

SBC – April 13, 2025
Psalm 66 (NKJV)
“A Call to Praise God”

The author of Psalm 66 is unknown. Psalm 66 is the first Psalm since Psalm 50 not to be attributed to David. It is basically a Thanksgiving Psalm with a prophetic slant in the mix. I like to call Psalm 66 a “**Life Psalm**” because it shows what the life calling of the believer is to be and at the same time a mixture of many things involved in our experience.

It was intended to be used in corporate worship, but the background occasion is unknown.

The first 12 verses are spoken in the first person plural (“us” and “our”). The emphasis here is on group praise. Verses 13-20 are spoken in first person singular (“I”, “me”, “my”) with the emphasis being on individual worship.

Slide # 1

Psalm 66

“A Call to Praise God”

- vv. 1-4 A Universal Call to Praise
- vv. 5-12 Praise God for How He Works
- vv. 13-15 Personal Commitment to Worship
- vv. 16-20 Personal Testimony to Answered Prayer

Psalm 66 (NKJV)
To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm.

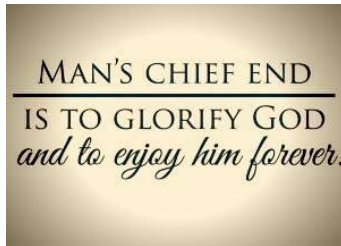
It is addressed to the “Chief Musician” which is elsewhere translated as “Choir Director”. This would indicate it was intended to be used for corporate worship.

The combination of Song and Psalm may emphasize this is a poetic Psalm intended to be sung.

1 Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!

The whole of mankind was created to worship God! That is why we exist! A good question is: What is your purpose on earth?

Slide # 2



Now, of course, true worship starts with true faith! Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). However, mankind was created for God, and all are under obligation to give God His due. This is what we were created to do!

One day, in the kingdom, this will be fulfilled as the earth will be filled with true worshipers.

Note the call is to make a “joyful shout” to God. Not merely to shout but to do so joyfully.

“Composers of tunes for the congregation should see to it that their [compositions] are cheerful; we need not so much noise, as *joyful* noise.” -**Charles Spurgeon**

2 Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious.

To “make His praise glorious” means that we ascribe honor, greatness, and majesty to God in a vibrant manner. It goes along with shouting joyfully and singing out powerfully to His honor and glory.

This is God-centered worship where the focus is all God with one’s whole soul.

3 Say to God, “How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.

The emphasis here is not just on thinking it but saying it out loud to God! Tell God! Tell Him how awesome His works are that He does!

His works are awesome – causing awe, whether it be in creation, salvation, or judgment.

And then the writer throws out this example of how God works in an awesome way. In the greatness of His power, He makes His enemies cower in submission.

The terminology of “shall submit themselves to You” has the sense of an insincere, feigned submission. In other words because of the sheer power of God they are forced to submit although they really don't want to.

Slide # 3

Psalm 18:44 (NKJV)

44 As soon as they hear of me they obey me; The foreigners **submit** [feign submission – same word as in 66:3] to me.

Psalm 81:15 (NKJV)

15 The haters of the LORD would **pretend submission** [same word as in 66:3] to Him, But their fate would endure forever.

One day in an ultimate display of power all will bow before Jesus!

Slide # 4

Philippians 2:10–11 (NKJV)

10 that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that **every tongue should confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

4 All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises to Your name.” Selah

Even though God has the power to force all to bow in submission, one day the whole world in conversion will sing His praises. To praise His name is to adore Him for Who He is. It focuses on appreciation of His character. It praises God for being the God that He is!

Slide # 5

Isaiah 66:23 (NKJV)

23 And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, **All flesh shall come to worship before Me,**” says the LORD.

Note that in verses 1-4, praise to the Lord includes shouting, singing, and speaking. Vibrant worship honors God! Certainly, it should be done decently and in order, and yet with life. The worship service is not to feel like a morgue!

Selah denotes a pause – probably a meditative pause. The call is for universal worship, and one day it will come to pass. In the kingdom, it will be a reality! This is cause for reflection!

5 Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.

The exhortation is to come and see the awesome workings of God in relation to mankind. He is a God who interacts with humanity. He is not some far-off being who never moves. This is why when God interjects Himself into the affairs of mankind, He is often referred to as “the living God.”

When the children of Israel heard the voice of God at Mount Sinai, He is called “the living God” in Deut. 5:26. Joshua told the children of Israel that they would know that God is “the living God” among them in that He would drive out the Canaanites before them (Josh. 3:10). David took on Goliath in the name of the “living God” (1 Sam. 17:26, 36). When the Assyrians blasphemously threatened the Jews Hezekiah appealed to God as “the living God” (2 Kings 19:15; Isa. 37:4). Jeremiah said God would move in judgment as “the living God” (Jer. 10:10). God delivered Daniel from the lions’ den as “the living God” (Dan. 6:26). The Church is called “the church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3:15).

Living things move! Our God moves! He interacts and intervenes in the lives of His people. Come and see the awesome works of God and how He has moved in the lives of people.

6 He turned the sea into dry land; They went through the river on foot. There we will rejoice in Him.

The Psalmist here recounted two great water miracles in the lives of God’s people – Israel. First, he mentions the crowning miracle of the Exodus as God (in effect) birthed the nation of Israel by bringing them through the birth canal of the Red Sea. What an amazing intervention – undeniably the hand of God.

Slide # 6

Exodus 14:13 (NKJV)

13 And Moses said to the people, “**Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD**, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.

This is where the saying, “Between the Devil and the Deep blue Sea” comes in. It portrays a very difficult situation with no good options. The Jews were between the Devil (Pharaoh) and the deep blue sea. But then there is God’s intervention – the awesome working of God against all impossible odds. The miraculous intervention of God.

Slide # 7

Exodus 14:21–22 (NKJV)

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.

22 So the **children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground**, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

The Exodus miracles (outside creation week) were the greatest demonstration of miracles in the OT. The Scriptures refer back to them again and again. God made Himself known in a most pronounced way, and had it recorded for all time and eternity, and expects us to go back to this as the GREAT proof of His awesome working on behalf of the sons of men. He put down His enemies in a most awesome way (cf. Ex. 15:14; Josh. 5:1).

In the OT, the standout cluster of miracles performed by God (in the post-Creation world) was in connection with the Exodus. In the NT, the standout cluster of miracles was seen in the ministry and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the two great interventions in the history of the world. But there is one more to come: the miraculous activity related to the coming Day of the Lord and the Second Coming.

The other great water miracle mentioned here in Psalm 66:6 was when the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan River into the Promised Land on dry ground.

Slide # 8

Joshua 3:17 (NKJV)

17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD **stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan**; and **all Israel crossed over on dry ground**, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

The psalmist could have picked anything to describe the **works** of God, but chose two events that showed how God participates in human affairs. The God of all power is not a passive observer, but an active participant. – **David Guzik**

God intends for these miracles to stand for all time as stand out examples of His awesome working on behalf of people. And for this reason the people of God rejoice in Him.

Our God is a miracle working God. He works on behalf of His people. He is the living God. He moves in our lives! Therefore we rejoice in Him! The joy of God's people is God Himself and how He works on our behalf!

7 He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah

God rules by His power forever! Amen! Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the hard way that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men (Dan. 4:17, 25). He rules by His sovereign power forever. As Daniel 4:26 says, "Heaven rules!" Indeed, it does!

He sees what is happening among the nations! He knows! He is aware! Because He doesn't constantly intervene in judgment the nations lose sight of the fact that God is watching! But He is and the rebellious are put on notice not to exalt themselves! Selah – stop and soak this in.

They should stop and think about WHO they are dealing with – God Who is awesome in how He works to put down His enemies to their shame, working miraculously on behalf of His people, and ruling by His power forever! Do you really want to mess with Him? Selah! Let that sink in!

8 Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard,

9 Who keeps our soul among the living, And does not allow our feet to be moved.

God is to be praised by those who know Him! He preserves us in the land of the living. We are immoral until our purpose here is done! Our stability and security is found in God!

At this point the Psalmist seems to be speaking in reference to Israel as a people. God is the one who preserves them (cf. Ps. 124).

Slide # 9**Psalm 129:1–2 (NKJV)**

1 “Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth,” Let Israel now say—

2 “Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth; **Yet they have not prevailed against me.**

10 For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

11 You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs.

12 You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.

Israel went through a lot of hard times. God tested and refined them. God bound them up as if in a net and laid affliction on them. God caused men to triumph over them. They went through frightful dangers of fire and water – but it was all to a good end.

“But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.” This will be the end of the story for Israel. And by way of application it the story for every believer.

Whatever we go through God works all things together for good for those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). He brings painful discipline into the lives of all His children to build holiness into their lives (Heb. 12:7-11).

But in the end God does not allow His people to be overthrown but rather leads them out into a “rich fulfillment.” That is the end of the story!

Fulfillment is the idea of “satisfaction”. In the end God is our all and all God is working to the end that we more and more see that the whole of our satisfaction is found in Him and nothing else. It’s all God!

It’s like God is whittling away at our flesh and little by little bringing us to the place of full satisfaction in Him. That is the end of the story!

Tortured Trees Make Good Violins

A legend concerns an old violin maker who was envied by his fellow artisans because of the superior quality of his products. Finally, he disclosed the secret of his success:

While the others went into the protected valleys to cut wood to make their violins, he climbed the rugged crags of a nearby mountain to secure trees which had become twisted and gnarled by the storms. From these weather-beaten monarchs of the forest, he then fabricated his violins, famous for their tone and beauty. He knew that the fierce trial of the mountain gales caused such trees to strengthen and toughen their fibers. It was this – their storm-tortured heart and grain – that produced the deep, colorful tones when the instrument was played. **-H.G. Bosch**

The psalmist said to God that he understood, that in some ultimate sense, their affliction was “from You” – it was allowed by God Himself. As they continued to trust in God, He vindicated Himself and their trust, not only delivering them from difficulty, but bringing them out to rich fulfillment. This rich fulfillment would never have come apart from the many difficulties. – **David Guzik**

Slide # 10

“The main end of our life is not to do, but to become. For this we are being moulded and disciplined each hour.” - F.B. Meyers

It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply. – A. W. Tozer

The Psalm now shifts from Israel as a whole to one particular worshiper. This, too has great application. We are designed by God to function in concert with other believers. We are a community of believers. And yet we each function as individuals as well. We are part of the whole and yet each one makes their own individual contribution.

13 I will go into Your house with burnt offerings; I will pay You my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals, With the sweet aroma of rams; I will offer bulls with goats. Selah

Worshippers in the OT expressed themselves in connection with the sacrificial system. A burnt offering expressed sold out consecration to the Lord – sort of like a Romans 12:1-2 commitment. Various other offerings would express thanksgiving and gratitude to God.

When in trouble, the person may vow to worship God in this way if delivered, and then upon deliverance, he would pay his vows in this way, expressing worship and thanks to God for what He has done!

Selah – reflect on the fact that God is to be properly worshiped for what He has done. It's easy to plead with God for help, and once the crisis is passed, to just go on.

It's like when people urgently ask for prayer but then forget to follow up on how God answered. Don't forget to properly worship God for what He has done. Selah!

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul.

In verse 5, he said, "Come and see," and now in verse 16, he says, "**Come and hear**". And the call here is to "all you who fear God" – that is, all who are true worshipers who truly reverence God. This is a worship service! He wants to openly declare before fellow believers what God has done for him.

And his testimony is that God has worked in answer to prayer.

17 I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue.

He cried out to God, and yet he did so with high praise on his tongue. It wasn't just all asking, but also praise.

Slide # 11

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

And then the Psalmist interjected this principle...

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

Iniquity means crookedness or moral perversion that is abhorrent to God. To regard means "to look with favor upon". It means to intentionally plan.

That is the place of the hypocrite who prays one thing but their heart is in another place!

If you are planning on sinning – you can forget that God is going to answer your prayer. He cried out to God for deliverance and God answered, but had he clung to sin in his heart the outcome would have been different. God works through prayer, but it is the prayer of the righteous that avails much (Ja. 5:16). Peter warns husbands that if they don't treat their wives properly that their prayers will be hindered (1 Pet. 3:7).

Powerful praying prays from a right heart.

Slide # 12

Proverbs 28:9 (NKJV)

9 One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV)

13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

Slide # 13

1 John 3:22 (NKJV)

22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.**

The Psalmist is saying that God has worked mightily through prayer, but it was prayer from a sincere heart that was right with God; otherwise, God would not have honored his prayers. But he affirms...

19 But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, Nor His mercy from me!

Praise God for answered prayer! Praise God for His faithfulness. The word "mercy" here is the Hebrew word "hesed" which refers to God's faithful covenant love.

The word “hesed” is a very rich word often translated as “loyal love”, “covenant love”, or “steadfast love”. I really like the definition of loving faithfulness!

Praise God for being a prayer-answering God and for His ever-loving faithfulness!

Make a joyful shout in worship to God!

He has a sovereign good purpose in all He brings us through.

He works awesomely as we pray!

Yes, pray, but then don't forget to praise Him for what He has done!

**"You can do more than pray
after you have prayed, but you cannot do
more than pray until you have prayed."
- John Wesley**

Let us conclude our worship service tonight with the spirit of Psalm 66:2.

Psalm 66:2 (NKJV)

2 Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious.