**#3 Who should we sing to? (Isaiah 12)**

#1 – why sing? Natural response to revelation. Commanded to.

#2 – what sing? Songs that teach and admonish: content. Every season.

#3 – who?

* Used to think only kind of singing that really mattered: singing to God. Worshiping him – hands up – eyes closed. Vertical experience – connection with our maker. Eg:
	+ *As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after You.*

*You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship You.*

*You alone are my strength, my shield,*

 *to You alone may my spirit yield.*

*You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship You.*

* + If you can address the king of the universe in song – why would you not?
		- Surely that is the highest – best – worthwhile form of praise? /Sing about God – sing to him!
	+ Then I read the scriptures:
		- /All wrong – but broader, richer than I realised. 4 audiences as we sing:
		- Sing to one another
		- Sing to the world
		- Sing to ourselves
		- Sing to God

**Sing to one another**

2x most impt verses about singing in NT: **Colossians 3:16** Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

* Goes to the heart of why we gather together to worship on Sundays.
	+ As we sing – sing to God with gratitude – primary. Vertical.
		- Also – secondary: teaching and admonishing one another. Horizontal.
	+ As we sing to him -> declaring gospel truth to OA.
		- When you sing out: might be just what s/o else needs to hear.
		- Your presence in ch - /your sake – build you up. To build up bro-sis here too.
		- When you sing: speaking the truth in love[[1]](#endnote-1) to the rest of Park Ch.
	+ Not just abt you. Imagine s/o comes into ch – happens every week – rubbish week – office politics got down – house is cold – kids argued on way to ch.
		- Singing meant to encourage them. Need that. Need it from other ppl here. You make your bold confession of faith – song – their sp really lifted.
	+ Service starts: your singing is lacklustre – half-hearted. You’ve missed that easy opportunity to enc your bro-sis.
		- Easy! Let’s face it, most: /go over – hug – speak some word of truth or help to them. Singing: easy! Teach and admonish one another.

***Eg: What a Friend we have in Jesus,***

*All our sins and griefs to bear!*

*What a privilege to carry,*

*Everything to God in prayer!*

*Oh, what peace we often forfeit,*

*Oh, what needless pain we bear.*

*All because we do not carry*

*Everything to God in prayer!* Admonish!

*…Have we trials and temptations?*

*Is there trouble anywhere?*

*We should never be discouraged;*

*Take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*…Can we find a friend so faithful,*

*Who will all our sorrows share?*

*Jesus knows our every weakness;*

*Take it to the Lord in prayer.*

**Ephesians 5:18-20** be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.

* When filled w Sp – sp-filled person – speak to OA by singing.
* Carries on: Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
	+ Aside: Trinity there.
	+ As you sing – music bubbles up in heart to the Lord – you are also singing to OA.
		- Even if you feel like singing direct to the Lord – he’s primary audience – also another audience being spoken to.
	+ So when we gather in ch - /own private worship time. Do that in the car. Home. Walk.
		- Here: even if the song is directed to God – audience is still OA too. Singing to help bro-sis.
	+ Church /meant to be 150 individuals having an individual worship experience. Their purpose: /just backing vocals for your private exp. Ch – together – OA.
		- S/t glorious abt being together and enc OA.
		- Maybe /like song – fine. Sing it for s/o else’s benefit. /About you![[2]](#endnote-2)

**Sing to the world around us**

* As we gather together, ppl notice. Just by being here - proclaim - watching world that J is king, he alone saves – only hope.

**Is 12:4**

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;

 make known among the nations what he has done,

 and proclaim that his name is exalted.

**Psalm 96:2-3**

Sing to the Lord, praise his name;

 proclaim his salvation day after day.

Declare his glory among the nations,

 his marvellous deeds among all peoples.

* What would we call that? Make known… Proclaim… Declare… -> Evangelism.
	+ Evangelistic element to singing.
* Who’s gonna hear?
	+ **Ppl waking past outside**. Good day: decent noise. Hundreds[[3]](#endnote-3) of ppl walk past every Sunday. Every sing one: God calls to. Reminder to them: J is king.
	+ **Ppl online.** Anyone on planet earth can now watch us. Words of Rom 1: people are without excuse.
		- Enc tech team – use wide-angle more – congregation here.
	+ **Mostly:** people here. Songs full of God’s truth connect w ppl. /Go away humming sermon!
* Think abt Amazing Grace:

*Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)*

 *that saved a wretch like me!*

*I once was lost, but now am found,*

 *was blind, but now I see.*

* + Testimony. This is what I was – Lord saved me![[4]](#endnote-4)

**Sing to our own hearts**

S/t -> own hearts.

**Psalm 42** Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God! Come on! Get a grip! Remember! Preach to self – admonish self.

**Psalm 77**

I cried out to God for help;

 I cried out to God to hear me.

When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;

 at night I stretched out untiring hands,

 and I would not be comforted…

‘Will the Lord reject for ever?

 Will he never show his favour again?

Has his unfailing love vanished for ever?

 Has his promise failed for all time?

Has God forgotten to be merciful?

 Has he in anger withheld his compassion?’

Then I thought, ‘To this I will appeal:

 the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.

I will remember the deeds of the Lord;

 yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.

I will consider all your works

 and meditate on all your mighty deeds.’

Come on mind – focus! Know this is true. Believe it. Act on it. Stop believing lies!

**10,000 reasons** – loosely based on Psalm 103

*Bless the Lord, oh my soul,*

*Oh my soul, worship His Holy name.*

*The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning,*

*It's time to sing Your song again.*

*Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,*

*Let me be singing when the evening comes.*

***Be still, my soul****: The Lord is on your side;* - remember that, soul! Calm!

*Bear* *patiently the weight of grief or pain;*

*Leave to your God to order and provide;*

*Through every change He faithful will remain.*

*…Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;*

*All now mysterious shall be bright at last.*

***Crown him with many crowns****,* - directed to God? To OA?

 *the Lamb upon his throne.*

*Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns*

 *all music but its own.*

*Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,*

 *and hail him as thy matchless king*

 *through all eternity.*

* These songs help us take resp for welfare – own souls. Need them. Own hearts so fickle.
	+ Preach to self: come on self. Believe this. Act on this. Mind take control over heart.

**Sing to the Lord**

Talk briefly abt 2 words: **Prayer**

* When you sing to the Lord – talk to him. Call that?
	+ Prayer![[5]](#endnote-5).
	+ Most of us find prayer hard. Enjoy singing? If - mean words - prayer life is better than you think!
* ***Speak O Lord as we come to you*** *to receive the food of your holy word. Take your truth, plant it deep in us…*
	+ Prayer!
* ***Lord my God!*** *When I, in awesome wonder consider all the works*

*Thy hand hath made,*

*I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,*

*Thy power throughout the universe displayed:*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee, How great Thou art!*

* + Prayer of thanks – adoration – gratitude.
	+ Boost car performance – Nitrous Oxide. Prayer: nitrous boost: sing!
* **Worship**
	+ Tried to avoid - b/c ppl think of singing.
		- Actually singing – diff – crossover. Teaching - admonishing – evangelising – testifying – encouraging – directing.
	+ But – sing to Lord – worship.
		- English: worth-ship. To express - worth of a person - value.
		- Old wedding vows: *With this ring I thee wedde: with my body I thee worship[[6]](#endnote-6).*
		- /Blasphemy. Saying: with all of my: honour you – respect you – value you. You are worthy.
	+ In Bible, literally, bow - /little nod – kneel down – face to floor.
		- **Psalm 95:6-7** Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God
		- Doing? Humbling self – recognising his worth.
		- Our hearts: always wanting to take back the glory – put self back on the throne. Worship him –> right perspective – force our sinful hearts back into their true & proper place.
	+ In NT, worship almost always directed at J. Only person worthy of our worship - /other that deserves that honour.
		- Christmas story – wise men – Persian scientists – astrologers – they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him[[7]](#endnote-7)
		- Jesus walking on water – Mark. Matthew’s acct: J climbs into boat – wind dies down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.
		- In response to revelation. Kneeling at bottom of boat – we are not worthy. You are worthy – your value.
* ***Holy, holy, holy!*** *Lord God Almighty!*

*Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.*

* ***It's Your blood*** *that cleanses me,*

*it's Your blood that gives me life.*

*It's Your blood that took my place in redeeming sacrifice,*

*and washes me whiter than the snow,*

*My Jesus, God's precious sacrifice.*

* Hard to choose songs – pr for worship leaders. See by now: /filler. Lot to think abt. Know many of you pr for me – need that. They do too[[8]](#endnote-8).

*Pr: those who lead our singing. Awesome task to lead us.*

*Lord: made us to sing. Thx: so much to sing abt. Thx: precious sacrifice of Jesus – washes me – us – whiter than the snow. Help us to sing like mean it – in reverence and awe – to encourage OA – and to remind our own stubborn hearts of all your goodness.*

**To God - prayer:**

*Out of the depths I cry to You;*

*From darkest places I will call.*

*Incline Your ear to me anew,*

*And hear my cry for mercy, Lord.*

**To God – worship – thanks:**

*Were You to count my sinful ways*

*How could I come before Your throne?*

*Yet full forgiveness meets my gaze –*

*I stand redeemed by grace alone.*

**To self**

**To one another:**

*So put Your hope in God alone,*

*Take courage in His power to save;*

*Completely and forever won*

*By Christ emerging from the grave.*

**To self**

**To one another**

**To world – put faith in this saviour!**

*His steadfast love has made a way,*

*And God Himself has paid the price,*

*That all who trust in Him today*

*Find healing in his sacrifice.*

1. Ephesians 4:15 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cut: Can’t help thinking some ch really struggled during lockdown: made ch all abt individual experience. Get the music right – lighting right – so you can have that perfect individual experience of God. /Connection w OA. Take away: watching on YouTube – phone. Experience gone. So why bother watching? Why at start of lockdown: enc you to watch the online service at 10am, not at 9pm. As far as possible: doing this together. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. In 2016 993,000 people visited Hanley Park. Not all via our entrance of course. But numbers will have gone up significantly since then. <https://doit.life/organisation/12342> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cut: Really interesting – 1Cor 14 – Worshipping God - Ppl speaking in tongues – individual worship experiences. Visitors come in: thinks they’re all crazy. Evang opportunity wasted! Instead: Paul: adapt your worship gatherings b/c unbelievers are there. Prophecy ^^ - words they can understand – powerful words that will cut to the heart. Do that: they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’ …… [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/your-prayer-life-is-better-than-you-think> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1552/Marriage_1552.htm> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Matthew 2:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Cut: Need a balance of all these. Focus on only 1 – dangerous imbalance. All abt worshipping God: individualistic – and why bother coming? Better online: choose all fave songs – played by pros. All abt outside world: seeker-sensitive movement – 20yrs ago. All abt evang. Get bums on seats. Everything to accommodate visitors. /Anything difficult or complicated or offensive. /Sin – judgement. All abt OA: clique – holy huddle w rituals. /Explain communion, baptism – all know. All abt self: therapeutic – inward-looking. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)