

DESERT SONG

Exodus 15

Calvary Church of Pacific Palisades
May 22, 2011 ♦ Sunday Morning Worship

Introduction:

Grew up singing, love to sing. Traumatized Susie gathered around piano 1st Christmas started singing.

Maybe you were traumatized when you first came to church and we stood and sang for 30 minutes.

Sing for different reasons. Happy, miserable. Remind us of good times, take mind off bad times.

Happy songs, sad songs. Funny songs and stupid songs. Unforgettable lyrics and tunes. IMPRINTED.

Ill. Song I could sing if awakened out of a dead sleep and asked ... lyrics that don't make sense. Different

Singing reflects our moods as well as changes and lifts them. Singing expresses and connects.

Ill. James Taylor concert ... sat behind a couple. Cheap seats but the best show, not the stage, the couple.

Which brings me to worship ... Why do we sing so much? Christians are the singing-est religion.

Why has so much money been spent on church music ... Cathedrals. i.e. Cathedrals of the world. Budget?

Why is it that worship music is the most divisive issue of our time. i.e. Worship Wars. Very personal.

WHY? Worship flows best through music; vehicle through which we connect with God. Express heart.

WHY? ... while there is no "order of worship" in the Bible (please tell me if you find one); it is full of songs.

Two whole OT Books containing songs; Song of Sol (married love) and Psalms (joy and complaint).

Please open your Bibles to Exodus 15. **Page 50**

Lots of famous songs in the Bible. This is the 1st Song in Scripture

In the desert, the wilderness; in a barren place. But they are free; find them celebrating with singing.

In the desert they begin with unhindered praise,

Travis read portions of the song ... Moses, then Miriam, his sister joins in ... **Read Exodus 15:19-21**

1. If you want to sing a song of JOY, then focus on God. What He has done, who He is.

a. This song has no hint of self. Reminds me of the kind of songs Travis writes. Christ.

Ill. Song themes this morning ... not by accident; intentional. God's presence, power, reign, creativity.

Who God is and what God has done ... Powerful warrior who fights for us. No other god like Him, a loving

leader who reigns forever ... focus is on God, His attributes, His glory, His fame.

Songs that focus on God are songs of JOY, Songs of HOPE.

b. This song can't be contained. Miriam with a tambourine, women forming a conga line.

Modern Generations ... don't just want to hear it, we want to feel it. THE BEAT, THE THUMP.

Ancient Generations as well. Tambourine is PERCUSSION instrument. Drums, cymbals.

Ill. Jeru Day ... 67 war, Israeli's took Jerusalem. Netanyahu and Obama. Next year in Jerusalem.

Focused on God, unaware of self. Rejoicing, singing songs of praise ... impressed with God WORSHIP.

Transition: 1st Song in Bible. Focus = God. Uncontainable. But didn't take long to lose focus.

Took ONLY three days for them to change their tune. Singing praise to singing the blues.

Read Exodus 15:22-25a

2. If you prefer the BLUES, then focus on CIRCUMSTANCES. Lament, I'm not getting what I want.

When we focus on circumstances, we lose sight of God and end up mired in bitter complaining.

Right to address their complaint to Moses who cried out to God. WHY? Was this really God's fault?

- a. God led them to the bitter waters. **Exodus 40:38 (NIV84) ³⁸ So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.**

God didn't lead them around every difficulty, He led them into difficulty. Bitter waters, more than once. WHY would God do that? Hard times are good times because ... focus riveted on Him. Impossible circs. Ill. Never closer to God, when struggling ... husband says wants out, kid tells you she's following Buddha.

- b. God led them there to create dependence. **Philippians 4:19 (NIV84) ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**

Hard times are good times because total dependence on Him.

ill. Can't do it on my own, I'm not equipped to handle this. What am I supposed to do? What's the secret? **James** ... count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds. Focus on God trust in Him, not self. HOW?

Read Exodus 15:25b-27

3. Whatever the circumstances, OBEDIENCE turns bitter waters sweet.

God led them there to show them that by His power He could make the waters sweet.

God takes difficult/impossible circumstances; turns them into opportunities.

So hard to believe this. Not what we want, no one welcome this; run from it.

Hear God's voice and obey and you will be healed. No one wants to drink bitterness; we want to complain rather than listen and faithfully obey.

This week I listened and God's Word spoke to me ... struggling; got to change focus. I'm singing the blues. Not too hard on them; how long does it take for you to forget the miracles; the blessings? Sin of forgetting Instead of focusing on circumstances; Wake up thanking Him, recalling miracles, blessings. Instead of fixed on the circumstances (challenges) Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus ...

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV84) ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

"I am the Lord who heals you ..." Prosper you and not to harm you ...

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV84) ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Conclusion:

Today, a choice. In the desert, what kind of song will you sing?

Focused on God, or focused on circumstances. Singing His praises or singing the blues? Listen, obey?

May God turn our Desert song from songs of lament into songs of Hope, as we trust in Him.