

Testimony and Bible Study

BLAYZE WHITE

‘This Is My Story, This Is My Song’

*Methodist minister,
Blayze White, shares
how scripture, song,
and the Methodist
tradition shape a
people who don't just
believe the gospel –
but sing it!*

I can still remember the first time I felt led to go to a Methodist church. I didn't grow up in a particularly churchgoing family. Faith was present, but more like a polite guest than a permanent resident. Yet, through the quiet witness of friends, grandparents, and godparents, I found myself drawn to explore more.

My first attempt was an Anglican church. A beautiful building, rich liturgy ... and not a single person spoke to me. I began to wonder if I had accidentally attended a vow of silence convention.

Next, I tried a lively evangelical church. Everyone spoke to me. Repeatedly. Enthusiastically. I'm fairly certain I was welcomed by the same person at least three times! Lovely, but slightly overwhelming. This isn't typical. I've since had deeply positive experiences in both Anglican and evangelical churches, it just so happened that on those days, I caught them at either end of the ecclesiastical spectrum.

Then I tried the Methodist church in Market Rasen. For those unfamiliar to this church, it stands atop a set of stone steps, looming



nobly over the street, part chapel, part architectural warning. As I approached the heavy front door, I half expected a man with a lantern and a tragic backstory to answer. Instead, I was met by some of the warmest, kindest people I have ever encountered. They welcomed me with a gentleness that immediately disarmed all my expectations. They could see I was out of my depth, and they met me there with grace.



Market Rasen Methodist Church

They showed me into a pew ... and then promptly shut the door behind me!

Now, I have many theological questions, but near the top of the list remains: 'Who decided to put doors on pews?' And more importantly, 'Why did they think it necessary to lock them?' I remember thinking, *'How little faith must they have in the preacher that escape routes are required!'*

Yet, something happened in that place. When the singing began, everything changed. This elderly congregation came alive. They sang with a depth, a conviction, a joy that filled the room. The building suddenly made sense. It wasn't imposing; it was resonant. The acoustics lifted their voices heavenward, and what I heard felt like the very thing described in Psalm 40:

'He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.'

Psalm 40:3 ESV

I walked in as a teenager weighed down by guilt and confusion. In that moment, I glimpsed something transformative: God gives his people a song.

METHODISM: BORN IN SONG

It is no exaggeration to say that Methodism was born singing. Charles Wesley is believed to have written over 6,000 hymns. Around 100 – 200 remain in regular use today, which, if nothing else, proves that perseverance is a spiritual gift. *'If at first you don't succeed,' he seems to say, 'write another 5,800 hymns.'*



Charles Wesley

Charles wasn't simply prolific, he was purposeful. Together with his brother John, he understood something vital: if the gospel is to reach the heart, it must be both heard and felt.

So, Charles wrote hymns that were:

- Theologically rich
- Biblically grounded
- Emotionally resonant
- Accessible to ordinary people

In a time when many could not read, hymns became portable theology. People learned scripture not only by hearing it preached, but by singing it repeatedly.

Colossians 3:16 captures this perfectly: *'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.'* (ESV)

Methodists didn't just believe the Bible, they sang it into their bones.

In fact, early Methodists were often recognised as they walked to worship, carrying two essential items: a Bible and a hymn book. That was their identity, people of the Word, and people of song.

SONG AS TESTIMONY

Music has a remarkable ability to express what ordinary speech struggles to contain. Even those with no faith will say, *'That song just gets me.'*

Scripture is full of such moments. Take Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1–10. A woman who had known deep pain and longing is suddenly overwhelmed by God's provision. What does she do? She sings: *'My heart exults in the Lord ... I rejoice in your salvation'* (1 Samuel 2:1 ESV).

Or Moses, in Exodus 15. This is a man who, only chapters earlier, was offering God every excuse imaginable (Exodus 3 – 4). Yet after the Red Sea, after deliverance, his first response is not analysis, but adoration. He sings. Then something beautiful happens: others join in. Miriam takes a tambourine, the people respond, and a shared story becomes a shared song.

This is the pattern of Scripture:

- God acts
- People respond
- The response becomes song

Your story becomes your song.

SONG AS IDENTITY

I once tried to explain the power of sung worship to my dad, who found the whole thing slightly baffling, particularly the hand-raising. 'Why,' he wondered, *'do people sing with their arms in the air?'*

Providence provided an answer. He took me to a Sunderland football match. Now, Sunderland is a club that has truly embraced the biblical principle that *'the last shall be first'* ... just not yet.



Sunderland AFC

What struck me wasn't the football, it was the singing. Thousands of people, united in voice, singing with passion, hope, and unwavering loyalty. When the opposing fans fell quiet, our side gleefully informed them: *'You're not singing anymore.'*

There was my dad, arms raised, voice loud, fully invested. I gently pointed out: 'This is what I've been trying to tell you about church!'

Singing forms identity. It binds people together. It expresses belonging. This is precisely what Charles Wesley understood. His hymns gave early Methodists a shared language of faith, something they could carry into mines, fields, and homes.

A NEW SONG

One of the dangers we face is assuming that the great songs of faith are all behind us, but

Scripture refuses to let us think that way: *'Behold, I am doing a new thing'* (Isaiah 43:19). God is not only the author of old songs, He is the giver of new ones.

The same Spirit who moved Hannah and Moses, who inspired the hymns of Charles Wesley, is still at work today, drawing people to Christ and putting new songs in their mouths. The question is not whether God is still writing songs. The question is whether we are still listening.

THIS IS MY STORY

I love singing in church. This is not because I am good at it. I am not. If you heard me, you might conclude that my 'joyful noise' is doing a great deal of heavy lifting. Some say everyone has the voice of an angel. Mine does, but it's an angel with a persistent chest infection. Yet, I have never wanted to sing more than when I am worshipping, because something happens in that moment.

I find myself drawn into a story bigger than my own. I join my voice:

- With Moses on the far side of the sea
- With Hannah in her joy
- With generations of Methodists who sang their faith into being
- With congregations today, still declaring God's faithfulness

Sometimes through ancient hymns. Sometimes through new songs. Always through the same unchanging gospel.

Every now and then, we sing those familiar words:

'Morning by morning new mercies I see...'

Something stirs again, because that is the truth at the heart of it all: God is still giving his people a story, and

he is still giving his people a song.

FOR REFLECTION / BIBLE STUDY

1. Read Psalm 40:1–3
 - What 'new song' has God placed in your life?
2. Read 1 Samuel 2:1–10
 - How does Hannah's song reflect her story?
 - What would your equivalent be?
3. Read Exodus 15:1–18
 - Why do you think song is the first response to deliverance?
4. Read Colossians 3:16
 - How does singing help the Word of Christ dwell in us?
5. Consider your own worship
 - Do you see singing as optional, or essential?
 - What might it mean to recover our identity as a people of both Word and song?

*"This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour
all the day long."*



BLAYZE WHITE

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