

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July**

**Psalm 96 – 1-10**

**Who do we worship; Why do we worship and how do we worship?**

**First Part:** When was the last time you caught yourself singing in the shower?

What about humming along to a tune that

gets stuck in your head? When was the last time your favourite song came on the radio and you couldn't help but sing along?

Music has positive effects on our brain such as stress reduction and mood improvement, even helping with stroke recovery. There are many health benefits of singing as well to your mental, physical and emotional health.

When we sing we are pushing air up our throat making flexible membranes to vibrate at different speeds. This changes the pitch of the sound and reshapes our tongues, lips and mouths to form words while making this happen.

Singing tones up our facial muscles, diaphragm, develops our lungs and improves posture; it releases anti-stress hormones and helps us feel better and can decrease our pain; it improves our IQ and memory and can lower our blood pressure. Singing goes with every season and Psalm 96 gives us the Bible's rationale for singing.



22 times the Bible tells us to “Sing to the Lord.”

In today’s Psalm God is giving His people their marching orders:

**“*Sing* a new song to the Lord, let the whole earth *sing* to the Lord,” and “*Sing* to the Lord, bless His name.”**

Psalm 96 is for royalty, it should start with a tambourine and a trumpet – but since we don’t have those here, let us sing, not a new song, but a well loved one – **How Great Thou Art.**

**Second Part: Why should everyone sing to the Lord?**

***Because God asks us to.***

Sing ME a new song, everybody ought to sing to ME, you ought to sing to let people know about the salvation I offer and declare all the great things I HAVE done.

***Because God is great and God is real***

God is feared above all gods as all the other gods are just idols. Just dead pieces of wood, or clay or silver. They can’t know you, help you, respond to your prayers or change your circumstances. Only God can. So we should open up our mouths and let our vocal cords loose. Sing to the Lord a new song!

***3. Because God made the heavens and God is beautiful.***

Job 38:7 tells us that while the creation was happening, the morning stars sang together and the angels shouted for joy. We ought to sing because the stars of the heavens sing. God created our being – He is

incredible, full of splendor and majesty. He has an aura that radiates all around Him because He is so beautiful.

**4. *Because God is here and God reigns.***

He is in this sanctuary. This place was built to worship Him. He inhabits it! He's sovereign. He's our Lord. He made us, and He's large and in charge. He will never treat us unfairly because He never loses His cool, is trustworthy, reliable, predictable and consistent.

God's wonderful creation is to be praised. He is above the heavens, but down here on earth where there are many gods, the one true God outshines them all. These gods – with a small g – are mere idols. They are things we make up, in contrast to our creator who made us and the heavens. We praise God as Creator and we also praise God's character. Let's sing: **How Great is Our God**

**Final part:**

**Sing to God and bless His name.**

We are called to bless His name and of course, God does not need our blessing. But in worship, to bless God is to tell of God's saving deeds, to extol His mercy, might and compassion.

**5. *Because singing is a means of worship to God.***

We're not singing about *lost love* or about *drinking beer with friends*. We're singing about the greatness of our God and what He's done for us. He made all of creation to sing. The heavens were made to sing;

the sea was made to resound with His praise; the fields – the land, and everything on it, was made to celebrate the wonders of our God. Heaven, and sea and earth: all of creation, and we are part of creation. We were made to praise God and celebrate Him.

Ancient worshippers in the Temple used Psalm 96 and others like it to bless God and they may have knelt and lifted up their hands. Worship is between the worshipper and God, yet it moves outward with another imperative – we are to tell others of God’s salvation. We are to declare God’s glory among the nations

The Psalm writer sings out his praises to God, overwhelmed by all that God has done. We should reflect on God’s majesty and goodness to us so we are able to tell others about Him. When our hearts are full of appreciation for what He has done, telling others should come naturally.

We are called to publish God’s glorious deeds to everyone – wherever, whenever and however we can.

### **How well are you doing at telling others about God’s greatness?**

We ought to sing now, because some time, for a time, at least, in the future, our lungs probably won’t be able to sing. And our minds won’t be able to form words. And our tongues won’t be able to pronounce them.

Because one day the King will come. And He will reign in our presence and will rule with justice and righteousness. And He'll judge "with faithfulness." He'll judge based on our faith in His Son.

When Jesus returns, He'll judge each one of us *faithfully*, according to what we have done.

- He'll judge us for the things we've said to others that were and weren't true.
- He'll judge us for the things we did that helped others and the things that hurt others.
- He'll judge us for the things we did which were selfless, and the things that we did that were selfish, and wanted something for ourselves.

And when He first returns, I don't think we will be able to sing. I think we will just gasp, weep and fall on our knees in wonder, worship admiration and awe.

Let's finish our sermon and prepare for Communion with the song **Praise the Name of Jesus.**