



## Discussion Guide

Date: 8/31/2025

Sermon Title: What is a hymn and why do we sing them?

Scripture: Psalm 100

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

### OPENING PRAYER

*Gracious and loving God, we gather in your presence with joy and thanksgiving. Open our hearts to your Word and open our ears to the songs of faith passed down through the generations. Help us to hear your voice in the Psalms and in the hymns we sing. Remind us of the power of music to form our faith, unify your people, and lift our spirits toward you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

### Opening Question:

1. What is your favorite song and why is it your favorite?

### Digging into the Word:

1. What words or phrases stand out to you in this Psalm? How does this Psalm express praise and gratitude? How do these themes connect to the hymns we sing in worship today?
2. Verse 2 says, "Come into his presence with singing."
  - a. Why do you think music is so connected with worship throughout Scripture?
  - b. How have songs shaped your own experiences of faith?
3. Verse 3 emphasizes identity: "we are his."
  - a. How can hymns remind us of who we are and who God is?
  - b. Can you think of a hymn that has helped shape your understanding of God or yourself? If it
4. Psalm 100 was likely used as a call to worship in temple settings.
  - a. What role do hymns and Psalms play in calling us into worship today?
  - b. Why is it important that worship includes both words and music?
5. Wesleyan theology holds that singing is not just expression, but formation. John Wesley said in his Directions for Singing (found in the 1780 Methodist hymnal): "Sing lustily and with a good courage... Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing."
  - a. What does it mean to "sing spiritually"?
  - b. How can our singing be an act of spiritual discipline or means of grace?
6. Supporting Scripture: Read Colossians 3:16 (NRSV) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."
  - a. How do hymns teach and admonish us?

- b. How is singing both an act of worship and of community-building?

### **Wesleyan Insight:**

In Wesleyan theology, music and hymnody are deeply connected to spiritual growth and Christian formation. Charles Wesley wrote over 6,500 hymns to help people experience theology through song. Hymns teach doctrine, stir the heart, and unite the body of Christ. As Methodist theologian Randy Maddox explains, “Grace is not merely pardon but also power—power to grow in holiness.” Hymns are one way that grace is mediated into the believer’s life, helping us to grow in love and holiness.

### **Sermon Questions:**

7. Pastor Clayton mentions that Hymns and Psalms tell us who we are; they remind us of our identity. Has that been true in your singing and reading?
8. The sermon also shares that hymns share about our vocation. Meaning that we are to worship and serve with gladness. What does it mean to 'serve the Lord with gladness,' and how can we incorporate this attitude into our daily lives and work?
9. How does the concept of being 'freed from guilt and shame' through God's grace challenge or affirm your current spiritual practices?
10. In what ways do hymns bridge the gap between intellectual understanding of faith and emotional connection to God?
11. In the sermon the hymn Blessed Assurance is quoted “This is my story this is my song”. Does your story and the song of your life reflect the hymns and Psalms? How do we live into who we are created to be in God’s grace?

### **Applying it:**

12. How do hymns or songs teach us about theology, and can you recall a specific hymn or song that has deepened your understanding of God's nature?
13. What hymn or psalm resonates most deeply with you, and how has it helped you navigate challenging times in your life?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*God of melody and meaning, thank you for the gift of song that shapes our faith and carries our prayers. May the hymns we sing and the Psalms we read deepen our love for you and for one another. Let our lives become songs of praise, echoing your steadfast love and enduring faithfulness. Send us forth with joyful hearts, ready to serve and to sing of your goodness. In the name of Christ, the One we worship, Amen.*

### **WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)**

1. Incorporate a hymn into their daily devotional time for the next week, reflecting on how it reinforces their identity in Christ or teaches them about God's character
2. Start a hymn or song journal. Each day this week write down a meaningful hymn or song and reflect on its lyrics and note how it speaks to their current life situation. You may want to share with your group your experience next time you meet.