



Holy God, We Praise Your Name

This hymn gives me a bit of a chuckle. It is a deep and holy, a worshipful chuckle. What's so funny? Nothing. The chuckle comes from the truthful irony of the last phrase of the hymn. After all of the attributes of God's glory and creation and sovereignty, the final image, worthy of praise is the mystery of the vast expanse of what we do **not** know about God. I chuckle a holy, humble chuckle.

There is a wonderful Broadway musical titled "Your Arm's Too Short to Box with God." Borrowing that image, let us admit that our poetry and music is too small to describe our God. We chuckle at the truth of both images. We can reach, but our reaching only reveals our inadequacy. We enjoy God's embrace because of God's reach.

One might even say that it is the mystery of God that saves us. We know the story of the cross, the tomb, and the resurrection. But each of those episodes is surrounded by mystery. We can't understand God in any of it. We can only exercise faith and believe, assigning to the stories our biggest words, finest poetry, deepest music. Even then our arms are too short.

Holy God, we praise your name. It seems too little, too mumbling and stumbling, but it's the best we can do. Our arms are so short. We congregate in our praise so that we might look and sound bigger than we are, but our arms are still too short. Thanks be to God, God's arms reach even us. We praise God's name for that. Worship humbles us as it "lifts" God up. It's the best we can do. We end up, based on what God has revealed, praising a mystery that is, thankfully, bigger than our brains, but fits in our hearts. Still there is mystery.

How sad it would be if we could figure God out, if we could know all there is to know. One of the sad things would be that we would try to use God for our own ends.

Terry W. York

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