

PSALM 67

To the leader: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make God's face to shine upon us,

² that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations.

³ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.

⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

⁶ The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.

⁷ May the Lord continue to bless us;
let all the ends of the earth revere God.

I can just hear it, played with stringed instruments, maybe some percussion too, and a lovely chorus of singers: "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make God's face to shine upon us..." Beautiful music for a beautiful song. This song is all about praise for God and the image of God is an expansive image. God is God of all the earth. God is God of all the nations. God is not restricted to a particular people. God is not accessed through one tradition or path alone. God is not exclusive but inclusive. God is not narrowed down to one group but expansive enough to incorporate all groups.

The earth, too, expresses its praise by "yielding its increase". The earth's responsiveness and care for the human creature is an invitation from the Creator. We humans are invited into a communion of loving reciprocity between us and all life on this earth, which also includes all peoples of the earth. The earth does not discriminate based on race, sexuality, gender or faith. If the earth does not discriminate this reveals that its creator does not discriminate either. Any nation of people "can be glad and sing for joy, for you (God) judges the peoples with equity..."

Imagine if all peoples truly embraced a vision of a creator whose intention is to bless all life on this earth. Imagine, then, that such blessing is also an invitation for all who are blessed to bless in return. How do we reciprocate out of a faith, hope and love in a God who seeks to bless all life around us through our hands, feet and heart? This is our call as those who claim

our identity as Christians and as followers of Jesus. It is for us to then figure out how such a call must be worked out in the particular details, capacities, possibilities and relationships of our lives. Where are the opportunities and where are the challenges? What walls need to come down? What commitments need to be made anew? What stands need to be taken? How can we liberate our heart toward others by accepting that the relationship can only remain what it is not what we hoped it could be?

PRAYER: O God of the nations, O God of all the earth, remind us this day that we belong not just to ourselves or our particular family, friends, culture or group. We are part of a large family that includes not just other humans, but the earth also...

What are we prepared to do for our family, O God?...

How mindful are we of our relationship with the earth?

What are we prepared to give up and take up to bless those around us...

How much is the vulnerability and the brokenness around us, in us and upon this earth something that calls us to healing and reconciliation as Jesus' hands, feet and heart?...

How may we reach out to those who are different and belong to other groups, not to judge but to understand with a heart that is open not closed?...

Flow into us this day, O God, flow into us as renewing energy, as conviction, as passion to invest and engage and reach out, as an inner peace "that passes all understanding"...

In Jesus' name; Amen.