

GOD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS

- I. His saving works
- II. Our praising response

INTRODUCTION

A person once wrote in the **BANNER**:

- “I’m proud to be member of the CRC. That may sound dumb in time when it's more fashionable to throw stones at the CRC than to praise her. I know that some people are saying she’s behind the times. But I see CRC as a church that in her own way has always responded to new challenges. She has her roots in the Netherlands, but is grafting people in of other ethnic & racial origins. The names Sanchez, Liu, Begay, Yang & Nhem are becoming as common as Talsma & Vanden Berg. Each Sunday throughout the U.S. & Canada in the CRC, the gospel is preached in 16 different languages. In other words, the CRC is becoming a multiethnic denomination. She is establishing ethnic minority congregations where people of color can freely express their uniqueness as Christians. Established congregations let their church buildings be used in off-hours by other ethnic groups who worship in their own language & in their own style.
- “But the CRC must in the end become multicultural. In a multicultural church, we don't just start churches for other ethnic groups or share our facilities when we are not using them. We must further make a genuine attempt to be 1 body of people of many different languages, customs, & life experiences, worshiping together, praying together, singing together in the same service at the same time. A multicultural church encourages all of its members to appreciate the ethnic heritage that each person brings with himself or herself. Becoming multicultural doesn't mean rejecting your heritage; it means learning to appreciate the cultural backgrounds of others. It means learning to appreciate & embrace other styles of worship, other types of singing, other ways of preaching, other ways of praying.
- “If we become multicultural, we can fully appreciate the church universal. We can then feel ourselves a part of a church that embraces believers from every kindred. Our worship, our theology, our life-view will be richer. We will move away from an ‘us & them’ attitude & will see that we are just 1 part of the worldwide church of believers. A multicultural outlook will also make us more concerned about the person on the next block as we begin to understand his or her experiences, hopes, & frustrations.
- Becoming multicultural will affect us in every area of our churches & denominational life. As it happens, we need to remind ourselves that our church is situated in the world. The world is not 1 culture. The church cannot afford to be either.”

Well, that means we must pray & work so that our denomination, & our congregation too, will increasingly be now what the church will be in eternal glory.

- a family & a fellowship of people from every tribe & town & tongue, from every culture & country & color.

- therefore, we must always listen to what Ps.98:1-3 is teaching when it says:
 - “Sing to the LORD new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand & his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The LORD has made his salvation known & revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love & his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all ends of earth have seen salvation of our God.”

Now, as we consider this **Psalm** & its truth that **GOD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS**, we want to see **2 truths**.

- **1st**, we take note of His saving works.
- & **2nd**, Our praising response.

I. HIS SAVING WORKS

Well, the great theologian **J.R Stott** points out: “The occasion of this psalm is evidently some great national victory which has been achieved by God in the sight of the nations.

- “Whether the divine victory was over Egypt or Babylon or some other foes, it certainly foreshadows that mightier salvation from sin, Satan, & death, which God has brought to us through Jesus Christ His Son.
 - “This is the most marvelous of marvelous things which God has done, & prompts the people of God to keep singing a new song, new from an ever fresh wonder at His grace. Christian songs of praise are fundamentally rejoicing in the marvelous things which God has done.”
- we see then that this Psalm is a call to praise & thanksgiving for who God is & for His magnificent, mighty, wonderful works He has accomplished.
 - & vs.1-3 describe those marvelous deeds.

Now, even though these verses don't mention it, we must, of course, praise & thank Lord for the great thing He has done in creating this huge universe & all it contains.

- & Ps.8:3 says that it was work of His finger.
 - that not only indicates everything came into existence & exists by His will & working, by His might & mercy.
- but it also shows how infinitely great & powerful God is that all took to bring this gigantic universe into being was His 1 little finger, or as Gen.1 says, by His word.

However, **Ps.98** is concerned particularly about the great thing Lord has done in accomplishing salvation.

- & that, indeed, is marvelous, for it excels all the other works & miracles He has ever done or will do.
- it is supernatural, stupendous, incomprehensible, an absolute wonder of wisdom & power & love!

Now it is interesting to note, when we look closely at **Mary's** song in **Lk.1** that she sang after she learned she would give birth to Jesus, we see how it strikingly parallels **Ps.98**.

- it could mean Mary had this Psalm in mind when she composed her song of victory about what God would do in saving people.

- David sings in Ps.98: Sing to the Lord a new song,” & Mary echoes:”My soul glorifies the Lord.
 - David sings: “He has done marvelous things,” & Mary echoes: “The Mighty One has done great things.”
 - David sings: “His right hand & holy arm have worked salvation for Him.”
 - & Mary echoes: “He has performed might deeds with his arm & scattered the proud.”
 - David sings: “The Lord has made salvation known & revealed righteousness to the nations.”
 - & Mary echoes: “His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation.”
 - David sings: "He has remembered his love & faithfulness to the house of Israel.”
 - & Mary echoes: “He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful.”

Well then, vs.1&3 of this Psalm state that God has “worked salvation. He has remembered his love & his faithfulness to the house of Israel.”

- you see, in being true to His word & promise, He has come to this earth & seen what sin & death are doing to His creatures, making them slaves to sin & Satan.
 - & that means death or eternal separation from Him.
- so then in love He moved to conquer sin & death & to bring deliverance & victory & life to sinful, dying people like you & me.

In other words, God has done a most marvelous, mighty thing in coming to us as Jesus Christ to be our Savior.

- as we have seen again on Christmas & Good Friday, He became a true, total human being.
 - & through Jesus’ life & suffering & the shedding of His blood & His death on the cross He gave Himself as a complete sacrifice to totally pay for all our sins to set us free from them.
 - &, as we saw again on Easter, through His resurrection from death & then His ascension into heaven where He now rules the universe, He has defeated death.
 - & He given us full & unending life with God so we will never really die.
- Lord then has made it possible to forgive us all our sins & to declare us not guilty, but righteous before Him & to adopt us into His family as His children.

Th'fore by Christ’s shed blood comes healing.

- by His death & resurrection comes life.
 - by His sorrow comes real joy, & by His humiliation comes eternal exaltation.
- in Him there is complete, everlasting salvation & victory!

But God has done great things in saving us, not just by the fact He has made salvation possible for us sinners.

- wonders of wonders is that He also makes that salvation a reality in our lives by sending Holy Spirit who, by His renewing power, moves us from sin to faith in Jesus Christ.

- He empowers us so that we now live the new life in Christ, experience freedom from sin's penalty & power, & freedom from the fear of death & hell.
 - & we enjoy a personal victory over sin & suffering as in this life we grow more & more away from sin & closer to Christ.

God, through the H Spirit, also strengthens us to be channels & instruments of His saving light & love & life to do marvelous things for Him & others.

- to live only according to His will & to challenge & strive to stop evil & error in His world.
- & to bring salvation to all peoples & receive into His family all who believe in Lord regardless what color they are or customs they have, & the cultures they possess.

And Lord has done marvelous things in the fact that, as Mighty One who saves & rules, He will also complete His work of salvation at the end of time.

- someday, as vs.9 of Ps.98 says, He will come “to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness & the peoples with equity.”
- that is to say, in fairness & truth, He will eternally punish all the wicked who didn't believe & obey Him.
 - & He will reward all those who are in Christ with full, final salvation in the perfect & complete glory of the new, eternal world.

Then God's righteous rule will be established & clearly seen everywhere over nature & all peoples.

- then everyone & everything will bow before Him &, willingly or unwillingly, confess He is indeed Lord & King.
 - all evil & error, death & devils, strife & stress & sufferings will be gone forever.
- & so the Church & all believers will triumph forever in being free from the very presence of sin.

But now notice our **passage** emphasizes all these works of salvation are marvelous because God did what no one else could do & it was all done by Him alone.

- our text says: “He has worked salvation by His right hand & holy arm.”
- & we also know from NT that salvation is the work of God's heart too which bled to death on that cruel cross on Calvary to accomplish it.

And what **Ps.98** is stressing here is God's almighty power that only with bare hands—with no weapons or help from us or anyone or anything--caused sin & Satan, death & hell to be defeated & eventually be destroyed.

- & He accomplishes salvation & continues to save until the end of time.
- salvation is all by God's grace & not by anything we feel or say or do.

And our **Psalm** also shows how marvelous God's almighty working of salvation is by the fact it teaches it is for all peoples.

- for it says in our text: “He has made his salvation known & revealed his righteousness to the nations, [&] all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”
- & praise God He did that through His great work of His Word becoming human, Jesus Christ, & through His written Word, Bible, & by HSpirit.
 - through these means He has made it plain & simple for all to understand the good news of salvation: its content & its reasons & the price it took to get it.
 - & the terms & conditions for us to receive it.
- if Lord hadn't made it known, or as word means, if He hadn't uncovered or publicized or demonstrated it, nobody would discover salvation by their own wits & works.

Th'fore God has done wonderful thing in accomplishing & working & revealing salvation.

- not just to OT.Israelites or NT.Jews or to Dutch people, or just to the white race, or to the culturally refined & morally upright & clean-shaven, the wealthy so that they alone enjoy it.
- no, but He accomplish salvation for all kinds of people.
 - & He reveals it all over the face of this entire earth so that people of every race & rank & color & condition & country & culture & custom & character can be saved.
 - there are no restrictions whatsoever except only 1: that by faith we receive Jesus Christ as our only Savior & Lord.

And so Lord saves black & white, red & yellow, the primitive & poor & pagan.

- the down-&-outers & drunkards & drug addicts, the aids person & murderer & the worst sinner, the most evil & wretched there is.
 - He makes them all equal, important members of His family when they believe in Lord Jesus Christ.
- that's why, as a denomination & congregation & individual Christians, we must continue to carry out God's great & wonderful, saving work in this world.
 - & we must more & more say & show that all Christians, no matter who they are, are all 1 in Lord, so that we will all lovingly live & worship & work together in Him for His glory.

II. OUR PRAISING RESPONSE

Now is because God has done such great things in accomplishing salvation for all & revealing it to all that we are called in our **text** to “sing to Lord a new song.”

- & vs. 4-9 command everyone & everything to “shout for joy to Lord, [to] burst into jubilant song with music; [to] make music to Lord, [to] resound [and] clap their hands.”
- this Psalm then calls us to sing & make music to Lord in a variety of ways.

That means, as His new people, we must **RESPOND in PRAISE** to God for the marvelous, saving things He has done for us & world.

- as those redeemed & being renewed from sin, we must bring our thanks to Lord.
 - but not just with lip-service, but with sincerity from our hearts.

- & we must show it through lives that obey His will in love to Him as only Lord & in loving service to those around us.

You see, God has made known salvation to us & we have received by faith in Jesus Christ.

- but we aren't to keep it for ourselves, for His command is to proclaim that salvation around the globe.
- th'fore we must now tell it to others in every nation & area of the world.
 - we must do it by ourselves becoming God's instruments to reveal His salvation to all continents.
- & you know, there are so many openings for workers in World & Home Missions & World Renew.
 - & if we don't go or fulfill them, who will?
- but we must also do all we can to prayerfully & financially support the work of our CRC & other churches as well, in evangelism & missions & mercy in all lands & languages.

And then, as I have said, we must make sure that those, who respond in faith to Jesus as their only Lord & Savior, are welcomed & received warmly as being 1 with us in Lord.

- we must make them be & feel that they are real part of God's family.
 - that being a Christian doesn't mean they must become Dutch or Westernized.
- but that by faith in Christ they can be a true Christian in their own God-redeemed & Spirit-renewed language & looks, customs & cultures.
 - in their own way of worship & making music of praise to Lord.

CONCLUSION

And so, **Christians**, let us be faithfully fulfilling what **Ps.98** commands us to be & do.

- a person once put it this way:
 “Men have proclaimed God's praises throughout the ages.
 Now is our turn to worship Lord & to announce God's presence & His loving concern for the inhabitants of this world.
 His power is as great today as it ever was. He continues to reign over the universe & creatures that move in this world.
 He alone is true God. He offers to all men His salvation. He is close to His sons & His servants & fills the hearts of His children with joy.
 Now, as His sons & servant, let us express our joy. With voice & musical instruments, with lovely melodies & joyful sounds, let us proclaim the glory of God.
 Let us fill our homes & sanctuaries, our halls of learning, our factories & marketplaces, even the streets of our city, with the sounds of celebration.
 God is here; God is now!”

AMEN