



Why were you shouting?

H^{EAVENLY FATHER,}
^{CALM ME!}
The trembling in
my belly will not stop. Why am
I so nervous? I've done this be-
fore—many times since I was but
a youth.

Father, give me peace about this!

Granted, I have not done it
much lately—only twice, after an
interval of almost twenty years.
Still, why am I so nervous this
morning?

*Father God, let me do this for
Your glory! Calm my trembling so
that my voice will be strong and
clear.*

The run-through was rough—
sometimes a good sign. But the
rude people in the room, chatter-
ing away at full voice while I ran

through my song, left my concen-
tration in disarray. My voice shook,
my brain struggled for control.
Why are people so discourteous
these days?

O God, push that memory away.

Let me start clean.

The shaking continues. What
am I so nervous about? No one in
the room wishes me ill; when I get
up there I will see only smiling, en-
couraging faces. I know the words,
I know the tune. I have rehearsed
for weeks. It's solid.

*Why won't You calm me, God?
Is there some additional way I must
prove myself to You? What am I
missing?*

The pastor's message nears its
conclusion. Just moments now, and
my belly still quakes from nerves.



Reflections
by the Pond

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In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—calm me, Lord!

I climb the steps to the platform. My mind is numb, my concentration scattered to the winds. What will happen when I open my mouth? Who or what will be in control? Did God hear my plea? Where is He?

A seven-beat intro. I take a breath, and begin to sing. *There is a fountain filled with blood... My voice is strong, the notes resonant, the words clear. ...and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.* The song rises, the message of redeeming grace fills the room. Christ is exalted.

A few minutes later, as I step off the platform and return to my seat, I hear a still, small voice in my head:

"I've been here all along. Why were you shouting?"



One of the ugliest occupations of Satan is to plant seeds of doubt about the veracity of God and the level of His interest in our daily lives. He's good at it; he's been doing it for a very long time.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from

any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:1-5

The adversary argues against God's loving attendance to His people for the purpose of making himself seem more important. But it is all a lie. The prophet Jeremiah wrote that Jehovah God appeared to him and said,

"I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness."

Jeremiah 31:3

Somehow we have believed the lie that someone so gargantuan and powerful as the Lord God Almighty, who created heaven and earth, who flung the stars into space, could not possibly be bothered by the small tremblings of the human spirit. But, here again, the earliest days of man prove otherwise.

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7

This is the work of an intimate, personal God. Man's creation was an act of a loving Father not afraid to get His hands dirty. Like a potter mashing the wet clay between his fingers, Jehovah God Himself squeezed and shaped man into being. Then Father God pressed His lips to the face of His new creation and breathed into him the wind of heaven.

And the One who did that is the same God who hears every tortured utterance of our soul. Our spirit need only whisper our smallest prayer to His Spirit. They are companions, these two. They are permanently linked, sharing thoughts and words in both directions at once. Our most vaporous desire is instantly broadcast through the divine ether of heaven, and the Great Creator Himself hears, and stoops to our need.

He always hears.

It is not necessary to shout.

