

# Exposition on Psalm 98

by St. Augustine

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*The sermon exhorts the listeners to sing a new song of peace and joy, trusting in Jesus Christ and being reformed into a new man.*

**Scripture:** Luke 7:12

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Salvation Through Christ"

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## Description

St. Augustine preaches on the importance of singing a new song unto the Lord, symbolizing the transformation from the old life in Adam to the new life in Christ. He emphasizes the need for inward healing and trust in Jesus for true transformation. The sermon delves into the revelation of God's salvation through Jesus Christ, His mercy, and truth extended to all nations, and the call to make a joyful noise and rejoice in God's works. St. Augustine also discusses the significance of overcoming the flesh and rejoicing in spiritual growth, even amidst tribulations and persecutions, as we await the righteous judgment of the Lord.

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## Transcript

1. O sing unto the Lord a new song Psalm 97:1. The new man knows this, the old man knows 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; that they who cut themselves off from the communion of the whole earth, may understand that they cannot sing the new song, because it is sung in the whole, and not in a part of it. Attend here also, and see that this is said. And when the whole earth is enjoined to sing a new song, it is meant, that peace sings a new song. For He has done marvelous things. What marvelous things? Behold, the Gospel was just now being read, and we heard the marvellous things of the Lord. The only son of his mother, who was a widow, was being carried out dead: the Lord, in compassion, made them stand still; they laid him down, and the Lord said, Young man, I say unto you, Arise. Luke 7:12-14 ...The Lord has done marvellous things. What marvellous things? Hear: His own right hand, and His holy arm, has healed for Him. What is the Lord's holy Arm? Our Lord Jesus Christ. Hear Isaiah: Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isaiah 53:1 His holy arm then, and His own right hand, is Himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ is therefore the arm of God, and the right hand of God; for this reason is it said, has He healed for Him. It is not said only, His right hand has healed the world, but has healed for Him. For many are healed for themselves, not for Him. Behold how many long for that bodily health, and receive it from Him: they are

healed by Him, but not for Him. How are they healed by Him, and not for Him? When they have received health, they become wanton: they who when sick were chaste, when cured become adulterers: they who when in illness injured no man, on the recovery of their strength attack and crush the innocent: they are healed, but not unto Him. Who is he who is healed unto Him? He who is healed inwardly. Who is he that is healed inwardly? He who trusts in Him, that when he shall have been healed inwardly, reformed into a new man, afterwards this mortal flesh too, which does languish for a time, may in the end itself even recover its most perfect health. Let us therefore be healed for Him. But that we may be healed for Him, let us believe in His right hand.

2. The Lord has made known His salvation Psalm 97:2. This very right hand, this very arm, this very salvation, is our Lord Jesus Christ of whom it is said, And all flesh shall see the salvation of God; Luke 3:6 of whom also that Simeon who embraced the Infant in his arms, spoke, Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace; for my eyes have seen Your salvation. Luke 2:28-30 The Lord has made known His salvation. To whom did He make it known? To a part, or to the whole? Not to any part specially. Let no man betray, no man deceive, no man say, Lo, here is Christ, or there: Matthew 24:23 the man who says, Lo, He is here, or there, points to some particular spots. To whom has the Lord declared His salvation? Hear what follows: His righteousness has He openly showed in the sight of the heathen. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the right hand of God, the arm of God, the salvation of God, and the righteousness of God.

3. He has remembered His mercy to Jacob, and His truth unto the house of Israel Psalm 97:3. What means this, He has remembered His mercy and truth? He has pitied, so that He promised; because He promised and showed His mercy, truth has followed: mercy has gone before promise, promise has been fulfilled in truth....

And His truth unto the house of Israel. Who is this Israel? That ye may not perchance think of one nation of the Jews, hear what follows: All the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God. It is not said, all the earth: but, all the ends of the world: as it is said, from one end to the other. Let no man cut this down, let no man scatter it abroad; strong is the unity of Christ. He who gave so great a price, has bought the whole: All the ends of the world.

4. Because they have seen, then, Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all you lands Psalm 97:4. You already know what it is to make a joyful noise. Rejoice, and speak. If you cannot express your joy, shout ye; let the shout manifest your joy, if your speech cannot: yet let not joy be mute; let not your heart be silent respecting its God, let it not be mute concerning His gifts. If you speak to yourself, unto yourself are you healed; if His right hand has healed you for Him, speak thou unto Him for whom you have been healed. Sing, rejoice, and make melody.

5. Make melody unto the Lord upon the harp: on the harp and with the voice of a Psalm Psalm 97:5. Praise Him not with the voice only; take up works, that you may not only sing, but work also. He who sings and works, makes melody with psaltery and upon the harp. Now see what sort of instruments are next spoken of, in figure: With ductile trumpets also, and the sound of the pipe of horn Psalm 97:6. What are ductile trumpets, and pipes of horn? Ductile trumpets are of brass: they are drawn out by hammering; if by hammering, by being beaten, you shall be ductile trumpets, drawn out unto the praise of God, if you improve when in tribulation: tribulation is hammering, improvement is the being drawn out. Job was a ductile trumpet, when suddenly assailed by the heaviest losses, and the death of his sons, become like a ductile trumpet by the beating of so heavy tribulation, he sounded thus: The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Job 1:21 How did he sound? How pleasantly does his voice

sound? This ductile trumpet is still under the hammer....We have heard how he was hammered; let us hear how he sounds: let us, if it please you, hear the sweet sound of this ductile trumpet: What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? O courageous, O sweet sound! Whom will not that sound awake from sleep? Whom will not confidence in God awake, to march to battle fearlessly against the devil; not to struggle with his own strength, but His who proves him. For He it is who hammers: for the hammer could not do so of itself....See how (I dare so speak, my brethren) even the Apostle was beaten with this very hammer: he says, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Behold he is under the hammer: let us hear how he speaks of it: For this thing, he says, I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. I, says His Maker, wish to make this trumpet perfect; I cannot do so unless I hammer it; in weakness is strength made perfect. Hear now the ductile trumpet itself sounding as it should: When I am weak, then am I strong....

6. The voice of the pipe of horn, what is it? The horn rises above the flesh: in rising above the flesh it needs must be solid so as to last, and able to speak. And whence this? Because it has surpassed the flesh. He who wishes to be a horn trumpet, let him overcome the flesh. What means this, let him overcome the flesh? Let him surpass the desires, let him conquer the lusts of the flesh. Hear the horn trumpets....What means this, Set your affection on things above? It means, Rise above the flesh, think not of carnal things. They were not yet horn trumpets, to whom he now spoke thus: I could not speak unto you, brethren, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto you were not able to bear it: neither yet now are you able. For you are yet carnal. They were not therefore horn trumpets, because they had not risen above the flesh. Horn both adheres to the flesh, and rises above the flesh; and although it springs from the flesh, yet it surpasses it. If therefore you are spiritual, when before you were carnal; as yet you are treading the earth in the flesh, but in spirit you are rising into heaven; for though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh....Brethren, do not reproach brethren whom the mercy of God has not yet converted; know that as long as you do this, you savour of the flesh. That is not a trumpet which pleases the ears of God: the trumpet of boastfulness makes the war fruitless. Let the horn trumpet raise your courage against the devil; let not the fleshly trumpet raise your pride against your brother. Make a joyful noise in the sight of the Lord the King.

7. While you are rejoicing, and delighted with the ductile trumpets, and the voice of the horn, what follows? Let the sea be stirred up, and the fullness thereof Psalm 97:7. Brethren, when the Apostles, like ductile trumpets and horns, were preaching the truth, the sea was stirred up, its waves arose, tempests increased, persecutions of the Church took place. Whence has the sea been stirred up? When a joyful noise was made, when Psalms of thanksgiving were being sung before God: the ears of God were pleased, the waves of the sea were raised. Let the sea be stirred up, and the fullness thereof: the round world, and all that dwell therein. Let the sea be stirred up in its persecutions. Let the floods clap their hands together Psalm 97:8. Let the sea be aroused, and the floods clap their hands together; persecutions arise, and the saints rejoice in God. Whence shall the floods clap their hands? What is to clap their hands? To rejoice in works. To clap hands, is to rejoice; hands, mean works. What floods? Those whom God has made floods, by giving them that Water, the Holy Spirit. If any man thirst, says He, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes in Me, out of his bosom shall flow rivers of living water. John 7:37-39 These rivers clapped their hands, these rivers rejoiced in works, and blessed God. The hills shall be joyful together.

8. Before the Lord, for He has come; for He has come to judge the earth Psalm 97:9. The hills signify the great. The Lord comes to judge the earth, and they rejoice. But there are hills, who, when the Lord is coming to judge the earth, shall tremble. There are therefore good and evil hills; the good hills, are spiritual greatness; the bad hills, are the swelling of pride. Let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He has come; for He has come to judge the earth. Wherefore shall He come, and how shall He come? With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity Psalm 97:10. Let the hills therefore rejoice; for He shall not judge unrighteously. When some man is coming as a judge, to whom the conscience cannot lie open, even innocent men may tremble, if from him they expect a reward for virtue, or fear the penalty of condemnation; when He shall come who cannot be deceived, let the hills rejoice, let them rejoice fearlessly; they shall be enlightened by Him, not condemned; let them rejoice, because the Lord will come to judge the world with equity; and if the righteous hills rejoice, let the unrighteous tremble. But behold, He has not yet come: what need is there they should tremble? Let them mend their ways, and rejoice. It is in your power in what way you will to await the coming of Christ. For this reason He delays to come, that when He comes He may not condemn you. Lo, He has not yet come: He is in heaven, thou on earth: He delays His coming, do not thou delay wisdom. His coming is hard to the hard of heart, soft to the pious. See therefore even now what you are: if hard of heart, you can soften; if you are soft, even now rejoice that He will come. For you are a Christian. Yea, you say, I believe that you pray, and sayest, Your kingdom come. Matthew 6:10 You desire Him to come, whose coming you fear. Reform yourself, that you may not pray against yourself.

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