing a solo, so low nobody can hear you. That's not what I mean. Some people don't like to sing. Singing is not their thing. They like to hear other people sing. At some point we've all heard our own voice and decided we don't want anyone else to hear it. It's possible a parent or goofy uncle or a music teacher encouraged us to sing quietly. Now as adults singing isn't a favorite past time. Even though your kindergarten teacher taught you lots of songs, nobody wants to sing them. Your mind never wrapped around a melody and found a way to learn new songs. This is not your fault.

Singing is the easiest way to glorify God. In spite of everything I just said, opening your mouth to let out a noise is the easiest thing to do. Some people open their mouths without every thinking. Sounds come out of their mouths that no one should hear. They make noises that have absolutely no use or purpose in our world.

Did you know that about the turn of the 20th century some song writers were using the melodies of bar songs, drinking songs, with new words about Jesus? I won't tell you what songs you may get a prejudice. That was a clever way to spread the gospel.

Many cultures tell their stories through songs. I've got a recording of old sea fairing Irish tunes. The music is fun, toe tapping stuff. The lyrics tell some wild stories. It's just people opening their mouths and making noise.

We can sing because He is our Lord, Creator, and Savior. You don't have to be a singer like Bobbie or Norma, Jesus is your Lord, your Savior, and your Creator. This is important. The songs I sang when I was a student in school glorified sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll. I won't sing any of them. When I hear students singing today they're glorifying sex, drugs, and rebellion in more graphic and foul ways. So, this is just me thinking, I can certainly open my mouth and sing to Jesus.

But, what's more important is what happens to me when I start singing. I breathe differently when I'm singing. My heart rate increases. Sometimes I tap my toe, stomp my foot, snap my fingers, clap my hands, and even sway my hips. I'm still talking about Jesus songs. I have to believe that Jesus sang a song or two doing all that good stuff. Rhythm wasn't invited by Elvis. I am old.

Singing changes my attitude. When I start singing praises to Jesus I start thinking about His strength, His protection, His authority. My singing often times is just me trying to settle my mind, my body, and my spirit on Jesus.

Then there are the occasions when singing becomes a prayer. It is a prayer to ask my Lord, my King to lead me. It is a prayer of adoration to sing to Jesus about His majesty. Let's move on.

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! Psalm 96:9-7(ESV)

We can glorify God by proclaiming His strength, holiness, and authority. In our hour by hour lives we are distracted from His strength, His holiness, and His authority. It's hard to give the Lord the glory for His strength when we are feeling overwhelmed. Just like that when we're feeling lost, confused, and bewildered. That's also true when we're beat down and angry.

Some translations have used the phrase give to the Lord, while some others use the word ascribe to the Lord. That second one, ascribe seems unusual to me. I don't use that word in any conversation. Even when I'm talking to other preachers.

So, let's take just a second and determine what we are doing when we ascribe to the Lord. We are proclaiming to the Lord who He is. Doesn't Jesus already know who He is? Yes, but if I give it to Him, then I am acknowledging that's who He is. Jesus is majestic, He is holy, He is strong. Now when I say it or sing it I am announcing to myself and to others who He is.

That's when something new starts happening within my mind, and especially my spirit. I begin to believe it. Because I've been distracted, I forgot what I believed. Don't deny it, we've all done it. We forget that Jesus is our Savior and Lord. We do what we did before we started trusting Jesus. We do our own thing, until we again start to believe who Jesus is.

There is not a moment in your life that doesn't need His strength, His holiness, and His authority. But there are moments when I forget to call upon His name. From my own experience being mad, or sad, or bad, or glad can distract me from remembering that Jesus is my Savior and Lord. Then I get mad due to my situation. Or sadness creeps into my life. Or the false-guilt, the devil trying to make me feel guilty, takes over. In those moments I'm not giving Jesus the glory for being my Savior and Lord.

I'm talking about living your life with a song to Jesus rattling around between your ears and maybe rolling off your lips. I've seen construction workers cutting boards and singing a song about a lost love. I've watched nurses tap their foot and watch their lips move and there ain't no music. But I'll bet their singing something from Taylor Swift. I've witnessed housekeeping wearing the earbuds and wiggling their hips while they sweep the floor. Maybe singing doesn't work in every profession.

It doesn't matter what's happening: flood waters, high prices, the car won't work, your boss is overbearing, or the world is on fire Jesus is still your Savior and Lord. Give Him the glory. Ascribe to Him splendor and holiness. Acknowledge with your heart and soul that He is the Savior of the world, and the Lord of all life.

Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity." Psalm 96: 10 (ESV)

We can praise the Lord who is supreme over an unchangeable kingdom that is just. Many times in scripture the word world is used as the present darkness in which we live. As Christians we use the word world to describe the evil and sin that surrounds. The Psalmist is not referring to this world of sin.

We might be better saying God's kingdom is established and cannot be moved. We know that is true, always has been true, and always will be true. God's kingdom is eternal. Before God created the world we live in God and His Kingdom existed. When there is a new heaven and a new earth God and His Kingdom will exist.

Where God is, there is His Kingdom. Jesus showed us God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus taught us to prayer for God's kingdom to come on earth.

The Kingdom of God has always existed because the Lord is unchanging, all powerful, and all knowing. You may not be thinking big enough if you can only see God's Kingdom inside a building. Your view point of God's Kingdom may be too small if you can't see the finger prints of God in all of nature. Your attitude about God's Kingdom may be limited if you don't see God's activities in your daily life. Your experience of God's Kingdom may be restricted if you don't think God can save even the worst sinners.

When we start singing to Jesus we are proclaiming His eternal, unshakable, all powerful Kingdom. The world we see with our eyes is not the Kingdom of God. We are the Kingdom of God and we can proclaim to God His attributes and those of His Kingdom. He is eternal, majestic, and splendid. He is working in the world where we live: in our homes, at our jobs, where we go to unwind, and where there are sinners.

God is greater than our idols of money, self-glorification, and pleasure. He is strong than forest fires, earthquakes, and hurricanes. God is more powerful than lies, selfish-ambition, and narrow-mindedness. This is our God who takes sinners and turns them into saints. Our God saves people from themselves, addictions, and pride. Our God redeems people to become teachers, helpers, healers, and preachers. Our God lifts people out of depression, fills their souls and spirits, minds and hearts with truth. Our God is just, righteous, and faithful. Our God sees our actions, hears our thoughts, and knows our hearts. Our God loves us.

He is worthy of our adoration, our gratitude, and our praise. There is no one or no thing that can compare to the Lord. He deserves to be in our songs. His songs need to fill our hearts, minds, and voices.

The heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness. Psalm 96:11–13 (ESV)

Join all of creation in rejoicing at the coming of the Lord. Everyday we are one day closer to the righteous and faithful judgment of the Lord. That is a reason to give thanks. That is a reason to sing of the majesty of our Lord. We too often worry about tomorrow. What if tomorrow is the day Jesus returns? We will rejoice. We shout and sing for joy. We can join all of nature as the trees, the sea, the stars, the fields of flowers, weeds, and crops all lift their voices in anticipation of the day Jesus arrives.

When the heavens open and Jesus appears I would rather be singing His praises, than falling to temptation. When the trumpet sounds and Jesus comes on the clouds I want to be singing and not complaining. When I stand before His throne may my voice be lifting up His wonderful deeds. When He calls my name may His name be on my lips.

Jesus is coming again and those who know Him need to rejoice. Work is hard, rejoice in the splendor and majesty of Jesus. Raising a family, being a parent, being a friend is a full-time job. Rejoice your Savior and Lord is coming sooner than later. Rejoice when you wake up in the morning. Give thanks when you lie down in bed at night. Sing to the Lord in between. Sing about what He did yesterday, and what He will do today. Sing about His faithfulness. Sing about His unchanging nature. Sing about His everlasting love. Sing because of His joy in your heart.

You can only rejoice if you know Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Otherwise the coming of Jesus and His judgment is frightening. Don't be afraid, and don't be indifferent. Embrace Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

When Jesus comes I will be judged on the righteousness of Jesus. That is only by God's mercy and grace. I have done nothing to deserve the righteousness of Jesus except being forgiven. I was only forgiven of my sins, made clean by Jesus because I called upon Him. I know that I am not worthy, I have sinned, gone my own way, done my own thing.

I gave it to Jesus and He made me right with God, my Creator, Father, Lord.

Everyday is different, and not one day is perfect. I am guilty of forgetting my salvation and my God. I make mistakes. I can turn to Jesus be renewed, revived, empowered.

Jesus took away my sins. He became my sin when He died on the cross. He left my sin behind when He rose from the dead. He lives within me now.

I can sing because of Jesus. You can sing because of Jesus. Call out His name. Give your life to Jesus. Give thanks for His salvation. You will be glorifying God.