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A Declaration and Invitation

Jeff Ploegstra
Dordt College, jeff.ploegstra@dordt.edu

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A Declaration and Invitation

Abstract

"Oh Lord, in good times and in bad, may your name be praised!"

Posting about God's purposes in difficult situations from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/a-declaration-and-invitation/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

A Declaration and Invitation

 inallthings.org/devotions/a-declaration-and-invitation/

September 21, 2017

Jeff Ploegstra

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 145:1-8](#)

[Nahum 2:3-13](#)

[2 Corinthians 13:1-4](#)

Psalm 145

I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.

² Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.

³ Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.

⁴ One generation shall commend your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.

⁵ On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

⁶ They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,
and I will declare your greatness.

⁷ They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

⁸ The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (ESV)

I admit, I sometimes have a hard time with Psalms like this one. For some reason, upon reading these verses, my mind immediately jumps to the counterpoint of each statement: Verse 2: “Every day I will bless you.” What about the day my Dad is diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer?

Verse 4: “One generation shall commend your works to another.” Is this true even when generations are lost to AIDS, genocide, and famine?

Verse 5: “On the glorious splendor of your majesty and on your wonderful works, I will meditate.” Do I do so even as Hurricane Harvey dumps 19 *trillion* gallons of water on Houston, displacing thousands and wreaking death and destruction?

Verse 7: “They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.” But, what of the hundreds of thousands who fear deportation with the ending of DACA?

Is the psalmist naïve? Is he completely ignorant of suffering in the world? I think not. Instead, I read this as both declaration and invitation.

So, in response to the psalmist, I invite you to declare with me:

“Even when there is so much wrong in the world, evil being done at the hands of other people, disasters created out of ignorance—even then, we shall praise Your name. We shall choose to remember Your graciousness and mercy; we shall choose to remember Your faithfulness. For even though we know You are in control of all things, You are not a capricious God delighting in the suffering of that which You have created. You allow suffering, but we are confident that You can bring beauty out of the ugliest situation, and love out of the deepest hate. Have we not heard? Do we not know that you used the greatest tragedy in history for your purposes?”

And yet, it seems almost trite to just say that God turns terrible situations to His purposes. For the weak and powerless, for the victim of ongoing abuse, for those afflicted with disease, perhaps this isn't always a psalm of praise and confidence. Perhaps, it can serve as a cry for help as well. Perhaps, this psalm can speak of our yearning, our anticipation, our fearful hope for that grace and mercy.

Oh Lord, in good times and in bad, may your name be praised!