

Psalms 66:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

Analysis

Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. This verse shifts from corporate praise (v.1-15) to personal testimony, inviting others to hear individual experience of answered prayer. "Come and hear" (lekhu shim'u, לִכְוּ שִׁמְעוּ) parallels "come and see" in verse 5. There the invitation was to observe God's corporate works in history; here it's to listen to personal testimony of what God has done individually. Shama (שָׁמַע) means to hear, listen, give attention. The imperative summons an audience to attentive listening—not casual hearing but focused attention to testimony.

"All ye that fear God" (kol-yir'ey Elohim, כָּל-יִרְאֵי אֱלֹהִים) identifies the intended audience. This isn't universal summons (as in v.1, "all ye lands") but invitation to fellow believers—those who fear God, who reverence Him, who walk in covenant relationship with Him. Yir'ah (יִרְאַה) means fear, reverence, awe. Those who fear God have proper understanding of His character—His holiness, power, justice, and grace. They are positioned to appreciate testimony of God's faithfulness because they already know His character and trust His promises. This suggests testimony functions primarily to encourage believers, strengthening faith through shared experiences of God's faithfulness.

"I will declare" (asapperah, אֶסַּפְרָה) uses the Piel (intensive) form of saper (סָפַר), meaning to recount, number, tell, declare in detail. The verb suggests thorough, deliberate narration—not casual mention but detailed recounting. The psalmist commits to telling the full story, giving comprehensive testimony to God's

intervention. This models the practice of testimony—not vague generalities ("God is good") but specific accounts of what God has done, how He answered prayer, when and how He intervened.

"What he hath done for my soul" (asah lenafshi, אֲשַׁח לְנַפְשִׁי) specifies the content: God's work in the psalmist's inner life. Nefesh (נֶפֶשׁ), often translated "soul," means life, self, person, inner being. It encompasses emotional, spiritual, and psychological dimensions of personhood. God's work wasn't merely external deliverance from enemies but internal transformation, answered prayer, spiritual renewal, or deep personal intervention. The testimony will address what God has done in and for the psalmist's essential self—his deepest needs, prayers, struggles, and longings. This combines both thanksgiving for answered prayer and witness to God's character. Personal testimony serves dual purpose: glorifying God for His faithfulness and encouraging fellow believers by demonstrating that God still hears and answers prayer.

Historical Context

Testimony has always been central to Israel's worship. The law required parents to tell children about God's works: "And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Exodus 13:8). The stones from the Jordan River served as testimony prompts: "What mean these stones?" (Joshua 4:6-7). The Psalms frequently call for declaring God's works to the next generation (Psalm 78:3-4).

Personal testimony appears throughout Scripture. Naaman testified to his healing from leprosy (2 Kings 5:15-17). The blind man healed by Jesus gave powerful testimony: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). The Samaritan woman's testimony brought many to faith (John 4:39). Paul repeatedly gave testimony of his conversion (Acts 22:1-21, 26:2-23). These testimonies served evangelistic and edificatory purposes—bringing unbelievers to faith and strengthening believers' confidence.

The early church continued this practice. Believers shared their experiences of answered prayer, divine healing, deliverance from persecution, and spiritual

growth. These testimonies weren't formal theological lectures but simple, honest accounts of God's faithfulness. They provided evidence that the God of Scripture still acts in believers' lives. In times of persecution, testimonies of God's sustaining grace encouraged others facing similar trials. During spiritual revival, testimonies of conversion and transformation demonstrated God's saving power.

Modern church practice sometimes neglects testimony, preferring professional presentations or avoiding personal sharing that might seem emotional or subjective. Yet Scripture models believers declaring what God has done. Testimony isn't self-focused storytelling but God-glorifying witness to divine faithfulness. The psalm models appropriate testimony: inviting fellow believers to hear, declaring specifically what God has done, attributing glory to God rather than self, and thereby encouraging others to trust the prayer-hearing God. Contemporary worship could benefit from recovering this biblical practice of believers testifying to God's work in their lives.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why does the psalmist invite specifically 'those who fear God' to hear his testimony rather than addressing everyone generally?
2. What is the value of personal testimony in corporate worship, and how does it strengthen the faith community?
3. How detailed and specific should testimony be to truly 'declare what God has done,' versus remaining vague and general?
4. What has God done for your soul that you could declare to encourage other believers?
5. How does giving testimony (declaring what God has done) reinforce your own faith while encouraging others?

Interlinear Text

לְכוּ	שְׁמַע וְ	אֶסְפָּדָה	כָּל	יִרְאֵי י'	אֱלֹהֵי יָם	אֱשֶׁר
H1980	and hear	and I will declare	H3605	all ye that fear	God	H834
	H8085	H5608		H3373	H430	
	עָשָׂה	לְנַפְשִׁי:				
	what he hath done	for my soul				
	H6213	H5315				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 34:11 (Parallel theme): Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Psalms 71:15 (Parallel theme): My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

Psalms 66:5 (References God): Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

Psalms 71:18 (References God): Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

Psalms 71:24 (Parallel theme): My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

Psalms 34:2 (Parallel theme): My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

Psalms 71:20 (Parallel theme): Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Malachi 3:16 (Parallel theme): Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

1 John 1:3 (Parallel theme): That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

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