

Psalm 118: The LORD is my fight song in the tents and at the gate of the LORD

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Saturdays in college towns are always interesting aren't they? Hot dogs & burgers on the grill; foam fingers & fans beaming with pride; reminiscing about past great players, improbable comebacks, legendary upsets, inspiring coaches, the torrential downpours braved, grizzled old men in worn denim and cherubic freshmen in coats and ties joining together to sing the fight song. Whether the Red & Black is your standard, or you're more of a Rambling Wreck, the fight song is something you hold near and dear. It is one of the more storied traditions in college sports—No matter how much the players, coaches, or uniforms change the fight song never changes. It is steeped in tradition and pride, always remembering the past yet still looking to the future victory. What is your Christian fight song? It's also steeped in tradition and pride, always remembering the past yet still with its eyes fixed on the future victory. The LORD is my fight song.

But we don't always sing our fight song with pride and gusto do we? Nope. Sometimes we change the words, change the tune, because we get distracted by the things going on around us. By the fight songs from the other tents.

How often does our fight song sound like something BB King or Steve Ray Vaughan penned? Sometimes anguish and stress have us singing the blues. Because our physical health and financial wealth aren't what we planned them to be. We complain about broken relationships. We complain over what has happened, what is happening, and what is going to happen in our lives. We whine about our pain, and shortcomings, the problems in our lives. We sing about all the problems in our tent.

Other times, our sinful nature keeps the tune but changes the lyrics to our fight song. We change the focus from God to ourselves. Sometimes we sing a song of self-aggrandizing, pride. A vain fight song. We focus on all the things we have accomplished. What we have earned. How strong we are. How decorated our tent is. Look at the mighty things my right hand has done.

It doesn't matter if your fight song is an outlet to complain, or one that is really vain. Either way these fight songs are not the fight song of the saints' triumphant. Our sinful nature has caused us to forget our true fight song. We have forgotten to sing about who our God is, what he has done. We have not taken advantage of our opportunities to sing about the impact God has had in our lives. That is not the Christian's fight song. The Christian's fight song came from the tents of the righteous; the fight song being sung in heaven right now. This fight song remembers the past and looks to the future. This fight song is the LORD. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.***

This is the ringing cry from the tents of the righteous, the fight song from the saints triumphant. This fight song remembers the past, the great triumphs of the LORD in the lives of his children. It was his right hand that did mighty things in their lives, and in the lives of their spiritual ancestors. It was the LORD's right hand that was mighty enough to save his children from the eternal death which their parents and their actions had earned them. It was his might, his love that saved them from what they deserved. And he didn't stop there. He also continued to shower blessings upon them, sustaining them physically, emotionally, and most importantly, spiritually.

This is why they sang their fight song so boisteriously. Because their God had done mighty things and they wanted their neighbors and their children to know it. Their song resounded clearly. Detailing the ways that the LORD had not given them over to death, but raised them to life. Explaining that he does the same thing for each of his children. That he wants the same thing for all mankind.

This is the fight song of pride they passed down from generation to generation. It encouraged you to learn how true the words of this song are. To see how throughout the OT & NT God worked in the lives of his children. To encourage and sustain you, as well. God was powerful enough to save and sustain them. Many of the saints who passed before us experienced much more severe trials and tribulations than we ever will. This is not to set them on a pedestal and say "be more like Abraham, Moses, or Paul." But rather we look at these men, and men like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, at women like Mary and Priscilla and see how powerfully God worked in their lives, through their words and actions. How clearly and loudly they were able to sing their fight song. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.***

Remember that picture of the tailgaters joining together in the fight song. They are not excited to just be in a random parking lot and enjoy one another's company. They are excited because they know where they are headed. As Christians we also know where we are headed. Like a rowdy home crowd we do not approach the gate with doubt about the legitimacy of our tickets. We know what Christ has earned us. The victory is assured, our entrance certain; and like all those fans we have to wait for the proper time.

We know that our tickets are valid because we know what our God has done. We give thanks to God that he saw fit to send his Son to become man. We give thanks that Jesus became our salvation. We praise our God in song that Jesus answered our cry for mercy in the only way possible. You see it was that old fight song, the one our sinful nature wants to sing, that declared our need for a Savior. In that fight song, we declared our obstinance against God, our defiance against our Creator. Blaming him for the things that have gone wrong in our lives, while giving ourselves the credit for everything that has gone right. That is not the fight song of a redeemed child of God. The washed child of God sings of the great triumphs of her God in her life and the lives of her ancestors. Sings of our Savior's life, death and resurrection and what those all earned for all mankind. These won us the most important victory; these grant us the proper credentials at the gate of the LORD. This is the reason we have to sing our fight song with pride and gusto.

We give thanks to God that he delivered our spiritual ancestors to and through His gate. We give God all the glory for bringing them to faith, for sustaining them by his strength. We praise his glorious name for the times they were rejected because of the name of the rejected cornerstone. We glorify God in song as we thank him for making that rejected rock the bedrock of their lives, of their faith. Because Christ is the only ticket accepted at the gate of heaven. This is the only way in. This is what his life, death, and resurrection have earned us. This is our fight song. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.***

And this is the fight song we sing as a witness to world around us. We reflect his light upon all the other peoples of this dark world as we sing our fight song. We certainly have each experienced our fair share of hardships and struggles. Our friends and neighbors can testify to this. But we deal with them differently. As redeemed children of God we no longer revert to that old fight song. Rather we rely upon God's strength. We have been pushed hard, almost to the point of falling but our God has not let us fall from the grip of his grace. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.*** He has fought off all our enemies. The attacks of the Devil and the world at times are difficult. They burn hot, but they are extinguished quickly because they have no staying power. Because our God is here. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.*** And he has defeated death, too. Christ endured the sting of death, so that it now attacks us a swarm of bees, an annoyance, but not an eternal fear. We know our victory over death has been won. Death no longer has its stinger. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.***

Because the LORD has made our future certain. The Devil, the world, and death no longer have authority over us. The Devil and the world have limited power for a limited time, because our God of unlimited power has made it so. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.*** Our LORD has conquered death, so we can join with Job and the Psalmist and proclaim that I will not die, but live. We live to proclaim the goodness and power of his name. We sing our fight song boisterously.

Someday the venue for our fight song will change. We will no longer be in this temporary dwelling, where we are like foreigners in a country not our own. We will move on from our tents as the tailgating crowd moves on from the parking lot. And we continue singing our fight song. Singing as the gates are opened, as we pass from this life to the next. And the gates will be opened because Christ's life, death, and resurrection have earned you the proper credentials. This is why we thank and praise our God now, knowing what he has given us. Knowing that one day we will join together in this fight song with all the saints triumphant in heaven.

But for now, we wait here singing in our tents. We sing waiting for the proper time, remembering the power of God in the lives of past great saints, improbable odds bested by God's power, inspiring letters and sermons, the torrential temptations survived, singing our fight song. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things*** with great anticipation to the big event, our eyes fixed on the future victory, the glory of heaven, when we will join with all the saints' triumphant in our fight song. ***The LORD's right hand has done mighty things.*** Amen.