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Break Forth in Song

By Teresa Hampton

Our move to Mobile, Alabama, in 1981 was exciting. We decided to buy our first home. Just after we closed the deal, there came an unexpected rain that dumped sixteen inches. The new house that we had not yet moved into, was flooded. Members Harry and Jean Miller promptly came to our rescue. Harry often broke into song as he worked, despite the fact that they had just lost their oldest son to a drunk driver's irresponsible actions. How could a person sing joyful songs following such tragedy? I believe it came from their incredible faith.

Singing was a natural response when the Almighty defeated the enemies of his people. Moses and the children of Israel sang after the Egyptian army was drowned in the sea, as did Miriam and the women (Ex. 15:1-19, 20-21). Deborah and Barak sang when God defeated Jabin, king of Canaan, and his forces (Judg. 5:1-31). Christians should rejoice in Christ's victory over death. *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep* (1 Cor. 15:20). His victory should be celebrated, especially since it assures that we can overcome death (1 Thess. 4:14). Singing helps one focus on God and the glory of heaven.

God's people sang during times of trial. Paul and Silas were seized, dragged into the marketplace, accused of wrongdoing, beaten and placed in the inner prison with their feet in stocks. What did they do? They sang at midnight (Acts 16:25). Jesus sang a hymn with his disciples before going to the Garden of Gethsemane, with full knowledge that soon one of his chosen twelve would betray him, and he would be arrested by the mob he led (Matt. 26:30).

Singing was also the natural response of God's children when he blessed them. The children of Israel sang when they arrived at the well in Beer where God had promised to give them water (Num. 21:16-18). Those returning from captivity sang when they began to restore the temple, and later at the dedication of the wall (Ezra 3:11, Neh. 12:42).

Singing should be our response, too, when we experience victories, or going through trials, or gratefully reflecting on all that God showers on us. Let us not forget God's masterful design for worship in the church—using the instrument of God's choosing, the human voice. Studies show that singing benefits a person physically and emotionally, and group singing offers the most positive change.* God understood his creation and instructed us to exhort and admonish one other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Praise God, break forth in song!

Today's verse: *Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises* (Psalm 69:30).

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