

Date 2 / 25 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture LyricTitle "It is Well with My Soul"Author / Director / Horatio G. Spafford

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I was given a link by Mr. Shakely to a Youtube video that actually played "It is Well with My Soul" while explaining the origins and context of the famous hymn.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc? )

This hymn was written after various traumatic experiences in Spafford's life, such as the death of their only son from Scarlet Fever and the Great Chicago Fire that completely ruined him financially in 1871. Finally, after facing further economic turmoil, Spafford scheduled a boat trip to Europe in order to give his family a reprieve from all of the disasters they were facing in the states. Unfortunately, the boat he sent his daughter and four wives on had a collision, causing all of Spafford's daughters to drown in the accident with only his wife surviving. On his way to meet his wife in England, he penned to famous lyrics, "When sorrow like sea billows roll; it is well, it is well with my soul," over the spot in the ocean that his daughters perished. Even after all of these devastating tragedies, the speaker of the hymn by Spafford still trusts in God and God's plan for his life, considering He sent Jesus to "shed His own blood for [his] soul." He has faith that he will eventually end up in heaven with his loved ones.

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

"It is Well with My Soul" clearly depicts the theme of extreme faith and trust in God and in God's decisions and actions. Even in times of good and bad, people should come to understand that there is a God and that he will do everything in a righteous and just manner. The song urges people to keep a level, positive state no matter what comes their way, be it tragic occurrences, financial downfalls, relationship problems, or anything else that detracts from their hope and faith in life and in God because, ultimately, these instances of seeming evil and malevolence are only temporary. Devoting one's life to God, on the other hand, gives people a reason, motivation, and meaning to live, as it gives them an end result or goal to constantly and consistently work towards. The lyrics prompt people to realize that an ultimate trust and faith in God will eventually result in an everlasting experience in God's kingdom. Everything that occurs during a person's life only yields effects for a brief period of time in comparison to the infinitely enduring existence people can enter into after their lives on earth.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"It is Well with My Soul" uses relatively simple diction with an emphasis on various words from Early Modern English, considering the piece was written in the late 1800s. The hymn contains six true verses that are four lines each and a refrain that only consists of three lines. Moreover, because the lyrics come directly from the heart and soul of the person who wrote them, there are obviously very personal and significant aspects of the hymn that relate to the events within Spafford's life, such as the "sorrows like sea billows roll" representing the drowning of all four of his daughters.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

It is not enough just to know the hymn "It is Well with My Soul" and to listen to the lyrics, but instead, in order to be truly affected by the entire realm of the piece, one must know about the history of Horatio Spafford and what prompted him to write the lyrics to the hymn in the first place. Personally, I had heard the song before it was shown in class, but I had never even thought about its possible origins. The Youtube video regarding the reasons for which the piece of music was composed completely changed my outlook on the song itself, giving me an entirely new perspective on the meaning of the lyrics and making me even more believe in the credibility of the lyrics and of God. If a person, like Horatio Spafford, has lost everything significant and meaningful in his life but still manages to possess the upmost faith and hope in how the rest of his life will play out as determined by God, then there obviously must be at least some legitimacy in His existence and influence over life on earth. I find this Christian hymn poetic because it urges people to accept everything that happens in their life, good or bad, because in the end God will impact people's lives in the way they ultimately deserve it. Going with the flow is the best way to approach life because everything happens for a reason; therefore, any form of resistance will only bring about even greater trouble and chaos.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)