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WERE YOU THERE?

“It was the third hour when they crucified Him.” (Mark 15:25)

Folk songs are generally described as songs of which the origins have been lost but which express the heartfelt traditions and experiences of a particular culture or people. Therefore, they become greatly cherished by each succeeding generation.

The Negro spirituals represent some of the finest of American folk music. These songs are usually a blending of an African heritage, harsh remembrances from former slavery experiences, and a very personal interpretation of biblical stories and truths. They especially employ biblical accounts that give hope for a better life—such as the prospects of heaven. They symbolize so well the attitudes, hopes and religious feeling of the black race in America.

To better understand a Negro spiritual, one must feel even as a black singer does that he or she is actually present and very much involved in the event itself. The event being sung—in this case the story of Christ’s suffering, death, and ultimate resurrection—becomes a very intensely emotional experience. It is told with much feeling and freedom of spirit, generally without any instrumental accompaniment.

The lesson for each of us to learn from a Negro spiritual like this is that truths such as the redemptive work of Christ must have much more than just our mental assent. The biblical account must become a very personal conviction in our lives, and our very souls should be gripped by its emotional power.

- ♥ Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
- ♥ Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
- ♥ Were you there when they pierced Him in the side?
- ♥ Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
- ♥ Were you there when God raised Him from the dead?

CHORUS: Oh, sometimes I feel like shouting glory, glory, glory! When I think how God raised Him from the dead! AMEN.

Meditate on: Isaiah 53:4-12; Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 1:5,6

Imagine yourself standing at the foot of the cross when Christ was tortured and crucified. Then place yourself outside the empty tomb when the angelic announcement *“He is not here”* was given. Try to relive the emotional feelings that would have been yours. Allow this song to minister to you as you go through the day. AMEN.

Amazing Grace – 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions
By Kenneth W. Osbeck

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
Matthew 28:18 – 20

