

Sermon Summary: Hold on to your praise, even in your darkest seasons. Drawing from the story of Paul and Silas in prison, this message reveals how worship isn't a reflection of our current circumstances, but a declaration of God's unchanging faithfulness. When we choose to praise God in the middle of pain, we invite His presence into our struggle and turn our deepest trials into a testimony for others.

Sermon Highlights

- Worship has the ability to ground us in truth.
- God commands us to worship because He knows it does something in us.
- The primary purpose of worship is to give glory to God.
- You need: A song that's sticky, a song that's shared, and a song that shakes.
- Do you have a song you can carry with you from season to season?
- My praise has the power to break someone else's chains.
- The reason I worship isn't so I can get out; it's so I can let God in.

Scriptures

- Acts 16:23-31
- Psalm 77:6
- Revelation 4:11
- Colossians 3:16
- Exodus 14:31
- Exodus 15:1-2
- Exodus 15:20-21
- Psalm 118:14, 17
- Mark 14:26

Sermon Discussion

- “Worship has the ability to ground us in truth.” Name some specific things you can give God glory for right now.
- “The primary purpose of worship is to give glory to God.” Share a time when a song reminded you of God's truth right when you needed it.
- “The reason I worship isn't so I can get out; it's so I can let God in.” What area of your life do you need to let God's truth into right now?
- “The reason I worship isn't so I can get out — it's so I can let God in.” What area of your life do you need to let God's truth into right now?
- Build an eGroup worship playlist. Include all the songs mentioned in your discussion and then allow people to add others. Share the link to the playlist in your group chat for everyone to enjoy.

Prayer Prompt: “Dear God, thank you for giving us worship. We know that when we give You the glory You deserve, it changes us. I pray that each of us would bring worship into our week and find moments to give You praise. Instead of holding on to fear or anger this week, help us to hold our song. Amen.”

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AI generated sermon recap:

Holding On To Your Song: Worship's Power And Purpose

Sep 7, 2026

Overview: Elevation Church shared a multi-city Elevation Nights tour announcement and a sermon by Jonathan (JJ) Josephs, Ballantyne campus pastor (13 years), titled “Hold on to your song.” Drawing from Acts 16 and Psalm 77:6, JJ taught that worship’s primary purpose is to glorify God and its practiced effect is to anchor believers with God’s presence, strength, joy, and peace—especially in “midnight hour” seasons. He urged listeners to keep a “sticky” song of truth in their spirit, share that song for others’ freedom, and sing until things shake—letting God in rather than merely seeking a way out.

- Elevation Nights Tour Announcement: Dates: October 9–18 - Cities: Lubbock, Dallas, Oklahoma City, Houston, Kansas City, Memphis, Birmingham, San Antonio - Featuring: Elevation Worship, Elevation Rhythm; “I’m going to bring a word” and “Holly’s going to bring a word” - Tickets and info: elevationknights.com
- Speaker and Series Context
- Speaker: Jonathan (JJ) Josephs, Ballantyne campus pastor for 13 years
- Setting: Labor Day weekend message influenced by Pastor Steven Furtick’s series “I Know That Voice”
- Personal note: Brief family intro (wife Anna; children Zion, Elias, Olivia) and a reflection on passing down meaningful music to his kids

Scriptural Foundations

- Acts 16:23–34: Paul and Silas, severely flogged, imprisoned, feet fastened in stocks. “About midnight” they prayed and sang hymns; a violent earthquake shook foundations, doors opened, everyone’s chains loosed. The jailer, ready to kill himself, was stopped by Paul (“We are all here”); he asked, “What must I do to be saved?” They answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”
- Psalm 77:6: “I remembered my songs in the night” — the central principle to “hold on to your song.”
- Revelation 4:11: Worship’s primary purpose is giving glory to God: “You are worthy, O Lord...”
- Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” — worship teaches and embeds truth.
- Exodus 14:31–15:2, 20–21: After deliverance through the Red Sea, Israel sang: “The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.” Miriam led with a tambourine—carried even out of Egypt.
- Psalm 118:14 (and later in exile, Isaiah): The same confession persists across generations: “The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.”
- Mark 14:26: After the Last Supper, “when they had sung a hymn,” Jesus went to the Mount of Olives; by Passover tradition he would have sung Psalm 118, including “I shall not die, but I shall live.”
- Why Worship: Purpose and Effects
- Primary purpose: To give glory to God, not governed by feelings or personal performance; access is by grace through Jesus.
- Transforming effect: As C.S. Lewis wrote, “It is in the process of being worshiped that God communicates His presence to men.” In worship, God imparts presence, strength, joy, and peace.
- How truth sticks: “Worship is truth with a tune, revelation with a rhythm, confession with a cadence,” embedding theology in the heart.

Hold On To Your Song: Timeless and Generational

- Secular example of timelessness: “I Will Always Love You” — written by Dolly Parton (1974), recorded by Whitney Houston (1992), and now sung by JJ’s children; “we’re in 2026.” Some songs endure and pass through generations.
- Spiritual parallel: Worship songs ground believers in God’s faithfulness and promises across seasons. You don’t learn a new song in the night; you remember the one already in your spirit.

- Church practice: Elevation writes and introduces new songs to equip people with truth to carry into trials (e.g., “Do It Again” — “Your promise still stands, great is Your faithfulness”).

Three Essentials for Your Song

- A song that’s sticky: It recalls God’s character in crisis. Like Paul and Silas at midnight, a “sticky” song grips your heart and rises unbidden when needed. Israel’s refrain (“The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation”) traveled from the Red Sea through the Temple, into exile, and to Jesus—1,500 years of continuity. This is not just a cover; it’s an inheritance.
- A song that’s shared: Acts 16 notes that “the other prisoners were listening.” Your song is personal but not private. Sung aloud, it can strengthen others. Impact: As Paul and Silas sang, “everyone’s chains came loose.” Your worship can catalyze freedom in people around you. Ministry beyond circumstances: Even if you feel “still in chains,” share what God has put in you; God may use it to set someone else free.
- A song that shakes: Worship invites God’s manifest presence—like an earthquake that shakes foundations, opens doors, and breaks chains. Key insight: “The reason I worship is not so that I can get out, but so that I can let God in.” In Acts 16, doors opened and yet “we are all here”—God’s presence made the room more desirable than escape.
- Practice: You can praise with chains—amid addiction, despair, wounds, and uncertainty. Start where you are; let remembrance become rhythm.

Illustrations and Testimonies

- Generational worship at home: JJ’s children sing church songs now, carrying truth for future seasons. Family memories include “Knowing You, Jesus... There is no greater thing.”
- Sticky song in suffering: A letter from Alexandra (São Paulo, Brazil) about “Do It Again.” First sung in 2018; after a 49-day battle following a leukemia diagnosis in late September 2021, Alexandra’s father died on November 8, 2021. One week later, singing the song in church reframed faith: God’s faithfulness does not disappear when the outcome differs. “Do It Again” became a declaration to continue believing God no matter what.
- Hospital worship: When JJ’s grandfather was dying of leukemia, worship (e.g., “To worship You, I live...”) became the language when words failed.
- Miriam’s tambourine: She carried praise out of Egypt—prioritizing worship on the journey, not just after deliverance.

Prayer and Response: For those in a “midnight hour”: Prayer that the Holy Spirit helps them remember their song in the night, recall God’s faithfulness, and receive strength and joy. Salvation invitation: Corporate prayer of confession—“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world... I receive Your grace by faith...” —followed by a call to raise hands in response.

Next Steps and Actions

- Tour: Get tickets for Elevation Nights (Oct 9–18) at elevationknights.com; share in comments if you’re coming.
- Worship habit: Identify and hold on to a “sticky” song of truth; sing it aloud, especially in the night season; share it to strengthen others.
- Church engagement: Bring your faith and voice to corporate worship so others can “borrow” your praise.
- Online steps: Subscribe to Elevation Church’s YouTube; comment where you’re watching.

AI Generated sermon transcript:

- Well, if I haven't met you, my name is Jonathan. I get to serve here at our Ballantyne campus as our campus pastor for 13 years now. And I'm so grateful every time I get the opportunity to share God's word. But I have never been

more excited to preach a message than I am today. God has really been speaking to me. And I hope it's going to be a blessing to you. You know, for the past several weeks, our pastor's been leading us through this series, I Know That Voice.

- And I know it was working on me because I was studying one passage of scripture and been thinking about a sermon there. And one night I was just sitting on my porch and God dropped this word into my spirit. I said, I know that voice. I got to preach this to Elevation Church on this Labor Day weekend. And so I'm so thankful for our pastor. Are you so grateful for what he's been teaching?
- Do you ever feel like you're just living in the overflow of what he's been pouring out into us? It's a blessing. feel right now i got two scriptures i want to share with you one from the new testament and a quick one from the old testament that gives us our principle for today and if you're joining us in one of our other campuses stay standing for just a moment while we read god's word we're going to be in act 16 it's so appropriate we were just singing about god who breaks chains look at this in act 16 in act 16 verse 23 It says, after they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.
- When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight, y'all know this story? about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken at once. All the prison doors flew open and everyone's chains came loose. It's amazing what happens when you call on the name of Jesus. Chains start The jailer woke up and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and he was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.
- But Paul shouted, don't harm yourself. We are all here. The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, sirs, what must I do to be saved? They replied, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. You and your household. Amen. Amen. Alright now, Psalm 77 verse 6. Psalm 77 verse 6. The psalmist wrote, I remembered my songs in the night. I remembered my songs in the night. The title of my message today is, Hold on to your song. Hold on to your song. I come with a word of encouragement for someone today who finds themselves in a midnight hour.
- The word of the Lord for you is, Hold on to your song. Give your neighbor my title as you take your seat. Hold on to your song. I know there's so many OGs here and people have been a part of the church for a while, but there's always some new people joining us, maybe in the room or joining us online. So will you just indulge me for a moment while I show a picture of my family real quick? You got a picture of my family up here? It's my beautiful wife, Anna, 16 years we've been married. My oldest son, Zion, Elias, and Olivia right there. And we are at such a fun stage in parenting. It's a blast right now, isn't it? One of the great privileges I have at this stage of my life is beginning to expose my boys to just good music, you know?
- No shade to Forrest Frank, but I'm trying to diversify their palate a little bit. That's all they listen to on repeat. So I've been trying to show them some of the songs from my childhood. Just the appropriate ones. I'm leaving out Kanye. And most of the songs that I end up showing them, they just kind of like scrunch their nose and say, this sounds old. How many of you have been there with your kids before? You're showing them a song and it's like bringing back so many memories for you.
- You know every word and you show your kids and they just go, this sounds old. But every now and then I show them a song that just seems to hit a little bit different and they catch on to it. And recently we had one of those. I got to introduce the boys to, I think you'll agree with me on this, the greatest female vocalist of all time. Y'all know who I'm talking about? Shout it out. Well, I heard of Mick. I heard Mick. Someone said Tiffany Hudson. Oh, that's a good one. That's a good one too. That's a good one too. Okay. Whitney Houston. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Whitney Houston. Make some noise if you agree with me on that. Whitney, Whitney, Whitney.
- All right, I asked them if I could show you this clip because ever since I showed them this song, and when I put it on, they were like, I don't know about this. And since then, I wake up in the morning, they're singing it. I get in the car, they got it on karaoke. And I asked them if I could show them this clip we recorded, and they were a little hesitant.

And my boys are in the room right now. So when this gets done, y'all better make them feel loved right here, okay? Check this out real quick. Y'all better cut it before you hear me sing. Cut it before you hear me sing. Okay, okay, okay. Zion and Elias, let's go.

- I don't know if you know this about that song, but of course Whitney Houston made it so popular. But do you know who wrote that song? Dolly, man, y'all know your music history. Y'all love Dolly. Dolly recorded that song and released it in 1974. And then in 1992 is when Whitney Houston recorded it. So Dolly recorded, captured that song. Whitney, of course, just did a number on that song. And that's what we've been singing now. How crazy is that? Dolly writes a song in the early 70s.
- 20 years after that, Whitney Houston records it. And now we're in 2026. And Zion and Elias Josephs are doing their own version of I Will Always Love You. Isn't it amazing how some songs are just timeless? Timeless. Some songs you carry with you your whole life. It doesn't matter how long it's been since you heard it. Just that sound of that drum beat coming in and you can belt out. I will always love you. And bringing back all these memories. You can pass it on one generation to another. That's what I'm doing right now. It's amazing how these songs have the ability to carry them with us. And even pass them on.
- One of the things that was really on my heart to teach you today about worship is that, different from Whitney, worship, though, has a similar way that it has the ability to ground us in truths that we can carry with us season to season, moment to moment, place to place. Sometimes we go through things in our life and we carry these songs with us on the inside of our spirit. You ever had that? All of a sudden a worship song just pops out of nowhere for your situation. And God starts using it to remind you of his faithfulness. To remind you of his promises. To remind you of his goodness. And I felt burdened to talk to someone today who's going through maybe hardship. Maybe you find yourself in a midnight hour.
- And the encouragement I wanted to give you today is to hold on to your song. Because when God gives you these songs, it's meant to put something into your heart that you can carry with you. This is why I love our church. I love that we're not just a word church, but we're a worshiping church. Are you grateful for that? I love that when we come into this place, some of y'all are like, I don't know why they do so many new songs at this church. The moment I learned one, they're singing another one because we are a worshiping church. And I'm so grateful that our pastor and this team takes so much time to write these songs.
- Why? So that we have something to hold on to. In the trials and in the storms of our life, we have these songs that we can take with us that build our faith and make us come alive to God. Here's what I know. I will preach this message today and hopefully you're taking some notes and it's important you take notes when I preach this message because I know That if I catch you in three weeks from now and I said and you came up to me and you said wow pastor JJ That message you preached the other week. It really blessed me. Normally someone will say I came to church I was really hoping to hear pastor Stephen, but I want you to know I still liked your message Anyway, and that's okay. I take it as a compliment.
- He's my favorite preacher too. I You'll say that really blessed me. If I said, if it was three weeks from now, three months from now, and I said, oh yeah, what did God speak to you through that sermon? You'd be like, um, uh, let me pull up my notes real quick. Why? Because we tend to forget sermons, right? We tend to forget sermons, but okay, let me, let me demonstrate this and, and, and back me up. But if I said, uh, your promise still stands, you would say, all right, with a little more confidence this time. If I said your promise still stands. Great is your faithfulness. It's like the moment I say your promise still stands, you can go.
- Y'all, that song is over ten years old, and you've been holding on to it all this time. You mean to tell me at the mention of your promise still stands, you can declare the faithfulness of God? That's what it looks like to hold on to a song. And I don't know what Pastor Stephen and the team were going through when they wrote those lyrics. I don't know what they were declaring the faithfulness of God through. But whatever it is, you've been holding on to it. And through your valleys and through your storms and through your Jerichos, it became an anthem that you can hold on to that declares great is your faithfulness. Faithfulness. Now, that's the power of worship. I want to make one thing

clear. The primary purpose of worship is to give glory to God. I know that sounds obvious, but I want to say it. The primary purpose of worship is to give glory to God. In Revelations 4, 11, they say, you are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power. You are worthy, O Lord.

- The primary purpose of worship is to give glory to God. That's so important for us to know. Because when we come into church, sometimes we base our worship on other things besides the worthiness of God. Sometimes I come into worship and it's based on my feelings. Sometimes I go, ah, I don't know if I feel like it today. I just want to be authentic. I said, I don't feel like it today. Do you think Job felt like praising when he says, you give and take away? Blessed be the name of the Lord. Had nothing to do with his feelings.
- He said, I'm going to bless the Lord. Sometimes we base our worship on our performance, our behavior. thinking like oh i had a good week i deserve to work when have you ever deserved to worship god when have we ever deserved to be in his presence outside of the grace of blood of jesus christ so it was never based on my behavior or my performance i come into his presence and give him glory because he made a way for me to give him glory the purpose of worship is to give glory to god and yet God commands us to worship, not because he's insecure and needs it. God does not need our worship. God commands us to worship because he knows that when we worship, it does something in us.
- I worship God whether I feel like it or not because when I worship I get his strength. When I worship I get his presence. When I worship I get his joy. When I worship I get his peace. I thought Elevation Church would back me up while I'm preaching. Have you ever been in those moments of worship and you didn't feel like it? And you were going through storms. You didn't even know if you had the strength to praise him. But when you did something began to happen. in your life when you began to praise him and give him the glory that he deserved he ended up blessing you with something that you didn't deserve how many are thankful that in the presence of the lord is the fullness of joy okay c.s lewis said it this way he said it is in the process of being worshiped that god communicates his presence to men So the purpose of my worship is to give glory to God.
- And yet, as I worship, God gives his presence to me. You need a song to hold on to. And the psalmist said, he said, I remember my song in the night. I remember my song in the night. See, look at Colossians 3 with me for a minute. Colossians 3, 16. This is the power of worship. This is one of the ways that we get. God's truth into our hearts. Because I know you won't always remember a sermon, but the way God can just give you a song that you carry with you. In Colossians 3, 16, Paul writes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, "teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, "singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." with thankfulness in your heart to God. Paul says one of the ways that we teach one another theology, our beliefs about God, is through Psalms. So what is worship?
- Worship is truth with a tune. Worship is revelation with a rhythm. Worship is confession with a cadence. Worship is something that I can hold on to and carry with me. So when I find myself in the midnight hour and I don't know what on earth I'm there for, I can hold on to something that reminds me what I've always believed and what I've experienced in the Lord. It can remind me what I've been taught about who he is. So even in the midnight hour, I can declare what I learned. Remember what the psalmist said? He said, I remember my song in the night. You don't learn a new song in the night. You remember it.
- You have to have that song in your spirit. You have to have that revelation in your heart so that when you find yourself at midnight, you have something to call forth. That's Paul and Silas in prison. Whatever they were singing, it was a sticky song because it says that all the prisoners started listening to what they were singing. They were singing something. Forget Whitney Houston. They were singing something sticky, something generational. You need a song in your spirit. You need a song that you can carry moment to moment, season to season, that reminds you of who God is. I want to show you something that really blessed me.
- Do you know the first song recorded in the Bible? It's okay if you don't. I didn't either. I studied this this week. Okay, let me, it's a rhetorical question. Let me show you in Exodus 15. Exodus 15 has the first song recorded in the Bible. I'm gonna start in 1431 at the end. This is, the Israelites have been in captivity in Egypt for 400 years. And as God

sends the last flag, by the way, it says that it was about midnight. God sends the last flag. And the Israelites in a hurry begin to grab all their possessions and everything they can. And God is finally leading them out of captivity in Egypt. And they get to the Red Sea and miraculously Moses sticks out his staff and he parts the Red Sea God made away. But as they look behind them, they still see Pharaoh and all his chariots chasing them down. And they begin to panic and they begin to worry.

- But then God, by his strength and by his mighty hand, causes the waters to fold back in. And they watch as Pharaoh and his chariots and their enemy drown. So Exodus 14, 31, Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians so that the people feared the Lord. And they believed in the Lord and his servant Moses. Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord. Look at that. They were just sprinting and now they're singing. I will sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. This is what I want to show you. Verse two.
- The Lord is my strength and my song. And he has become my salvation. They come out of Egypt and they watch God defeat and triumph over their enemies. And their response is to begin to sing to him. The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. When God does something for you in your life, is your first response to give him worship? Is your first response to give him praise? Look at this. This blessed me too. Then it goes on to say in Exodus 15, something about Miriam, who's Moses' sister. Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, she took a tambourine in her hand and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. That blessed me for a couple of reasons. It blessed me because it lets me know that even while she was in captivity in Egypt, she had a tambourine.
- So this might be the first song recorded in the Bible, but I don't think this is their first time singing. I don't think she was waiting until she got free to worship the God of her ancestors. I don't think she was waiting until God delivered her to praise. And then what also blessed me was just think about it. God sends that last plague and tells the Israelites, it's time to go, it's time to go. And they just have moments to get out of Egypt. Moments packing everything they can. And of all the things that Miriam is packing for the journey, not knowing how long it would be as God leads them into the promised land. She chose to pack a... tambourine. I came to tell someone you got to hold on to your song. I imagine her friends going, Miriam, you might want to bring an extra pair of shoes. We don't know how long we're going to be out there in this wilderness.
- And maybe you want to bring some water wings because I don't know what we're going to do about that Red Sea. But Miriam said, no, I got to bring my tambourine with me. I've got to hold on to my praise because I don't know how long I'm going to be in this wilderness. And I don't know where God is taking me, but I know that he's going to be with me. And if God's going to be with me, I've got to hold on to my song. I've got to be able to worship him. I've got to be able to glorify him. Good time, bad. Pharaoh dead, Pharaoh chasing me. I came to bless the Lord. And they sang that song, the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. Now here's what really, really amazed me about what they sang after God delivered them from the Israelites.
- They didn't just sing that song, but that song was so sticky that it got passed on from generation to generation, from Dolly to Whitney to Zion, generation to generation. Because later in Psalm 118, 14, now they're in the promised land. They're in the temple that God has promised. This is generations later. And the psalmist writes in Psalm 118, 14, the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation forever. Later in Isaiah, the Israelites are once again in captivity and they're in exile. They said it again, the Lord is my strength and my song. The Israelites the first time sang it on the other side of a deliverance. Now they're in captivity, but they're reminding their souls of what they've been holding on to. He is my strength. He is my song. He is my salvation.
- And then in Mark 14, something amazing happens. I never saw this before. After Jesus has the last supper with the disciples, where he broke the bread saying, this is my body. And he gave them the cup saying, this is the cup of the new covenant. And he was telling them how he was gonna go to the cross and die so that we could be forgiven and reconciled to the father. From the Passover dinner on his way to the garden, look what Mark 14, 26 says. When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Do you remember at the start of this year, pastor did a

series called Seeking Jesus. And we learned about staying Jesus and seated Jesus. And right here we have singing Jesus. He leaves the Passover dinner with his disciples, gives them the bread and the juice. And on the way to the garden where he would kneel before the father sweating blood and say, father, if there's any other way, let it be so. But nevertheless, not my will, but your be done.

- It says that he sang a hymn. And do you know what song he sang? Do you know what hymn he was carrying with him? The tradition was that during Passover, they would sing through a number of Psalms. And the last one they sing, the song they would sing at this point of the Passover was Psalm 118. Jesus going to die on the cross singing, the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. You know what else is in Psalm 118? It says, I shall not die, but I shall live. Jesus is going to the cross prophesying to his situation through a song that he's been holding on to, passed on generation to generation. From the time Moses and the Israelites sang it in Egypt on the other side of the Red Sea to Jesus singing it between the Last Supper and the Mount of Olives, 1,500 years those songs and words have been sung.
- Y'all, that's not just a cover. That's an inheritance. And some of us are living in the favor of blessing, of a measure of faith that has been passed on to us one generation to another. Some of us are holding on to songs that our grandma used to sing around the house. And it just pops into your spirit. Where did that come from? I remember her singing it. And I don't know what she was going through, but I know what I'm going through right now. And we've been holding on to these songs. It's amazing that the savior of the world was singing, reminding himself that the Lord is my strength. and my song.
- Y'all, you need a song to hold on to. You need a song that's sticky. Here's Paul and Silas. They get thrown into prison earlier in that day, and they're sitting there, but something happens around midnight, and they just start to sing. I wonder, do you have a song that's sticky? Do you have a song that you can carry with you through season to season in your life? I'm so grateful that in this church, we get to learn so many songs that I get to see my kids singing, not knowing what it'll mean to them in their future, but it's putting God's word in their heart. I have a song for when I find myself going through a storm in life that simply reminds me that God is Lord over the storm and I can be still and know that he is God. I'm so thankful that when I'm drowning in shame, I can sing, I've never been more loved than I am right now. I wasn't holding you up, so there's nothing I can do to let you down. I still get teary when I think about my dad playing Bishop Joseph Garlington around the house saying, Knowing you, Jesus. Knowing you. There is no greater thing. And it reminds me of my purpose when I start to wander. It reminds me of what God put me here for when I start to get off track.
- That my purpose, it's a song that I've been holding on to because it was passed on. Passed on. Look at this letter that we got from someone named Alexandra in Sao Paulo, Brazil. All the Brazilians make some noise. I know you're all in here. There we go. There we go. That's quiet for y'all, actually. That's crazy. He sent in this testimony just a few weeks ago and he was talking about how he first heard the song, Do It Again, you know, the one we were singing earlier. Your promise still stands. Great is your faithfulness. He said, I first began singing that song in 2018. The words, I've seen you move, you move the mountains and I believe I'll see you do it again, became part of my faith. At the time, I could sing those words without knowing just how deeply I would one day have to live them. At the end of September, 2021, my father was diagnosed with leukemia.
- And what followed were 49 days of one of the hardest battles my family ever experienced. We prayed, we believed, we worshiped, we believed God could move the mountain. And on November 8th, 2021, my father passed away. One week later, our church sang Do It Again. That moment changed the meaning of the song for me forever. My father was not healed physically, but I came to understand that God had not stopped being God. His faithfulness did not disappear just because the answer was different from what I wanted. In a way, we learned to worship through the pain. We learned that God is worthy of our worship.
- Wasn't I telling you all that before? That God is worthy of our worship before the miracle, during the battle, and even when the miracle looks different than what we expected. Do it again became a declaration of faith for me. Not simply that God would perform another miracle, but that I would continue believing him no matter what. That's

what a sticky song looks like. Something you can hold on to in the 49 hardest days of your life. Reading that story reminded me of when my grandfather was dying of leukemia. I would visit him in the hospital and I didn't have words to say, but I would worship. I didn't know what to say, but I knew what to sing. Sitting there next to his bedside singing, to worship you, I live, to worship you, I live, I live, to worship you. You need a song that's sticky. Paul and Silas are in prison and they start singing hymns to God.

- And all the other prisoners started listening. I've been preaching my whole first point to you. So let me give that to you. The first thing is you need a song that's sticky. You need a song that's sticky. And my second point is you need a song that's shared. You need a song that's shared. Paul and Silas, nothing to lean on, nobody to hold, shackled, wounds in their back, in prison for casting a demon out of a woman that ticks somebody off. And now they're in jail. They didn't even do anything wrong. You ever been in circumstances? You're like, I don't think I even deserve to be here. What am I doing here for? I didn't deserve this. That's where Paul and Silas are. And they start singing their song. And it says that the prisoners were listening.
- I love this detail because, you know, if I was in prison, the first thing I'd start asking all the other prisoners is like, what did you do? But it doesn't tell us what they did. It just tells us what they were doing. Yeah, it says they were listening. Your song is personal, but it's not meant to be private. That's why Apple Music puts a share button right next to the song you're listening to. So when you find a good one, you can share it with someone. Your song is personal. But it's not meant to be private. You need a song that's shared. It lets me know that Paul and Silas weren't mumbling or humming while they sat in that prison cell. Whatever they were singing, they were singing it with passion. They were singing it out loud.
- They might have been weak from the persecution that they just went through. But they were singing a song to God and the prisoners. We're listening. Your faith is meant to be shared. This is why it's so important that when we come to church together, that you don't just stand there with your arms crossed and let other people do the singing. You know, there might be other people who need to borrow from your faith. Other people who need to borrow your worship, your praise. Something happens when we come into this church together and say, we're all going to bring praise to God. Why?
- Because he's worthy, but also because he's given us a song to share. We got to share it, y'all. And after the prisoners listened to this song, did you notice what it said? When the earthquake came, it says everyone's chains got loose. Could it be possible that your song has the power to break things off of other people's lives? Could it be possible that someone in your row is sitting here today, coming in bound, coming in shame, but your praise begins to shift things and their spirit, and they walk out of here free because you shared your song about the mighty hand of God, how he's become your strength, how he's become your song, how he's become your salvation.
- If you've got a praise to share, back me up right now and give God glory. Something starts shaking in the room when they started singing. People's chains started getting loose when they started singing. And I love that when people come to this church, so often they say, I felt the presence of God from I pulled into the parking lot. That's what happens when you bring your faith. That's what happens when you hold on to your song. You carry the presence of God with you because he inhabits the praises of his people.
- You got to hold on to your song. You need a song to share. And as they sang and the chains broke and the doors opened, the jailer sees what's happening. And he thinks all the prisoners have escaped. And he runs into the prison and he thinks they're all gone. And he's about to kill himself. And Paul says, no, no, no, we're all here. And Paul begins to tell this jailer. Actually, he asked the question, what do I have to do to be saved? And he starts sharing his faith with them, preaching the word of the Lord. You can share the word of the Lord with people through your words, but you can also share it through your song.
- And I don't know what Paul and Silas were thinking as they stood in that prison cell. But the moment the jailer came in, they knew what to do. They started sharing. And I wonder if there's people in your life who are waiting to hear your song. I wonder if there are people who are asking, what do I have to do to be saved? And what does it look like for you to notice them and share what God has done in your life? Y'all, I say this every time I preach because

sometimes I think we get in this mindset that everything we do for our faith is just personal. It's just private. It's about me and the Lord. And I always want to emphasize that everything God does in your life is not just about you. There are things that God does in your life. There are things you go through. You're wondering, Paul and Silas are wondering, why are we the ones in this prison cell? We didn't deserve to be here. And yet sometimes God will take you through things because he has a purpose for somebody else that he wants to do through you. Some of the things you're going through right now, you've been hesitant to share.

- You go, I can't share my faith with that person. I'm still in chains right now. I can't share my faith. I'm still locked in addiction. I can't share my faith. And Paul and the Lord is saying to you today, no, no, no. Share what God has put in you because it might just be the thing that sets somebody else free. You need a song that's sticky, but you need a song to share. And here's my last point for you today. You need a song that shakes. You need a song that shakes you out of your apathy. You need a song that shakes you out of your hopelessness. You need a song that shakes you out of your selfishness. You need a song that shakes you out of your bitterness.
- You need a song that shakes. When they started singing to God, and I don't know how long they were already in that prison before, before they started singing, but it was at about midnight. Paul and Silas opened up their mouth. And when they started singing, look what the scripture says. Suddenly. There was an earthquake, such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison started to shake. And at once, the prison doors flew open and everybody's chains came loose. When they began to sing, things began to shake. When you begin to sing, things begin to shake. When you begin to sing, things begin to shake.
- When you begin to sing, things begin to shake. You need a song that shakes. And they start singing and the doors open and their chains broke off. And when the jailer comes in, it says that everyone's chains were loose. But he woke up and he saw that the prison doors were open. He drew his sword. He's about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. Go on. But Paul shouted, don't harm yourself. We are all here. You mean to tell me that the doors opened and the chains were loose and nobody left? I kept thinking about that. I thought, well, maybe Paul and Silas didn't leave because somewhere along the way, maybe in their prayer time, God spoke to him and said, hey, you're here for this jailer.
- Maybe that's why they didn't leave. I don't know. But the bigger question for me was if the doors opened and the chains broke, what kept all the other prisoners in the room? If there weren't chains holding them. What was in that room that was holding them to the ground? You need a song that shakes. When it says that there was an earthquake, it's a call back to Exodus where the Lord met Moses on Mount Sinai. It says that the ground began to tremble. When Paul and Silas began to sing in that prison cell, the earthquake is a picture of the manifest presence of God. coming into the room, opening doors, breaking chains.
- And yet you ever found yourself in that place of worship where God starts ministering to you and God starts meeting you in your pain and God starts meeting you in your anxiety and God starts and things start breaking off of your life. But you're like, I can't leave this place. The presence of God is just too good. What was happening in that cell as they began to praise? The Spirit of God came in, and even though the doors were open, nobody left the room. When you're in the room, anything can happen. When you're in the room, chains start breaking. When you're in the room, anything can happen. When you're in the room, there's healing. When you're in the room, there's joy. When you're in the room, there's peace.
- I don't want to leave this place, Lord, because you're here. You're here. You're here. The doors open and the chains were loose and nobody left the place. It lets me know something so powerful about worship. It lets me know that the reason I worship isn't so that I can get out. The reason I worship is so that I can let God in. Can I say it again? So you can write that down. The reason I worship is not so that I can get out. so that I can let God in. Something happens when you hold on to your song. I love what Moses and the psalmist and the prophet and Jesus said. The Lord is my song. When I find myself in a prison, when I find myself in a midnight hour, when I find myself being weighed down by the circumstances of my life, the word of the Lord is I can hold on to my song. Who's my song? The Lord is my song. He is my strength.

- I can always hold on. to him even if i'm beaten and even if i'm chained down to the ground i can hold on to my i can begin to sing songs reminding me of his faithfulness reminding me of his power reminding me of his goodness songs that have been passed on generation to generation songs that my grandmother used to sing songs that my father used to sing that i can hold on to in the midnight hour and remind myself that god is with me and i don't worship just so that i can get out of my circumstances I worship because when I begin to lift up his name, I worship because when I begin to exalt him, I worship because when I remind my soul of who he is and what he's done, God comes in to the place.
- Like an earthquake, suddenly it can happen so quickly. Walking into church wondering if this is going to be my last day and they begin to praise and I find the strength to lift up my hands and suddenly God comes in. So I came to tell someone today, you got to hold on to your song. Don't be one of those Christians who come to church and say, I just don't worship like that. It's not my personality. Personality or preference. And what if your preferences don't align with the purpose that God has for your life? I came to praise today. I came to praise today. Some of you are like, I don't know why David's got to dance like that. You think he's dancing for you? I came to praise. I've got a song in my heart. And I don't just praise in the good time.
- I want you to hear that some of the most powerful times of worship for me have been in the moments that were the hardest, where I felt the furthest from God, where I felt abandoned. And yet in those moments, the manifest presence of God came in and met me in that place. And things start shaking so quick. I came to tell someone today that you can praise with chains. Did you hear me? You can praise with chains. You don't have to wait until you're free of that addiction. You don't need to wait until you're free of those generational curses. You can praise while you're bound. You can praise while you're hurting. You can praise while you've been bleeding out your back. You can praise while you're still shackled. You can praise.
- With chains I remember my song in the night. I remembered it. It was nighttime It was dark all around me, but I remembered the song. I remember the Lord is my strength. He is my song I remembered him in the night you can praise with chains and I was picturing someone today Maybe you're in a circumstance that you never could have predicted I don't know if it was your own decisions that led you there I don't know if it's the things other people have done to you But you find yourself in a midnight hour and you didn't know how to prepare. I for the circumstances that you're in today. And maybe you don't have a tambourine, but you know what chains sound a lot like? I said I came to tell someone today at Elevation Church, you can praise with chains. You can praise with chains. You can praise with chains.
- Praise them in that addiction. Praise them in that despair. Praise them in those circumstances. I remembered my song in the night. And I picture Paul and Silas getting thrown in prison. What did we do to deserve to be here? Bleeding out their back, getting chained and shackled, sitting there going, what are we going to do now? Wondering, why does God have me in these circumstances? And I wonder if maybe at one moment... While they're sitting there with their feet shackled, Silas began to shuffle his feet a little. And Paul just heard. And Paul goes, Silas, what was that? And he goes, what was what? No, no, no, move your feet again. What was that? Silas shuffles his feet. Paul goes, I know that beat. Hang on, Silas, keep wiggling your feet a little bit. Silas is like, what are you talking about, Paul? He goes, no, no, no, no, no. What you're doing right there, that reminds me of something. It reminds me of something my grandmother used to sing.
- It reminds me of a song that used to sing at my church. Something about how I know the night won't last. Hang on, do it again, Silas. Something about how his word will come to pass. Something about silence. I know that one. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Come on, wiggle your feet again with silence. Praise with those chains. Praise with those chains. And he said, yeah, yeah. That song that said, I've seen you move. You move the mountains and then Silas answers back. And I believe I'll see you do it again. And Paul goes, wait, what else you said? Did you say that he would make a way when there was no way? And Silas goes, and I believe I'll see you do it again. And he says, keep wiggling your feet. Keep wiggling your feet. Don't wait for the chains to break. You can praise with praise. I see you move. Tonight, begin to meet your hands in the clouds. Thank you Jesus. Raise your hand and wave at me if you find

yourself. Oh, let me get everyone's doing it. Hang on. Yeah, I'm so thankful for how this word ministered to me and I pray that it blessed you today, but I want to pray specifically right now. For those of you who find yourself in a prison, find yourself in a midnight hour and you're waiting and you're waiting and waiting for God to deliver you. And it seems that along the way you lost your song.

- I want to pray that God would help you remember. Remember. You don't learn the song in the night. You hold on to it there. That's you today. You need prayer. Slide your hands so I can see you. I want to pray for you specifically for just a second here. And those of you online or at another campus, raise your hand. Your campus pastor will pray for you. We have people in the chat who would love to pray for you too. Psalmist said, I remembered my song in the night. Lord, you are our song. We remember you. Call to mind your faithfulness. Call to mind how you got us through situations before. It looks different than what we're facing now. But God, we've seen your mighty hand. And I pray for those who have a hand lifted right now. Lord, I don't know what circumstances they're going through. I don't know what midnight hour they're facing right now.
- But I know that the night won't last. And I know that you've moved before. And so God, I pray that through the spirit of God, you would help them remember Lord, your faithfulness and remember your goodness, that they would not lose their song, but that they would carry their faith through the hardships of life right now. Give them strength, give them joy. Holy spirit, guard and protect them in the mighty name of Jesus, I pray. Amen, amen. And now if you've been listening to this message and you've never made a decision to place your faith in the person of Jesus, the name that breaks every chain, the anointed one who breaks every yoke of bondage, it would be my privilege right now to lead you in a prayer to make a decision today to put your trust in Jesus, to put your trust in him.
- I'm going to pray right now out loud, and we're going to pray out loud together as a church family for the benefit of those who are making a decision today to surrender their lives to God, to receive the gift of his grace and salvation through the person of Jesus. Repeat after me. Say, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and the savior of the world. I believe he died and rose again to forgive my sin and give me life. I receive your grace by faith. Come into my life and make me new. Head still bowed, eyes still closed. If that prayer was for you, when I count to three, throw your hand up in the air. I want to celebrate what God has done in your heart today. One, two, three. Throw your hand up high so I can see it.