

Introduction

"It is of course true that the crucifixion of Christ manifests the world's violent judgment on the grace of God. But at a far deeper level the cross is God's own terrible judgment on a sinful and violent world...Refusing to oppose evil with evil and violence with violence, the crucified Christ defeats the hatred that inspires violence and the spirit of revenge that prompts counter-violence. The 'weakness of God' (1 Cor 1:25) proves superior to violent power and its endless cycles." (Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 196-197)

Divine Spirit, illumine to us the words of the Lord. Show us the wealth of glory that lies beneath the old familiar stories. Teach us the depths of meaning hidden in the songs of Zion. Raise us to the heights of aspiration that is reached by the wings of the prophet. Lift us to the summit of faith that is trod by the feet of the apostle. Open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of your law. Amen.

-Prayer of illumination by George Matheson, adjusted for congregational language

Habakkuk 3:16–19 NIV

I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us. Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

*Sinful fear is "a fear of God that flows from sin...and drives you away from God. This is the fear of the unbeliever who hates God, who fears being exposed as a sinner and so runs from God." (Michael Reeves, *When Fear is Sinful*, <https://www.crossway.org/articles/when-fear-is-sinful/>)*

Matthew 11:28–30 NIV

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Philippians 4:12–13 NIV

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

Zephaniah 3:17 NIV

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

Colossians 3:16 NIV

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

“We are challenged to participate in God's sufferings at the hands of a godless world. By ranging themselves with God in his suffering, Bohoeffler claimed, Christians distinguish themselves from the heathen.” (Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker Academic, 2017), 422)

“When the sovereign Lord is our strength, we can rise above the troubles of this world and say like Habakkuk, ‘He enables me to walk on mountain heights!’” (Eric Redmond, William Curtis, and Ken Fentress, *Exalting Jesus in Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 210.)