

THE POWER OF PRAISE AMID A PANDEMIC

Psalm 66

What is the right word to describe what we are feeling right now in the middle of this pandemic? _____

We feel pressure from the deadliness of the disease that swirls around us; even the uncertainty of who we can trust to tell us the truth about what is really happening does not decrease the pressure, but _____ it

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE PSALM

- A. Psalm 66 has _____ stanzas; we can focus on only the third but we must set it in its proper context
- B. Although the heading & psalm give few details, many think King _____ wrote the psalm
- C. The psalm may concern the siege of _____ by Assyrian king Sennacherib (2 Kings 18-19)
- D. But little in the psalm links it to this event; the author intended to teach us a _____ truth

II. THE HEART OF THE PSALM 66:10-12

- A. Dead center in the middle of the 3rd stanza are 7 metaphors for adversity: 1) _____ 2) refining as silver is refined 3) _____ 4) affliction on our backs 5) men riding over our heads 6) fire 7) water
- B. "Affliction" in v.11 comes from a root verb meaning "to press"—best translated as _____
 - 1) This word is the _____ of the center of the psalm and connects our circumstances to Hezekiah's
 - 2) Word translated "backs" in v.11 is normally translated "loins" in KJV: You laid pressure on our _____
- C. V.11 adds another metaphor: "You brought us into the net"—in Bible times a net was used as a _____
We also feel _____ by the circumstances of this pandemic: we cannot take a vacation from COVID

III. THE COUNSEL OF THE PSALM

- A. 5 times vv.10-12 assure us that _____ in His sovereign wisdom put us in this trap, under pressure
To confess this truth is to deny 1) the _____ gospel 2) that God is never responsible for bad events
- B. When God orchestrates difficult and deadly circumstances, v.10 assures us He has 2 _____ purposes:
 - 1) To test us: does God test our hearts so that He can know what is in them? Ps.139 says _____
God tests us so we can know what is in our own deceitful hearts, where we need to _____ spiritually
 - 2) To _____ us like silver is refined; God is determined to sanctify us and make us like Jesus Christ
 - a) To refine takes the intense heat of the _____ but the furnace is not pleasant and we want out
 - b) We make more progress in holiness when things are _____ rather than when things are _____
- C. The last sentence in v.12 reveals the end game for this trap and refining furnace: "rich _____"
 - 1) This word is used in only in Psalm 23:5—"my cup runneth over"; that is the _____ behind it all
 - 2) Why does He have us under pressure? In the trap? In the furnace? So that our cup may run _____

IV. THE THEME OF THE PSALM

It is easy to praise God after difficulties are over; praise in the middle of trouble has particular _____

- A. Praise keeps our focus on _____ and what He is up to, even in the difficulties and adversities of life
- B. Praise keeps us _____ by orienting us toward God & His goodness; it drives out worry & complaint