



Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty

Life with God in and through Christ is not static and dry, but active, rich, multidimensional.

We worship and serve a God who is not afraid to reach down into our lives and get His hands dirty.

Ours is a bountiful, generous God, overflowing with love for those who call upon Him. He made us to love Him, but He also made us for Him to love.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4-7

That love, that devotion to His creation, is expressed by God every day,

every moment in a believer's life. Out of that kindness and grace comes our praise for Him. And it is the believer's privilege to invite other believers to join in the song.

*Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty,
the King of creation!*

*O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy
health and salvation!*

*All ye who hear, now to His temple
draw near;*

Join me in glad adoration.

It is the paradox and joy of the Christian life that the same God who spoke into existence everything that exists—space, suns, planets, moons, time—and

who reigns as absolute sovereign over creation, is the one who so gently, graciously cares for His children. He patiently listens to their prayers, and fulfills everything good for their lives.

What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Romans 8:31-32

*Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?*

Our heavenly Father is both wise and considerate. But along with the unregenerate the thinking child of God might raise the query, "What about when bad things happen to good people?" To that our loving Father could reply, "Who says those things are 'bad'—and who says you are 'good'? I am the only one who can define those terms. Only I know what is bad and what is good."

We sons and daughters of Adam are a fallen race. Even the redeemed still dwell in sinful flesh, and so clothed have not the standing nor wisdom to declare ourselves or anyone else "good." And in that same lamentable condition, we have not the prescience to declare any event, any circumstance, any unexpected consequence "bad." History is built on unpleasant things that eventuated for good.

For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

2 Corinthians 4:15-17

*Praise ye the Lord, who with marvelous wisdom hath made thee;
Health hath vouchsafed and, when heedlessly falling, hath stayed thee.*

*What need or grief ever hath failed of relief?
Wings of His mercy did shade thee.*

*Praise ye the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.*

*Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.*

God the eternal Creator enjoys sovereign rule over the universe; there are no precincts, no elements beyond His reach. He controls everything man deems uncontrollable: weather, earthquakes, tides, suns and their orbiting satellites, comets and meteors. By His will they may unnaturally cease, by His will they may confound the most learned scientist.

The Lord may unnaturally bridle any of these for our comfort, or He may not. He may choose to protect us *through* the storm, rather than take us around it. One of the benefits of belonging to

Him is that even when all hell is breaking loose around us, the peace of heaven quiets the heart.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 23:1-4

*Praise ye the Lord, who, when tempests their warfare are waging,
Who, when the elements madly around thee are raging,
Biddeth them cease, turneth their fury to peace,
Whirlwinds and waters assuaging.*

All of this staggers the mind and feeds our praise. For what else can one do when contemplating the awful majesty and sweet condescension of God but lift up holy hands in thanksgiving and adoring praise.

*Praise ye the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him.
Let the Amen sound from His people again,
Gladly for aye we adore Him.*

Joachim Neander

