

Psalm 25 – Why We Sing Psalms

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Part I: The Psalm

Psalm 25 is David's prayer for deliverance. His approach is interesting; he asks that the trust he has had in God not be in vain. He then notes that this hope is dependent on two factors. First it is dependent on our willingness to walk in His ways. Second, it is based on God's willingness to forgive us our trespasses. David then enters a second prayer much more basic. He asks God to save him. He describes his great emotional distress. He sees this as part of his seeking forgiveness, and seeks to be delivered from feeling abandoned.

Part II: Singing Psalms

This Psalm has been turned into several songs in our song book. This is because we have multiple commandments in the New Testament to sing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19). Those commandments describe two purposes of songs: singing to one another to teach, and singing to God to praise. We also see three types of songs. First is the Hymn; this is from a Greek word that describes a song that praises God. Second is the Spiritual Song – a Greek term for a religious message set to music; this song is the type we sing to one another. Finally, there is the Psalm, which is a song from the book of Psalms.

For a few there is some confusion over this command. The word "Psalm" comes from the Greek word *Psallos*, which refers to poems played with musical instrument. However, in every New Testament context, the term is used to refer to the book of Psalms, not a type of music (see Acts 1:20, Luke 20:42). The Old Covenant authorized instrumental music in playing the Book of Poems. But the New Covenant authorizes singing the Book of Poems. Therefore, the command to SING Psalms (James 5:13) is not a command to PLAY Psalms, but a command to SING from the book titles Psalms.

Why would God command us to sing from this particular book of the Bible? First, we know they please God since He wrote them. We consider that part of the purpose of singing is to please Him, and our songs are a sacrifice from the heart. This command enables us to offer sacrifices that please God (Hebrews 13:15). Second, they well reflect our desire to praise God. We know that most were written by David, and that David was man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). Therefore, Psalms were written with a heart to God. Finally, they are easily designed for singing, with simple and clear themes to sing. At the same time they capture our imagination with vivid imagery that speaks to our hearts.

God's wisdom in singing is manifested in the command to sing. Singing lifts us up personally; this is the reason we feel refreshed by worship. Second, one of the most proven manners of learning is by song; this is why children sing songs about the alphabet or other things. Finally, we know that God desires unity among us. When we sing, we are acting out unity in a way no other work of worship accomplishes.

So what is the conclusion? First, we must sing with our hearts and minds (1 Corinthians 14:15). Second, we must see the importance of singing scriptural songs (Ephesians 4:29). Finally, we need to keep constant the idea that singing pleases God, one of the great themes of the book of Psalms (Psalm 47:7).