

Lent Vespers 2  
23 March 2014  
Concordia Lutheran Mission  
Terrebonne, Oregon

## “The New Song Christ Sings is the Gospel of His Saving Righteousness of the Cross through His Word and Sacraments.”

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God:  
many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Psalm 40:3

### Introduction

What is this New Song? This New Song is the Gospel.

OK, so what was the old song? The old song was the same old song of the old Adam, namely, sin, death, subjection to the power of the devil, and eternal damnation. Men have been subjected to this old song since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

But the Lord places a New Song in Christ’s Mouth, namely, the Gospel, Absolution and faith. Gone is the old song of wrath and ruin replaced with the Good News of the Lord’s Absolution and salvation.

The Lord Himself placed this New Song in Christ’s Mouth<sup>1</sup> because God has ever always desired Mercy and not condemnation. God Absolves Christ to Whom our sins were imputed

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<sup>1</sup>“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” **Deuteronomy 18:18**, underscore added. “Pertaining to the office of the prophet they are again warned against false prophets, also against wizards and soothsayers. And now Moses promises his people the great Prophet of the future, of whom God had already spoken on Sinai. The Lord will raise up a Prophet for Israel from their brethren, who will be a prophet like Moses. Moses had spoken to Israel the words that God had placed in His mouth. The future Prophet will likewise share with the people the revelations of God, speaking and testifying what He himself has seen and heard from God. His own Words will be God’s Word. ... Yes, this prophet, Christ, will be greater than Moses. His Word will be greater and more important than the Word of Moses. The law came through Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He who has transgressed the law of Moses, still finds salvation and refuge in Christ. But he who does not

and, thereby, absolves all men, inspiring Christ to praise God for this Wonderful Work of Absolution; calling upon God for Absolution for Christ's sake is the Highest Worship of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

This New Song is the great miracle that inspires men to fear, love, and trust in God above all things unto life everlasting and the resurrection of the body.

## **I. The New Song is the Gospel, i.e. Absolution of Sin, Peace with God, and Life Eternal.**

### **A. The old song is sin and death.**

For there to be a new song there must have been an old song. The old song is the world after the fall of Adam. After the fall of Adam, the song of the world became sin, death, and subjection to the power of the devil.<sup>3</sup>

Moses recounts a sample of the old song when he writes in the book of **Exodus**:

And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one

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hear the Word of Christ, but despises it, for him there is no hope. God will require it of him.” The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Wisdom for Today, The Biblical History of the Old Testament*, tr. the Rev. Arthur E. Beck, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup>“We therefore utter ‘a hymn unto our God;’ and the hymn itself sets us free.” St. Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Volume VIII, St. Augustin: Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, ed. Philip Schaff, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted May 1989, p. 120.

“The woman came with the opinion concerning Christ that with Him the remission of sins should be sought. This worship is the highest worship of Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to Christ. To seek from Him the remission of sins was truly to acknowledge the Messiah. Now, thus to think of Christ, thus to worship Him, thus to embrace Him, is truly to believe.” The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article III. Of Love and the Keeping of the Law.<sup>33</sup>, *Triglotta*, p. 163, underscore added.

<sup>3</sup>“O sing unto the Lord a new song’ (vers. 1) [**Psalm 98**]. The new man knoweth this, the old man knoweth it not. The old man is the old life, and the new man the new life; the old life is derived from Adam, the new life is formed in Christ. But in this Psalm, the whole world is enjoined to sing a new song. More openly elsewhere the words are these: ‘O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth; ... [**Psalm 96:2**] ... .’” St. Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Volume VIII, St. Augustin: Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, ed. Philip Schaff, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted May 1989, p. 480, amplification in brackets added.

side and on the other *were* they written. And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, *It is* not the voice of *them that shout* for mastery, neither *is it* the voice of *them that cry* for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strawed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*.<sup>4</sup>

There it is. The sound of singing Moses heard. Moses heard the liturgy of the world, which liturgy is idolatry, and its hymns, the old song of sin, death, and subjection to the power of the devil, manifested in the idols, the golden calves.<sup>5</sup> It is sin because it transgresses the First Commandment. It is death because, as Joshua noted, this singing was the sound of war, war against God ending, obviously, in death and ruin because men cannot defeat the Almighty. Finally, it means subjection to the devil, indicated by the idols, the golden calves, plucked out of the dark conjurings of the religions of Egypt.

The old song is simply the same old song of sin, death, darkness, ruin, and subjugation to the devil.

### **B. The Gospel is the New Song, Absolution of sin, salvation, peace with God and life.**

Christ, however, sings a new song in **Psalm 40**. Because the old song was war with God and the inevitable death – because what mortal can prevail against the Immortal? – the New Song means peace with God and life eternal. The New Song gives peace with God and life eternal because of Christ's Work for us. In verses 1-2 Christ suffered consequences of the old song of the world. David writes:

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.<sup>6</sup>

God, however, delivered Christ from the old song of the world of death and ruin and, in so doing, delivered all men from the old song of the world. Christ undertook to suffer not for His sake –

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<sup>4</sup>**Exodus 32:15-20.**

<sup>5</sup>“But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.” **I Corinthians 10:20.**

<sup>6</sup>**Psalm 40:1-2.**

He after all is God and has no need of any of these human experiences, suffering or otherwise – but undertook to suffer these terrible things for us so that we would never have to suffer them. When Christ was delivered from His suffering, *we were delivered from any and all suffering because of our sins*. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.<sup>7</sup>

The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

Now, then, if the Father raised Christ from the dead, He, by this glorious resurrection act, declared that the sins of the whole world are fully expiated, or atoned for, and that all mankind is now regarded as righteous before His divine tribunal. This gracious reconciliation and justification is clearly taught in Rom. 4:25: “Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification.” ... This truth Dr. Walther stressed anew in America. He taught that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the *actual absolution pronounced upon all sinners*. ... Calov<sup>8</sup>, following Gerhard<sup>9</sup>, rightly points out the relation of Christ’s resurrection to our justification as follows: “Christ’s resurrection took place as an actual absolution from sin. ... As God punished our sins in Christ, upon whom He laid them and to whom He imputed them, as our Bondsman, so He also, by the very act of raising Him from the dead, absolved Him from our sins imputed to Him, and so He absolved also us in Him”.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>**Romans 4:25.**

<sup>8</sup>“**Calov, Abraham.** B. 1612; studied in Koenigsberg and Rostock; ... He was the staunchest champion of strict Lutheranism of his age, against Romanism, Calvinism, and syncretism. The number of his writings is almost incredible. Foremost of his works is his *Biblia Illustrata*, 4 vols., in refutation of the commentaries of Grotius. ... D. of apoplexy at Wittenberg, 1686.” *Concordia Cyclopaedia*, p. 105, **s.v. Calov, Abraham.**

<sup>9</sup>“Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) has rightly been classified the ‘third preeminent theologian after Luther and Chemnitz.’ ... However, while Gerhard is best remembered for his great dogmatics, the *Loci Theologici*, Gerhard produced a number of devotional volumes and preach [sic] many sermons to the ‘common man.’ The sermons in this volume were apparently preached when Gerhard was 31 years old and already superintendent at Heldburg and a Doctor of Divinity.” **Foreword** from *Seven Christmas Sermons*.

<sup>10</sup>*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 321.

The Good news, i.e. the Gospel, is the deliverance of all men from sin through Christ's Work on the Cross. We find this Good News expressed as the New Song again in other psalms, e.g. **Psalm 98**<sup>11</sup>:

O Sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand<sup>12</sup>, and his holy arm<sup>13</sup>, hath gotten him the victory. The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.<sup>14</sup>

Christ sings a new song because through His Work men are retrieved from death and destruction and become a new creation. The prophet Isaiah writes:

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<sup>11</sup>“Vermahung zum Lobe Christi” [Admonition to Praise of Christ] *Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Uebersetzung Dr. Martin Luthers* [The Bible or the Entire Holy Scripture, Old and New Testaments, according to the German Translation of Dr. Martin Luther], St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1905, p. 604, translation in brackets from the German is mine.

<sup>12</sup>Notice similar language for the Gospel in **Isaiah**: “And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.” **Isaiah 11:11**, underscore added.

<sup>13</sup>Again, Isaiah writes: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” **Isaiah 53:1**.

“*The Lord has bared His holy arm.* It is certainly good that our God has revealed Himself. *He has bared*, that is, He has manifested *His arm*, that is, His power, since the Lord God is always weak and foolish in appearance and countenance, as we see today. But now, in this time, He reveals His power and wisdom before all the nations. This also happens, that from weakness He distinguishes Himself in strength, as we see His weakness move forward. The prophet takes this passage from Ps. 98:1 ff.” Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 17. p. 212.

<sup>14</sup>**Psalm 98:1-2.** “**Admonition to Praise the Messiah.** ... In view of the wonders of God's grace and righteousness, as revealed in the coming and in the work of the Messiah, the whole creation is invited to unite in praise to Jehovah. **V.1. O sing unto the Lord a new song**, one of the newness of all things in consequences of the redemption of mankind through the work of the Messiah; **for He hath done marvelous things**, the miracles of His grace in bringing salvation to the world; **His right hand**, emblem of His almighty power, **and His holy arm**, upheld in the sinlessness of His perfection, **hath gotten Him the victory.**, bringing help and salvation to men.” The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, The Old Testament, Volume II, The Poetical and the Prophetical Books*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962, p. 162.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people in joy.<sup>15</sup>

Again, the Apostle St. Paul writes that in Christ we are a new creation:

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.<sup>16</sup>

The New Song is the Gospel because it reveals to us that Christ, through His Suffering and Death, has delivered all men from sin, death, and the power of the devil. This New Song also is fitting praise of God Our Savior. David writes:

And He hath put a new song in My mouth, *even* praise unto our God ... .<sup>17</sup>

The Apostle St. Peter writes:

But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light....<sup>18</sup>

The mere mention and use of this New Song the Gospel obviously praises God because it reveals His Kindness and Mercy to fallen men in Christ and Him Crucified for the sins of men. The Lutheran Church confesses:

The woman came with the opinion concerning Christ that with Him the remission of sins should be sought. This worship is the highest worship of Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to Christ. To seek from Him the remission of sins was truly to acknowledge the Messiah. Now, thus to think of Christ, thus to worship Him, thus to embrace Him, is truly to believe.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>**Isaiah 65:17-18.**

<sup>16</sup>**II Corinthians 5:17.**

<sup>17</sup>**Psalm 40:3**, text is from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 132..

<sup>18</sup>**I Peter 2:9.**

<sup>19</sup>The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article III. Of Love and the Keeping of the Law.<sup>33</sup>, *Triglotta*, p. 163, underscore added.

“Just as Paul also says, Rom. 4, 20: *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.* Thus the worship and divine service of the

## II. Christ Sings through His Word and Sacraments to Inspire Saving Faith and Obedience to God unto Life Eternal.

### A. Christ sings the New Song through His Word and Sacraments, the Gospel.

Christ sings the New Song through His Word and Sacraments because the Word and the Sacraments are the Good News of Absolution of all sin for Christ's sake and Salvation.

Holy Baptism is the New Song because it is the Good News of Absolution of all sin and salvation. The Apostle St. Peter declares in his Pentecost sermon:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.<sup>20</sup>

The Apostle St. Peter writes that Holy Baptism is salvation because it is the New Song of Absolution, life, and salvation:

The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...<sup>21</sup>

The Apostle St. Matthew writes that the Holy Communion is the New Song because it Absolves of sin and saves:

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.<sup>22</sup>

The Apostle St. John writes that the Word is the New Song because it Absolves of sin and saves:

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Gospel is to receive from God gifts; on the contrary, the worship of the Law is to offer and present our gifts to God. We can, however, offer nothing to God unless we have first been reconciled and born again. This passage, too, brings the greatest consolation, as the chief worship of the Gospel is to wish to receive remission of sins, grace, and righteousness." *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article III. Of Love and the Fulfilling of the Law.*188, 189, *Triglotta*, p. 207.

<sup>20</sup>**Acts 2:38.**

<sup>21</sup>**I Peter 3:21.**

<sup>22</sup>**St. Matthew 27-28.**

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.<sup>23</sup>

Christ Himself is in our midst singing the New Song of His Word and Sacraments, the Gospel, the Good News of Absolution of all sin and salvation.

### **B. Christ singing the New Song inspires faith and the righteousness of God in men.**

This Glorious Singing of Christ in our midst inspires men to the righteousness of faith. David writes:

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.<sup>24</sup>

Many see the New Song because the Cross of Christ is raised up through the Gospel, i.e. through Christ's Word and Sacraments, as we've already seen. The prophet Isaiah writes:

And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations....<sup>25</sup>

The Sign is the Cross of Christ raised up through the Word and Sacraments<sup>26</sup>, i.e. the Gospel<sup>27</sup>. The Apostle St. John writes:

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<sup>23</sup>**St. John 20:21-23.**

<sup>24</sup>**Psalm 40:3**

<sup>25</sup>**Isaiah 66:19.** Also see **Isaiah 11:12:** "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcast of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

<sup>26</sup>"*A sign.* This is the Gospel and the Word, which is the banner by means of which the people are gathered. ... . In the world the church appears like nothing. The Word alone is the sign and banner. This Word is to be found only in the church." Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 17, p. 413.

<sup>27</sup>God's Word and Sacraments are the Gospel. "But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ and stewards of*



Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.<sup>28</sup>

The Apostle St. Paul writes that the Cross of Christ is lifted up through the Gospel:

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.<sup>29</sup>

Through the Gospel many see the New Song of salvation. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

... the word of God came unto John the son of Zachariah in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth; And all flesh see the salvation of God.<sup>30</sup>

Christ singing the New Song in our midst inspires men to saving faith and the righteousness of God. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.<sup>31</sup>

Again, the Apostle St. Paul writes:

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*the mysteries of God, i.e. of the Gospel and the Sacraments. And 2 Cor. 5, 20: We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in God's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Thus the term leitourgia agrees aptly with the ministry." The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV. (XII.): Of the Mass, Of the Term Mass.80, 81, Triglotta, p. 411.*

<sup>28</sup>**St. John 20:21-23.**

<sup>29</sup>**I Corinthians 11:26.**

<sup>30</sup>**St. Luke 3:2, 3-6**, underscore added. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*." **Isaiah 40:3-5.**

<sup>31</sup>**Romans 10:17.**

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.<sup>32</sup>

This New Song of the Gospel Christ sings to us every Sunday is not drudgery and doesn't inspire weariness in men, but rather delightful righteousness and holiness pleasing to God and rewarding to men. David writes:

And He hath put a new song in My mouth, *even* unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.<sup>33</sup>

Through the Gospel, Christ's Work of Sanctifying men by His Life, Death, and Resurrection is reckoned to them by faith. Isaiah writes of Christ's Work for men:

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge of and of the fear of the LORD.<sup>34</sup>

Christ sings these wonderful gifts into the hearts and lives of men through His Word and Sacraments, the Gospel, by faith. Christians gain this glorious and saving sanctification simply through hearing Christ sing to them this Beautiful New Song every Sunday. Luther writes:

... listen to Paul, who says here<sup>35</sup>: “Not by your own labor and sweat or by the work of the Law but by hearing with faith you have received the Holy Spirit.” Or listen to Christ Himself, who gives the following answer to Martha when she is deeply concerned and finds it almost unbearable that her sister Mary is sitting at Jesus’ feet, listening to His words, and leaving her to serve alone. “Martha” He says (Luke 10:41-42), “you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.” Therefore a man becomes a Christian, not by working but by listening.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>**Ephesians 2:8-9.**

<sup>33</sup>**Psalm 40:3**, text is from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup>**Isaiah 11:2.**

<sup>35</sup>**Galatians 3:2.**

<sup>36</sup>*Luther's Works*, Vol. 26, p. 214, underscore added.

## **Conclusion**

The New Song Christ sings to men is the Gospel, namely, Absolution and Saving faith through His Word and Sacraments. The old song is sin, death, and subjugation to the devil through the fall of Adam. The New Song of Christ disperses that dismal old dirge and forever opens heaven to men.

Through the New Song of the Gospel Christ sings into the hearts of men saving faith, from which issues salvation, life eternal, and the resurrection of the body.

*Amen.*