

What to Do When Things Are As Bad As You Thought They Might Be

1. Are we there yet?

2. First things first:

3. We're in it together:

Do We Really Have to Worship During Times of Trouble?

Thoughts on worship and song during hard times

Yes, really do. This means declaring God's truth even when the truth of our personal situation is hard. True worship recognizes the desperate reality of our present circumstances **yet focuses on the one who is greater.**

Throughout the Bible, we read stories of people who sang during hard times. Two names that immediately come to mind are David and Paul. They both faced profoundly dark circumstances throughout their lives, yet they were still able to find a song in their hearts. I don't know about you, but sometimes when I read the Bible, a little inner voice says, "well sure, it was easy for them to sing...*they* were men of God, chosen to do something great, like slay a giant with a stone and a slingshot or start up the church...*they* had God's blessings and were probably really good Christians so it must have been easy for them to sing when stuff was bad." I quickly forget that we only read part of their story and that they had *real lives too*: families, jobs, tragedies, and loss. Even though they were chosen by God to fulfill a part of His plan, David and Paul were also flesh and blood human beings, just like the rest of us, who had to deal with normal every-day living in a fallen world.

So why sing during hard times? Even though it may not always feel like it, God is just as present during the bad times as He is the good times. Our music provides great statements about God and as we sing, those truths are continually reinforced in our minds. When hard times come, lines of familiar songs often leap out at us, catch us unaware, and stick in our throats. During the times we cannot sing, it is then that we need the fellowship of believers more than ever. We need the comfort of knowing that others are singing and praying on our behalf, bringing before God the prayers and songs we cannot sing on our own.

In the song *Lord Reign in Me* we sing out, "Over all the earth, You reign on high...Lord reign in me, reign in Your power, over all my dreams, in my darkest hour...You are the Lord of all I am..." The song is just as much a declaration of the greatness of God as it is a plea for His grace and mercy during our darkest hour. When life gets tough, we need to draw close to Him and one of the ways we can do this is to worship Him through songs that reaffirm to us His presence, strength, love, and sufficiency.

Homework: read Matthew 26:30. Before going to the Garden of Gethsemane, what did Jesus and His disciples do? How does this relate to what we learned above? Have you ever read that verse before and realized what Jesus took the time to do, knowing what He was about to endure? What are some songs you sing during hard times?

Grace and peace to you all...Megan