

How Awesome Is All That!

Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men” Psalm 66:5



I was listening to a news report recently and reflected on the statement the newscaster made that the country was recovering from the recession of 2008. I guess for some that's true. But for others it seems like we're still solidly in the midst of recession and, among some of the people I know, it feels more like we're in the midst of a depression. There's still a lot of unemployment and underemployment in the African American community. Many small businesses, including mine, just couldn't recover from the loss of accounts both large and small. People are losing their homes and in some cases, folks who were doing pretty well just a few years ago, have had to move in with relatives or in some cases are simply homeless.

I'm reminded of the story of a songwriter named Horatio Spafford. He was a successful Chicago lawyer. He had a wife and five children (four daughters and a son). Then tragedy struck. First, his only son died suddenly. That same year he lost all of his vast real estate holdings and his life savings. Then a couple of years later, he planned a cruise to Europe with his wife and daughters, but because a business matter came up at the last minute, he arranged for his wife and daughters to sail on ahead and promised to join them in a few days. But then tragedy struck again. The ship his family was on was struck by another ship and it sank. Spafford's four daughters died along with 240 others, but his wife survived. When he made the trip to meet his grieving wife, he sailed near the place where his four daughters had drowned. And there, in the midst of his sorrow, he wrote the words to "It Is Well With My Soul."

Psalm 66 is a song of praise and thanksgiving. It speaks of the LORD's great works, His gracious benefits, His faithful deliverances, and all His dealings with his people. Verse 5 starts with "Come and see." The psalmist is inviting us in and serves as our tour guide pointing out items of significance to us and helping us to understand them. We see first a characterization of God as "terrible" in His works, which literally means "fearsome" or "awe-inspiring." Verse 3 called us to confess the awesome, fear-inspiring nature of God's works. Now we are to consider them by examining them closely in our mind's eye. The phrase "toward the children of men" can be understood to mean "on behalf of" or "for." It emphasizes that God's greatness overwhelms anything that human beings can do or comprehend, expressing a thought similar to that of Romans 11:34 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord?"

Just as Horatio Spafford found out, we can sing to the LORD because God's great power holds our lives in God's hands and keeps our feet from slipping. God, and God alone is powerful enough to ease our every pain, heartache and burden.

The Psalm opens with a call for Universal Praise - "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands;" That call is to glorify God and is not limited to the psalmist or even to the people of God - Israel. All the nations of the earth are to join in a collective calling out to God.

At our church, we sing a song called, "I Call You Faithful." It speaks of how God is Holy, Righteous, Awesome, Faithful, Healer, Savior and All That! We serve a dependable God, and we can feel confident in God's ability to save and deliver despite our circumstances. Our God is Awesome! Praise God for His dependability!

Questions for Discussion:

1. We sometimes communicate more with God during times of emotional turmoil and during periods of intense joy. How has God used these times to strengthen our relationship with him?
2. When have you felt you were being tested by God or overwhelmed by hardship?
3. How do God's creations testify to His awesomeness and power?

Reflections:

Examine your commitment to wholly depending on God by asking yourself the following questions at the end of each day: How often did I thank God today? How many people did I tell about my thankfulness? Did the things I said and did today reflect that God is in control of my life?

Prayer:

Lord, I thank you for the opportunity to get it right today. Lord, help me trust in you. Father, give me a mind like Jesus Christ so that I can let you reign and rule in my life. Amen.

What God wants me to do:

Special insights I have learned:
