

2015 Summer Sermon Series (Inspiring Songs of *Fresh-Brewed Faith!*)

“How Great Thou Art (Carrie Underwood)

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Texts: Psalm 150
Ephesians 1:3-14

Preached: 7/5/15



Our Summer sermons have been featuring songs presented during Fresh-Brewed Faith – our Spring Youth Sunday School Class. We’ve explored a mix of song styles and genres.

This morning we lift up a familiar hymn, “How Great Thou Art,” but sung by a contemporary artist, Carrie Underwood.

Jan Blinn presented this hymn to our youth because, in her words, “it is such a powerful song and is one of my all-time favorite hymns.” Jan gets chills any time she sings it herself or hears it sung. She heard it first sung by Jim Neighbors. Later her cousin Doran sang the hymn, and Doran had a voice like Jim Neighbors and she loved to hear him sing it.

Here is: “How Great Thou Art”

(You can listen to the song on YouTube -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnvg0Otupul>)

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Chorus: Then sings my soul,
My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

And when I think of God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Chorus

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
And lead me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

Chorus



Jan grew up on a farm. From a young age she has “witnessed God’s awesome power and seen his grandeur, walking in nature or watching a thunderstorm. There were times, are times, when Jan says she just has to stop and say to herself, “Wow, how great God is.” Many of us, I suspect, understand what she means.



Some people have always understood, people like Carl Gustaf Boberg, born in 1859. He was a Swedish pastor, editor, and member of the Swedish parliament.

One day Mr. Boberg was enjoying a nice walk when a thunderstorm suddenly appeared out of nowhere. A severe wind began to blow. The intense storm lasted only a little while. When it was over, Boberg looked out over the ocean and heard a church bell in the distance. And the words to How Great Thou Art began to form in his heart -- *O Lord, my God, When I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds Thy hands hath made. . .*

Boberg published a poem with those words in a weekly newspaper he edited. The year was 1891. It was later translated into German and eventually into Russian and was finally “discovered” by an English missionary to the Ukraine named Stuart Hine.



Hine and his wife, Sonia, first sung the words at an evangelistic meeting during World War I. It was first published in an English hymnal in 1949, and an American hymnal first featured it in 1954. The hymn struck a chord in this country and has been listed as a favorite by American Christians ever since.

How Great Thou Art – its words echo the sentiment of scripture – God stands worthy of our praise. How can we not, at times, be overcome with our Awesome God?

The writer of Ephesians begins: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing...we, who set our hope on Christ, ought we not to live for the praise of his glory?!*

Have you said, “How Great is God!” lately. This weekend as we celebrate our nation’s independence – maybe you gave special thanks to God. Maybe you said it to yourself when you saw triplet fawns raucously bounding to and fro in the park. Or maybe you read something that just confirms it...that our God is great. Jan Blinn shared this story – which she got from Facebook, but it was also written up in the Pittsburgh newspapers.



Lauressa Swedberg smiled through her grief Thursday as she planned a funeral in Nebraska for her 3-year-old daughter, Olivia, whose donated organs saved two lives in Pittsburgh.

And two families rejoiced while perched at the bedsides of their respective children in Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. They called the donor, Olivia Swedberg, who, sadly, died of brain cancer Tuesday, a hero who lives on.

“It's so hard to describe,” said Lauressa Swedberg, 31, of North Platte, Neb. “I am this mourning mother, but I also feel wonderful to know Olivia is living on. I feel so grateful because I now know that she was here for a purpose — to save others.”

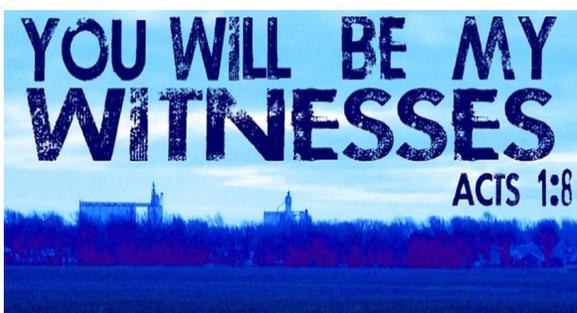


Two-year-old Lucas Goeller of Indiana Township received Olivia's liver during a transplant surgery that began Wednesday night and ended just before 7 a.m. Thursday.



During a simultaneous surgical procedure, Angelo Giorno, 4, of Derry Township received Olivia's small intestine to combat a digestive disorder known as short bowel syndrome.

Olivia was diagnosed in May with terminal brain cancer. A few days before Olivia died, her mother received a note from a lady following Lucas's story.



Lauressa read about Lucas's story and knew she could possibly help. After a series of calls and testing the transplant operations were scheduled.

Here's what Lauressa said, "I know that many people question their faith and if God exists. I just don't know how you could ever deny who was in control of this situation. I would never have known of Lucas if someone did not feel called to share..."

What a blessing this Nebraska mother gave to these families in Pittsburgh. Even through her grief she is a witness to the greatness of our God. You are a witness, too...in your own way, through your own circumstances, blessings and challenges.

God is great – it's good to tell God that, sing God that, and to remind ourselves. Then sings my soul, my savior God to thee – How great Thou art...How great Thou art.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*