

## The Summons to Sing & the Promises of Grace

### Intro

Ps 95:1

#### ▶ Personal experiences in gathered worship

- The call to worship God in song is nothing short of a gift of His grace.

**“Pilgrims on the way, we are called to give up everything ... for the sake of the gospel’s call. But our pilgrimage is a pilgrimage of joy, and it needs to be carried by song. Too many of us, it seems to me, are trying to make it through all this with tight jaws, pursed lips, and angry spirits. We are ready to die the martyr’s death, but we have not learned to sing the martyr’s song.”**

-Reggie Kidd, *With One Voice*, p46

- There are God-ordained purposes tied to gathered singing.

Ps 22:3 “You are Holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.”

### Sing ... and see God’s holiness and grace

- We’re not very far in the Psalms before we are met by a Holy God who does not regard sin as casually as we do.

Ps 15:1-6

- The unrelaxed standard of holiness (vs 2-5) held up for those who would enter God’s presence becomes, for those who are in Christ, a song of grace and confident access.

- God's majestic holiness coupled with Christ's work of redemption are the dominant themes of heaven's worship. They're also the dominant themes for Sunday morning!
- *Seeing God's holiness and His mercy in Christ will cause us to feel humbled, amazed and grateful.*

## Sing ... and be comforted by God's nearness

- Musical worship in Scripture involves more than just energetic thanksgiving.
- The singers in Scripture and in history are acquainted with trials.

Ps 77:1-6

Acts 16:16-25

- Even suffering can't repress God's song in our hearts because when the trials come, he gives us a song in the night.

### ▶ Our little blues singer

**"I would like to make just one observation: the psalms, the Bible's own hymnbook, have almost entirely dropped from view in the contemporary Western evangelical scene. I am not certain about why this should be, but I have an instinctive feel that it has more than a little to do with the fact that a high proportion of the psalter is taken up with lamentation, with feeling sad, unhappy, tormented, and broken. In modern Western culture, these are simply not emotions which have much credibility: sure, people still feel these things, but to admit that they are a normal part of one's everyday life is tantamount to admitting that one has failed in today's health, wealth, and happiness society.... Few Christians in areas where the church has been strongest over recent decades – China, Africa, Eastern Europe – would regard uninterrupted emotional highs as normal Christian experience."** -Carl Trueman, *The Wages of Sin*, p158-59

- *Seeing God as Comforter and Refuge leads the suffering singer to hope in God and wait expectantly.*

## Sing, and grow in self-giving unity

- God has brought together people from diverse backgrounds, with different styles and perspectives and He teaches us to see His multi-faceted glory in that diversity as we raise ONE voice to Him!

**“When I first became a Christian..., I thought that I could do it on my own, by retiring to my rooms and reading theology, and wouldn’t go to the churches and Gospel Halls; ... I disliked very much their hymns which I considered to be fifth-rate poems set to sixth-rate music. But as I went on I saw the merit of it. I came up against different people of quite different outlooks and different education, and then gradually my conceit just began peeling off. I realized that the hymns (which were just sixth-rate music) were, nevertheless, being sung with devotion and benefit by an old saint in elastic-side boots in the opposite pew, and then you realize that you aren’t fit to clean those boots. It gets you out of your solitary conceit.”** -C.S. Lewis, quoted in Kidd, *With One Voice*, p158

- “I don’t like folksy music. Where’s the majesty and reverence?”
- “I don’t like classical. Too high brow. Might as well sing in another language.”
- “I don’t like old-timey hymns. Can you say, hokey? Lol.”
- Reality: Every church has a stylistic center.

**“I’ve concluded that it must be our Singing Savior’s delight to make one fellowship resonate more to Bach’s voice and another Bubba’s. It must bring him satisfaction to grace one fellowship with a heap of Blues Brothers’ gifts and a dash of Bubba, and another with a boatload of Bubba and a sprinkling of Bach.”**

-Reggie Kidd, *With One Voice*, p144

- *Growing in tangible expressions of humility, we display God-glorifying unity to a world that is individualistic, self-serving and fragmented.*

## Sing, and hear the Singer

Heb 2:10-12

- This quote is drawn from Ps 22:22, yet these words are attributed to Jesus.

“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.”

- The ultimate worship leader in the gathering, who enables us to know the Father – he tell us the Father’s name – and who leads our song of adoration is Christ Himself.

**“It’s only when we understand his presence in the church as being the fulfillment of God’s promise in Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) to “quiet you with his love” and “rejoice over you with singing” that a crucial aspect of our salvation comes into perspective. Jesus didn’t coldly settle accounts for us. He doesn’t bark us into improving ourselves. He unites us to himself in the glorious communion he has enjoyed for eternity with his heavenly Father. He resides within us to heal the broken places and refresh our cauterized hearts. He sings us into a new mode of existence.”** -Reggie Kidd, *With One Voice*, p.109

- The Church sings to a singing God!

**“The New Testament too is written for such a time, and so its dominant note is also one of victory and thanksgiving. Indeed, its writers – all of them – are convinced that the most monumental thing in all human history took place in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus sings in our midst because death itself has begun working backwards. It is only fitting that we should answer his song with ours, because, as Twila Paris rightly sings, ‘All that has been taken, it shall be restored.’”** -Reggie Kidd, *With One Voice*, p118

- As we listen for God’s Voice over our songs, we experience joy unspeakable and full of glory.