

The January CFAMC Devotional Page

My father said to me, a few weeks ago, that "2011 is starting off rough." This is true.

[Blizzard of 1977 -- United States Dept. of Transportation \(Public Domain\)](#)



[Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Official Portrait \(Public Domain\)](#)



Our hearts have been wrenched and disturbed by the Tucson tragedy and all the other difficult things that are occurring around the world at this time, and our hearts have been united in supplication. That big smiling face of Congresswoman Giffords reminds us also -- given the continuous improvement she has enjoyed -- that our God, no matter how rough things may seem, is not indifferent to our requests in these deeply troubled times.

This brings us to the verse our CFAMC brother Donald M. Wilson submitted (thank you, Donald!) for this month's page!

Psalm 118:14 -- The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

In the last quarter of 2010, and continuing into 2011, I know that a number of us have been "going through" various situations while watching in grief and horror at the situations that are convulsing the wider world. Do you know that we, in Christ, have a tremendous privilege in times like these to STILL have joy, to STILL have hope, to STILL be manifesting the love of God? The world cannot have joy while crazed madmen cut down little innocent children; the people of the world cannot have joy while watching their friends get sick and pass on, while going through economic deprivation and distress, or while even shoveling those fourth, fifth, and sixth feet of snow! But we have strength AND a song, in our Savior (uh oh -- will I be able to finish this Devotional Page? I feel a song coming on -- and maybe you will too)!

We also have the privilege of paying attention, of watching closely, and rejoicing in everything God brings about in the midst of the storms, in the midst of the tragedies. Which brings me to one of my favorite verses:

Psalm 50:23 -- Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

Notice salvation in both verses. The salvation of our God is not something that we just get at the end, when we die -- it started when we accepted Christ, and continues every day, for every day God is working more and more to conform us into the glorious image of His Son, our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Every day we are being more and more delivered from this old sin nature that keeps getting us into trouble, that keeps us focused on ourselves and our problems and our discomforts and our this and our that ... Instead, we are being delivered to being able to enjoy the riches of God in Christ -- His person, His glory, His grace, His love, His perfect provision, His mercy, His patience, His perfect plan for our future, no matter what may be going on. And when we choose to walk in light of His deliverance (instead of joining the moaning and groaning in despair and frustration the world doesn't know any better but to make), then we see more and more of what He has provided for us.

It IS a choice. If we choose to act the way the world acts when trouble comes, we may expect to see things the way the world sees them -- hopeless, stuck, infuriating, productive of resentment and bitterness. But if we choose to walk in light of who we are in Christ, and to focus our mind and communications with one another on Him and what we share in Him, then we will see -- per Psalm 50:23 -- more and more of what he has to unpack of our salvation, every day!

As Christian composers, we have a tremendous opportunity and responsibility in this New Year, as we are the only ones who can manifest a song of hope and joy in this dying world. When you look at your daily news, remember -- out from the cries and groans, there is a need for true music to come stealing through the gloom, music that will cause some to stop and think, as my ancestors said it in the old Spiritual:

**"Over my head, I hear music in the air;
Over my head, I hear music in the air;**

**Over my head, I hear music in the air;
There must be a God somewhere."**

A little Black History Month preview for you there ... but there is a need, amidst the sad cacaphony of the world, for our music to be heard, and for it to cause listeners to want to know its Source. Like a diamond stands against the darkness of velvet, and the stars against the blackness of the night, so too the song that God has given us in the deepening darkness of this world must sound more striking, more arresting of attention than ever. Not that our music can save -- but it will give us an opportunity to introduce people who hear it to the One Who can save them!

Hold on tight, brothers and sisters -- this year that has started so roughly promises to be a wild ride all the way. But keep looking to the one Who is our strength, song, and salvation; keep making music, knowing that the privilege has been given you for such a time as this. And, no matter what, remember -- there is a correct answer to everything that is coming. I found this yesterday, and I know you'll be struck by it as much as I was. We all need to get into the habit of applying this verse to every circumstance!

I Chronicles 29:13 -- Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name.

That verse will neatly cover the rest of 2011 (and 2012, and 2013, and 2014, and...) -- enjoy!