

Pastor Kory's Page

Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

March 12-13, 2016

"Songs of Salvation"

"The Lord God is my Strength and my Song, and He has become my Salvation" (Isaiah 12:2). We heard these powerful words in last weekend's Old Testament reading. Isaiah confesses His faith in the Lord by calling God his "Song." For Isaiah, God and His Salvation was the content, the lyrics, and the reason for his songs.



Singing the Church's Songs of Salvation is one way that we confess our faith today. "Within the Lutheran tradition, the wedding of the Word of God to melody was modeled after the reformer himself. Martin Luther had a high regard for music and urged the Church to use it wisely as a vehicle for proclaiming the Gospel. 'Next

to theology,' he wrote, 'I accord music the highest place and the greatest honor.'" (LSB viii)

I hope that you too have experienced the power of Christian hymns and songs to uplift your soul: "Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, How great Thou art!" (LSB 801) God's Word set to music can console us, challenge us, cheer us, and inspire us—sometimes in the same song!

This weekend we sing one of the great Lent hymns appointed as the Hymn of the Day: "My song is love unknown, My Savior's love to me, Love to the love-less shown That they might lovely be. Oh, who am I That for my sake My Lord should take Frail flesh and die?" (LSB 430:1) What a perfect summary of our Gospel reading! Again and again God lovingly sends His servants, and finally His beloved Son to the love-less tenants in the vineyard.

During the Lord's Supper this weekend, we sing to the haunting melody of hymn 750, "If thou but trust in God to guide thee And hope in Him through all thy ways, He'll give thee strength, what'e'er betide thee, And bear thee through the evil days. Who trusts in God's unchanging love Builds on the rock that naught can move." (LSB 750:1) Hymns such as this one are written for those who are struggling and distressed – that's *all* of us, from time to time!

As we draw near to Holy Week, we'll sing Jaroslav Vajda's 20th century hymn, "When You woke that Thursday morning, Savior teacher, faithful friend, Thoughts of self and safety scorning, Knowing how the day would end; Lamb of God, foretold for ages, Now at last the hour had come When but One could pay sin's wages: You assumed their dreadful sum." (LSB 445:1) On Good Friday, we'll sing Bernard of Clairvaux's words, as Christians have been singing for a thousand years: "O sacred Head, now wounded, With grief and shame weighed down, Now scornfully surrounded With thorns, Thine only crown. O sacred Head, what glory, What bliss, till now was Thine! Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine." (LSB 450:1) The emotional words of the African-American spiritual make a fitting conclusion on that darkest day of the Church Year: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord? ... Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree? ... Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?" (LSB 456:1, 2, 3)

Finally, on March 27, we'll sing the Church's songs of Joy and Victory as we usher in Easter morning and celebrate our Risen Jesus: "Now all the vault of heav'n resounds In praise of love that still abounds: "Christ has triumphed! He is living! Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear! Repeat their song of glory here: Christ has triumphed!" (LSB 465:1) I think some of the best Easter lyrics are to be found in hymn 474: "City of God, Easter forever, Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb, River of Life, Saints and archangels, Sing with creation to God the I AM! Jesus is risen and we shall arise: Give God the glory! Alleluia!" (LSB 474:5)

Keith Getty's and Stuart Townend's song, "In Christ Alone," has a great Easter message: "There in the ground, His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain. Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave He rose again! And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me; for I am His and He is mine – bought with the precious blood of Christ." (CCLI #1252631)

What about you? What Songs of Salvation make a difference in your life? I would like hear about your favorite hymns and Christian songs and why they are so special to you. Are they historic hymns, contemporary praise songs, or somewhere in between? Please write me a note, send me an email, or share with me sometime about some of your favorites. Who knows, we might sing some of your favorite Songs of Salvation soon!

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Kory Janneke