

We Gather Here in Grateful Praise

401

Author Roy E. DeBrand

Composer Thomas Williams' Psalmody Evangelica, 1789

Psalm 107: 21-22

Thoughts on the Text

This hymn, which encompasses just about all of life, illustrates that praise should rise up in and from all of life. There is no aspect of the life of the church or the individual that is not God-soaked and God-reliant.

Praise becomes part of our breathing when we realize that we live and move in Christ; nothing has been made that was not made by God. Science and faith hold this in common: they both explore God's being and doing. Both should lead us to praise, for where we find God, we have found a place and a reason for praise.

This hymn is also about gathering for worship. It assumes a congregation. In any given time frame, including a week, and in any given congregation, including yours, a gathering of folks has (collectively) probably experienced all of life since last they met. This hymn, then appropriately calls each individual and the entire congregation to praise.

Praise is not just for the "winners" to express. Praise is appropriate when our testimony is that God was with us in our failure, our defeat, or our discouragement. We are not alone, in any circumstance...praise be to God. But there are circumstances in life when praise to God might seem a lie from our lips, when our broken hearts question. In those times praise steps aside and gives its place to lament, something quite akin to praise. The practice of praise prepares our hearts for such occasions.

The Trinity appears in stanza four, allowing all of life to express its praise to all of God; praise should be all-encompassing.

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