

Sing of the LORD's Salvation

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[0 : 00] Some songs stand the test of time better than others, don't they? Many of you will have playlists! on your phones or whatever you love to listen to. Some might include a range of music from decades! I wonder how many feature 1993's Christmas number one. In the weeks running up to Christmas, I Do Anything For Love spent weeks at the top of the charts. It's a song most of us are probably familiar with, but it didn't manage to stay in the top spot for the coveted Christmas number one, because along came Mr. Blobby, with the originally titled single, Mr. Blobby.

If Mr. Blobby is unfamiliar to you, let me counsel you to keep it that way. Especially if you are prone to nightmares, the 90's were a bit different. I also found out this week that in the year 2000, right, Can We Fix It? spent more weeks at number one than any other song.

Right, Madonna, Robbie Williams, Kylie Minogue, Britney Spears, Oasis, they all gave it their best shot, but none of them could stand up to the musical genius of Bob the Builder. People's tastes change, don't they? Songs that the previous generations loved, we look back on and think, what were they thinking? And no doubt in 20 or 30 years' time, we will look back at songs today and think, what were we thinking? Often songs rocket into stardom, only to fade into obscurity just a few years later. That's not true of all songs though, is it? You might not have heard Mr. Blobby, but you will have heard countless songs from the 80's, many from the 70's and 60's, some maybe from even earlier than that. Some songs do last. Some songs are so good that they endure for decades, that they transcend generations and sometimes they transcend cultures too. Some songs do stand the test of time better than others. But no song will stand the test of time better than the song of Moses. This song here that we are coming to in Exodus 15, it transcends not decades, but millennia. And it will continue to stand the test of time as long as time exists.

Earlier in the service, Anne read for us from Revelation 19, 15 sorry. In Revelation, the apostle John is receiving a vision of what is to come, what lies in the future. And what he saw, or better yet, what he heard, was the song of Moses. That the words have been kind of updated, it's like going from the Scottish Psalter to sing Psalms, that the lyrics are a little different, but it is the same song. That the tune is the same, the credit still goes to Moses, but now in collaboration with the Lamb, Jesus himself.

It's been updated, kind of broadened the new covenant, but the chorus that rings through Exodus 15 and Revelation 15 is the same. 3,000 years in the past, more than 3,000 years in the future. This song. What we are coming to this morning is not an obscure, strong song from a strange time. This is no Mr. Blobby, because this song here in Exodus 15 is all about the Lord's salvation.

[3 : 34] salvation. The salvation he has brought about for his people, and who that has revealed himself to be. That was worth singing about then, it is worth singing about now, and it will be worth singing about in heaven. So let's follow the kind of the flow of this salvation song this morning. There's a few points in the service sheet that we're going to kind of walk through. Think of them more like checkpoints along the way. This composition is one piece of music, right? It begins with an overture in the first five verses there, before transitioning into two main movements. We'll follow through each of those before coming into land on the note that both of those movements end on the chorus of this glorious song. Before we do that, maybe just a very quick reminder on the context we are jumping into here. Maybe you missed last week. Maybe this is your first Sunday in church, and you have no idea what's going on. The nation of Israel, right? That is God's old covenant people, right? Not kind of today's modern country of Israel. They had just been rescued from slavery in Egypt. And what a rescue it was, wasn't it? Trapped between Pharaoh's vast army and the Red Sea, the people of Israel believed that this was the end. That there was no escape. They were staring death in the face.

But God caused the sea behind them to part in two, to rise up as a wall of water on the left and the right, so the people of Israel could pass through on dry land. The Egyptian army, led by Pharaoh, charged in after the people, trying to destroy them. But the Lord released the walls of water. The pursuing army was drowned, and not one of them remained. That is what we saw last week here in chapter 15. We are still sitting on the shores of the Red Sea.

Just look up there a couple of verses before this chapter begins, the end of verse 30 of chapter 14. What do we see there? Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. That is what they see, and they do three things in response.

They fear the Lord, they believe in the Lord, and they sing this song to the Lord. Having seen the Lord's salvation, they come now to sing of his salvation.

[6:10] That is how God's people rightly respond to their salvation. And remember, this is not just their song then, this is our song now. But when we see the even greater salvation that God has won for us in Christ on the cross, in defeating sin and death, in disarming Satan and his servants, we should be able to take a version of this song on our lips, into our hearts. And that includes where this song begins. Just notice two things about those first few verses. There's kind of overture before the main event begins in verse 6, when the Lord himself is addressed. But first of all, see there how all of God's people decide to sing.

I will sing to the Lord. At end of verse 2, I will praise him. I will exalt him. These people aren't kind of living out some kind of musical, where they just move seamlessly between speaking and singing, kind of spontaneously bursting into song.

Nor is it just as the kind of musically gifted who are shoved to the front to sing on behalf of the watching crowd. No, all of God's people gather together and they say, I will sing.

And they sing, second thing to note, they sing, don't they, to their God. The Lord is my strength, verse 2, and my song. He has become my salvation. This is my God. And I will praise him.

It is a resolution to sing because they have a relationship with God. And those two things are very closely connected, aren't they? So singing doesn't come naturally to all of us, does it?

[7:52] I don't kind of love standing up here on a Sunday morning, but there are a couple of benefits about it. I do feel very far away from everyone, but it does mean, one thing, I can look at people on the balcony without kind of breaking my neck. That's a positive. The other positive, perhaps, is that some of you can't hear me sing. It's maybe not the most beautiful sound in the world.

Well, except for maybe the singers, ironically. I'm sometimes genuinely a little bit worried about putting them off. But because singing in tune is not a gift I kind of naturally have, it's something I very rarely sort of spontaneously do, right? If you were to go into our house at any point, right, you won't hear me singing. You'll hear my wife singing, because she's a great singer.

But it's not something I kind of run around the house joyfully doing. But that does not mean singing is not a great thing for me to do when I want to express my love for the people who mean something to me. I think I've used this analogy before, but I do think it's a helpful one.

However little you might sing day by day, however kind of musically challenged, like me, you might be, but what do you do when the birthday cake comes out for someone you love?

You start singing, right? Because you know them, because you love them, and because you want to celebrate them. You rightly start singing. A little bit provocative, perhaps, but I think a helpfully proven point. If you can sing happy birthday, but you won't sing in church, maybe you need to do a health check on your relationship with God. The flip side, though, a desire to sing, which so many of you have, right, that is a wonderfully healthy sign. That you have seen his salvation, that you know he is your salvation, and so that you want to make him your song. I said it's maybe a positive that none of you have to hear me singing. Maybe you do think that's a positive. But let me say, actually, I think that one of the great joys in church is people who wouldn't naturally sing, maybe even who don't have great voices, singing their heart out. Because it says a lot, doesn't it? It says a lot about their love for God when they are ready to do something maybe they don't even feel comfortable doing in order to praise their God. God's people are ready, eager, excited to sing to the Lord because of our salvation. And that is what we see the people do here. Let us move on to the two movements in this masterpiece. The first thing in verses 6 to 10, which kind of looks back. The second is in verse 13 to 17, looking forwards. Looking back, we hear God's people praise the Lord for what he has done in defeating his enemies. The beauty, isn't it, of poetry of song is that it can give a kind of a vividness, a picture of events that the pure prose just can't really match. These

verses show God's defeat of his enemies be more than just a victory, right? It is a rout, a total triumph. Glorious in power, the Lord shatters the enemy. It's like glass being thrown down onto concrete, shattered into a million tiny shards. No one can ever put it back together again. In his majesty, he overthrows his adversaries like a handful of pebbles, going to be launched into the sea, never to be found again. His fury consumes them like stubble. The match is lit, the fire is kindled. The stubble is consumed, never to be seen.

[11 : 42] The Lord blasts his nostrils, but the waters stand up in a heap. You feel the power, right? A hurricane, the strongest hurricane, a tornado, a typhoon, right? Nothing can stand water up in a wall.

An exhale of the Lord is enough to cause the sea to stand on edge. You can sense the power, can't you? It is even enough for the depths to cement themselves as the base of an impenetrable barrier above.

And it stands in such stark contrast, the righteous wrath, the unparalleled power of the Lord, stands in such stark contrast to the enemy who thinks he can oppose him.

Here, the enemy's misplaced confidence there in verse 9. He says, to undo all this evil.

Verse 11, you blew with your wind. The enemy sees himself as an unstoppable force, an unconquerable army.

[13 : 22] The Lord sees a flickering candle. It's gone. That is the victory the Lord has won.

It is comprehensive. It could not be more resounding. And that is what his people are celebrating. Maybe that surprises us a little.

The people are, they're kind of implicitly celebrating their liberation, but they are doing so by explicitly celebrating the Lord's crushing defeat of his enemies.

That maybe feels a little bit jarring because this is a song of rejoicing, isn't it? The tambourines are right. That there is singing and dancing.

It is a celebration because the Lord has shattered his enemy. Is that okay? Are we good with God smashing Egyptians, drowning their horses?

[14 : 20] I think the answer should be yes. We've seen throughout this book, haven't we, that Pharaoh was kind of representative in this book of the serpent king, Satan himself, and sin, the great enemies of God's people.

Right? Jesus' defeat of those enemies on the cross, of Satan's sin and death, is something we should rejoice in. But Pharaoh was not only a representative of those great enemies, he was, he really was, a servant of the great enemy.

I don't think it's too strong to say, his desire was to carry out Satan's will. He sought the death and destruction of God's people.

That is what he longed for. That is what he hungered for. You can hear it there in verse 9, can't you? My desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword, my hand will destroy them.

That is what he wants. And so even in this kind of prototype of redemption, as the Israelites see the Egyptians dead on the seashore, it really is a victory worth rejoicing about.

[15 : 40] It is like liberated captives of a concentration camp passing by their captors on the way to freedom. It is a sight that rightly induces praise, not delighting in the death of the wicked, but praise for those who have come to set them free from this evil enemy.

They are rightly delighting in the rescuer who has brought about a just judgment on evil and set an enslaved people free. That is what God's people rightly praise him for.

They sing about it. And it is, isn't it, part of the victory we celebrate at the cross. It's the same song with the words updated, a crushing victory over a seemingly powerful enemy who is brought to nothing by an infinitely more powerful God.

We should rejoice in the defeat of death. Celebrate the fact that sin has been slain. That the devil's hold over you has been destroyed.

Praise the Lord. It is a salvation worth singing about. A rescuer worth rejoicing over. Sing it. That sin, as we sang earlier, has been thrown into a sea without bottom or shore.

[17 : 01] And sing it. Because singing, isn't it, is how we express more than just what we believe to be true. Singing is how we express what we feel towards the one who has saved us.

Sing of victory in the past and sing of victory in the future. That the second movement praise the Lord for what he is doing for his people, for what he will do for his people.

Last week, I don't know if maybe some of you are a fan of golf, last week Rory McIlroy won the Masters for the second year in a row. It's one of, if not the biggest tournament in golf.

For years, Rory McIlroy had been hovering around the top of golf. But for many, at least until the last couple of years, his career was one of just unfulfilled potential.

It would always be said, pretty much every time you watched him in any tournament, the commentators would say something like, when he plays at his best, no one can keep up with him. And yet he went years and years without winning any of golf's biggest competitions.

[18:17] Because while his best might have been better than anyone else, he could never consistently perform at that level. You get that with every sport, don't you? Teams in their prime will be described as unbeatable at their best.

And yet every time a team steps out onto the field, they might well get beaten. Because you never know if their best is what you're actually going to get.

that we have sung of the Lord's total triumph over his enemies, his unmatched power. But we need to stitch that together with something else we've already seen in Exodus.

Quite a few chapters back, back in Exodus 3, where the Lord revealed himself as the I am. There is no inconsistency in it.

What you see at his best is what you always get. Now that means the immeasurably powerful God who conquered his enemy and saved his people on the shores of the Red Sea will always be the immeasurably powerful God who will save his people from their enemies and conquer them.

[19:46] So his people can not only rejoice in what the Lord has done, they can now sing a song of joy at what they know the Lord will do.

Not what they hope will happen, but what they know will happen. And that is what happens in verses 13 to 17, where the gaze is fixed forward. It's a spectacular thing, really.

The Lord is guiding his people, he is with them, but his victory in the past has prepared the way forward for his people in the future. As this generation set out towards the promised land, already from the moment they set foot on the far shore of the Red Sea, all that stood between them and the promised land began to tremble.

Verse 14, the peoples of Hurd, they tremble. Pan seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Further north again, the chiefs of Eden were dismayed.

On again, the leaders of Moab were shaking with terror. Even the inhabitants of Canaan were melting away. All because of the great and mighty arm of the Lord.

[20:54] They were still a stone. Because he had shown his power, his righteous wrath, all who might have opposed his people saw and despaired.

It's an amazing thing for the people on the shore of the Red Sea to be singing here. But verse 17, you will bring your people in and plant them on your holy mountain.

Zion, Jerusalem, at the heart of the promised land, even the recipients of this book are not there yet. They sing of that future hope with absolute confidence.

They know what is coming because they see what has happened. They sing praise to the Lord not just for what he has done, but for what he will do. That is their song.

That is our song. Confident in what the Lord will do for us because of what he has done to his great enemy.

[21:59] But the words we put on it carry even more hope, more beauty, a greater promise. That there is so much I could have picked from. Just one verse from one of the songs we regularly sing, though.

This is what we sing. Unto the grave, what will we sing? Christ he lives. Christ he lives. And what reward will heaven bring?

Everlasting life with him. There we will rise to meet the Lord. Then sin and death will be destroyed and we will feast in endless joy when Christ is ours forevermore.

That is the song of salvation. A song not just of past victory, but of future hope. guaranteed. How does we think about what God has done and what God will do?

This song, though, right throughout, demands that we keep our attention on who God is. Let's just see briefly where both these kind of movements meet. The chorus of this song, praise the Lord for who he has revealed himself to be.

[23:11] When we dwell on what God has done in the past, when we think about what he is going to do in the future, our instinct often, isn't it, is to think what that will mean for us.

Were we composing this song, I think we would likely finish each of these movements by shining the spotlight on ourselves. Because you have defeated the enemy, I am free. Because you defeated the enemy, I am free from sin's curse, free from Satan's tyranny. Because you will bring us into your dwelling place, I can look forward to endless joy, to dwelling with God in heaven forever.

I want to say that is not wrong. There are plenty of places in the Bible where the spotlight does shine on what God's great work of salvation means for us. But that is not what happens here. This is not a song primarily of thanksgiving, but of praise. It's not about us. It's not even about Moses.

[24 : 21] It is about the Lord. That is where the spotlight shines at the end of both these sections. Having looked back and looked forward, the focus is fixed firmly on what this reveals about God.

Specifically, that he is holy and that he is king. Who is like you, verse 11? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome and glorious deeds, doing wonders?

Who is like you? No one. Nothing. We praise the Lord for who he has shown himself to be. The one who, through striking fear into all those who would oppose him and his people, has shown himself to be majestic in holiness, glorious in deeds, worthy of worship, deserving of praise.

The one who will establish his throne has shown himself to be king of all creation. None like him in majesty, none like him in power, none like him in authority. That is who God has shown himself to be through this victory.

Even if it meant nothing for us, God would still be deserving of our praise because of what he has shown himself to be here. Like the most amazing piece of artwork, it doesn't have to have changed your life in order to be worth praising the artist for.

[25 : 50] Even if these events were meaningless to our eternal destiny, it would still be good and right to bow down before God and worship him because he is holy, because he is king.

What we gain from it and we gain blessing upon blessing, every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places as ours in Christ Jesus, that is just reason to heap the thanksgiving on top of the praise. that we must never get so distracted by our benefits that we forget to dwell on what our salvation reveals about God himself. As we consider the salvation he has won for us in Jesus, in bearing our sin on the cross, in raising him from the grave, that there is nothing wrong when rejoicing in what that means for us, but what it tells us about God should always be of first importance.

We said this briefly last week, didn't we? Even our salvation is ultimately for the glory of God. We should see him, that he is a God of justice and a God of grace, that he is powerful and gentle, that he is majestic and merciful, that he is the king of all the earth who came to conquer death.

That is our song. To rejoice in what he has done, to praise him for who he has shown himself to be. That is our song and it is a song I think we are to keep on singing.

[27 : 24] The last couple of verses there, verses 19 to 21, in a sense I think there is much about them that is little more than repetition. But I think that is part of the point.

In verse 19, we get another kind of recount of what we have read multiple times already. Pharaoh and his chariots went into the sea. The people of Israel walked through on dry ground.

We've heard that already, but that's the point, right? The story doesn't get old. They walked through the sea on dry ground. The Lord stood the water up and walls of water.

The story doesn't get old. You can't get enough of it. You can't tire of singing about it. It is worth retelling again and again and again, reminding yourself of constantly. Lest you forget about the Lord's salvation and stop singing about it.

We need the gospel on repeat. We need to tune our ears in constantly to hear it afresh, to come back Sunday after Sunday after Sunday and sing songs again, singing of the Lord's salvation because it never gets old and we should never stop singing about it.

[28 : 43] I think in these last couple of verses, we don't only have an encouragement to keep on singing, but a command. For the first time, we are introduced to Miriam.

When women show up in Exodus, it means good things are happening. We saw it with the midwives in chapter one, with Moses' mother and sister, with Pharaoh's own daughter in chapter two.

When a woman appears in Exodus, we can be confident that something good is happening and that is exactly the case here. Miriam is introduced. It might have been her in the banks in the island chapter two, but only here do we have her name and significantly, her occupation.

She is a prophetess. I listen to what Miriam says. What Miriam's about to say is not just her opinion. It is God's word. She gathers all the women, gets them kitted out with tambourines and sings to the people. What does she sing?

[29 : 51] Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. That sounds familiar.

It's because it's virtually identical to the very beginning of this chapter back in verse one. Almost identical, except for one small, but I think important difference.

It's not as it, I will sing. The prophetess is saying, sing. Sing. Sing to a people who have just finished their song, sing it again.

It is no longer just the people's chosen response. It is the Lord's command. Sing it and keep on singing it. And that checks out with where we began, doesn't it?

With what Ann read for us at the start of the service. Revelation 15, they are still singing the song of Moses. But now it's not just Moses' song of salvation.

[30 : 57] It is also the song of the Lamb. But the words have been updated. But we don't sing about the defeat of the horse and his rider. We sing of the defeat of death and its sting.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? Praise be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. See the Lord's salvation.

And then sing of it. Sing of the Lord Jesus. Sing of your Lord Jesus. Sing to him.

Make known his might. Proclaim his love. Declare his power. Praise his name. Because what he has done and because of what he will do, sing this song and keep on singing it.

Let us pray before we sing this song again together in just a moment. Father, we do thank you and praise you that you have given us a song to sing and that in the Lord Jesus Christ you have given us a new song to sing.

[32 : 12] that you in your glorious might, in your power, in your majesty, you have defeated your enemy.

Lord, that at the cross Christ defeated sin and Satan. He overpowered death. He won the great victory for us that we might have life in him.

Lord, we praise you for what that has revealed about you. that you are holy, that there is none like you, that you alone are the God of heaven and earth, the King of all creation.

We praise you for what you will do in the future for your people, that you will bring us to our heavenly home where we will dwell with you in your sanctuary, in your dwelling place forever and ever.

We praise you for that glorious hope and we ask now that you would help us to sing of it, to sing of who you are, to sing your praise, to exalt your name, to lift high the name of Jesus, to see our salvation and respond in joyful praise.

[33 : 22] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.