



“Never Forget Your Song”

Psalm 137:1-9 Sermon Verse: Psalm 137:4

“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”

This month at Providence, we have reflected on the theme *It All Begins With A Dream*. Your goals and aspirations all begin with your thoughts. What you can conceive and believe you can achieve. As an African people, we have had to allow our faith to see us through difficult days. People and cultures tend to react and respond to adverse conditions differently. There are those who choose to use various forms of medication to calm their jangled nerves—some employ exercise. Meditation has been proven beneficial, but singing can give a peace of mind unlike any other form of relaxation. There are all types of songs for different occasions, but they all seem to achieve the same desired goals. Victory songs, songs of joy, love melodies, jazzy, country and western, and of course, gospel music are all musical renditions, which meet us where we are at a particular time.

For African Americans, songs have been a way of life. We openly express our deepest emotions in songs and learn to agree that the music can “tame the savage breast.” Music and songs are an integral part of the very fabric of the African American culture. Songs, throughout history, have always been a source of inspiration and encouragement. The Jews, too, used singing and certain songs to celebrate during their numerous festivals. Psalm 137 is a collection of 150 songs and prayers of Jewish inner stirrings and emotions. The children of Israel were a singing people who had many songs to remember about their lifestyle before Babylon. They were in exile and expected to be joyous and sing the songs of their past, but the text says that they hung their harps on the willow trees and declined to sing the songs of their homeland. The silence is not to be mistaken for indifference. Strong emotions contended with one another, especially antipathy toward those who had caused their suffering.

As an African people transported to a foreign, strange land and disenfranchised of human and civil rights, it became almost impossible for us to remember the days when we were kings, queens, warriors, and rulers. Unjust, unfair laws, bigotry, hate, segregation, and racism muffled our voices. However, we always seem to keep the faith. We believed, served, and obeyed a God whom we believed would carry our heavy burden. We never forgot our songs, which were triumphant in nature. We always believed Jesus would make a way out of no way.

The text raises a very real question—“How can we sing a song in a strange land when we are so full of tears?” Verses 5 and 6 tell us to never forget Jerusalem, remember the God of Israel, always have a song in your heart and on your tongue to exalt Jerusalem knowing that what you are going through is temporary. Be assured that God is blessing you right now. When hope seems to have dissipated, and your faith seems at its limit—You CAN sing. You can’t sing if you forget your song. **NEVER FORGET YOUR SONG!!** In particular, the song that refrains, “Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe.” We can surrender all of our worries and woes to Him. Sing loudly that He has already made a way out of no way; that “...some glad morning, when this life is over” He will say well done thy good and faithful servant. Sing the songs that tell you how we got over. Sing until the Sweet Chariot comes. Don’t let anything make you forget your song. How can we sing a song in a strange land? Simple!!

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