



THE SEASON OF

Lent

LENT IS NOT ABOUT BEING PERFECT.
IT IS NOT ABOUT ATTAINING SOME IDEAL
STANDARD OF HOLINESS, BUT RATHER IT IS
ABOUT MAKING TIME AND SPACE TO CONNECT
WITH GOD AND GROW CLOSER TO HIM.

LENT IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION.
GROWTH TAKES TIME AND EFFORT.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH
REV. A. LINCOLN JAMES, JR.
2025

Dear Church Family,

As we journey through this Lenten season, we invite you to use the Lenten Journal as a part of your daily devotional time. This journal is not just a guide but an opportunity to reflect deeply on the old hymns of the faith—the songs that have strengthened and shaped our spiritual growth.

These hymns carry rich theology, deep encouragement, and timeless truth, reminding us of God's faithfulness in every season. As you meditate on the words, let them lead you into prayer, repentance, and renewed devotion to Christ.

Take time to write, reflect, and worship, allowing these sacred songs to stir your heart and draw you closer to the Lord. May this season be one of spiritual renewal and deeper intimacy with God as we prepare our hearts for Resurrection Sunday.

Blessings,

Rev. Wendy Bullock, Minister of Christian Education

Rev. A. Lincoln James, Jr., Pastor



**“In The Garden” by C. Austin Miles
Agatha Lewis Stokes**

The hymn “In the Garden” was written by C. Austin Miles and is inspired by his vision of the Gospel of John, chapter 20 when Mary Magdalene went to Jesus’ tomb very early on Sunday morning. In this vision he witnessed the weeping Magdalene being comforted by the resurrected Savior. As soon as he woke up, it is said that he wrote the lyrics of In the Garden as quickly as they could be put down on paper, and exactly as they appear in the hymnal. Later that night he wrote the music.

The song celebrates the joyous companionship experienced with Jesus while walking through the garden. This is not a happy song as the music sounds like a slow waltz and reminds us of funerals. However, for me the hymn expresses a deep personal connection with Christ, emphasizing the themes of love, communion with God, peace and reflection.

Since I was a young college student, I would get up around 5:00 a.m. most mornings!! Besides the fact that there was always hot water in the dormitory at that time, it was also very quiet. It was a time to say my prayers, study, plan and prepare for my day without the interruptions of the many students in Cooper Hall!!! That was my time and I loved it!!

As I grew older with a family, I learned that this was the only time that I actually had to myself!! That is when I started going outside, on my porch drinking my coffee or just walking around the outside property with my cup in hand. Early morning outside was where I found my sweet spot. I could pray knowing that Jesus was standing by my side every single step I took. When I was wondering exactly where He was in my times of despair, this song would come to mind and assure me that God also works in silence and He walks with me, right by my side even when I think He is not there!! I could share with Him my deepest concerns, give Him high praise while looking at my beautiful roses and vegetables and listening to the birds singing ~ My God, How Great Thou Art!!!

I challenge you to try getting up at least 30 minutes earlier tomorrow and do your devotions and prayer while the dew/frost is still on the roses!!



**“Have Thine Own Way”
By Sheena Palmar**

This devotional explores the theme of surrender and trust in God's perfect will, inspired by the hymn "Have Thine Own Way, Lord." Let's focus on a passage from Psalms, offering reflection and encouragement to align our hearts with God's desires.

Surrendering Our Will

Psalm 25:4-5 (Learning God's Ways)

•**Scripture:** "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior; on you I wait all the day long."

•**Reflection:** David acknowledges his need for God's guidance. Do you approach God with a teachable spirit? What areas of your life are you hesitant to surrender?

•**Prayer:** Lord, reveal your ways to me. I surrender my desire for control and ask for your guidance.

Remember to:

- Read the Psalm passage slowly and thoughtfully.
- Reflect on the questions provided, journaling your thoughts.
- Pray honestly and openly with God.
- Apply the truths you learn to your daily life.

May this devotional journey through Psalms draw you closer to God and empower you to say, "Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!"

**God Above All
“All the Way My Savior”
Sis Dekota Street**

The hymn "All the Way My Savior Leads Me" was written by Fanny Crosby in 1875, inspired by her personal experiences and reliance on prayer during difficult times. It is written that Ms. Crosby was in dire financial straits and needed five dollars to pay her rent. After praying for help, a stranger unexpectedly appeared at her door and handed her the exact amount she needed, which deeply moved her. This miraculous answer to her prayer led her to write the hymn, expressing her gratitude and faith in God's guidance. The hymn reflects the theme of divine leadership and trust in God throughout life's journey.

This is the day that the Lord has made. I will be glad and rejoice in it! All the way my Savior cares for me encourages me to be the best I can be. When I start my day, I am thankful to Him. When I end my day, I am thankful to Him. All the Way My Savior. Amen.

**“At the Cross!”
By Rev Lavell Rudd**

“...the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18

When I think about the Cross that Jesus bore for me, I'm reminded that I too must bear a cross. Not like the one(s) he carried for me, but one similar with the weight of sin, shame and burdens in my life.

I'm also reminded that at that cross is where our Savior bled and died and it is where I can now see the light in knowing that the burdens of my heart have been rolled away! For Jesus' sacrifice grants each of us Salvation: **That forgiveness** from God and the ability to be reconciled with Him.”

So let us not forget to devote our Faith as we receive God's Grace as we receive our sight and his love beyond degree!!

*At the Cross, at the Cross,
Where I first saw the light;
And the burden of my heart rolled a-way,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!!
~ Ralph E. Hudson*

Faith in Action ~ Live with a renewed heart!! Allow love to soften and renew your heart, leading you to pursue a life that reflects His compassion, humility and grace.

**“Nothing but the Blood”
Kendra Payne**

1 Peter 1:18-19: "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!"

This hymn reminds me of how blessed we are by God's grace and mercy. God saw fit to sacrifice his only begotten son despite our sins and failure to follow the Word of God. Nothing but the blood that Jesus shed cleanses us of our sins. I am so thankful not only for the bloodshed but that it forever renews us. Just as we have communion, we can repent and ask for forgiveness. Singing this hymn speaks to our hearts to reflect on how powerful the sacrifice and blood of Jesus plays in our daily lives

The hymn resonates with me because I don't know where I'd be without the love of Christ. In my imperfections, I can sometimes feel less than, and unqualified to walk with God. However, this hymn encourages me that he loves me so much and my sins are cleansed through the blood of Jesus Christ. There is nothing but the blood that can make me whole again; no man, no good deeds but only him. I can rest in the knowledge that my sins have been forgiven and that I am accepted and loved by my Savior. His love and grace are sufficient for me, and I am forever grateful.

**“There Is a Fountain”
By Agatha Stokes**

...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin. Matthew 26:28

William Cowper, who had suffered from severe depression since the death of his mother when he was just six years old, was faced with the prospect of a final law examination, he experienced a mental breakdown that he never fully recovered from. Cowper was sent to a Christian asylum for treatment and rest. He began to read the Bible and found the peace that could only come through salvation.

After eighteen months he was able to leave and live with his good family friend, famed author of “Amazing Grace,” John Newton. Newton helped Cowper recover, and together they wrote poetry and religious verse, which they later published in their own hymnal. “There is a Fountain” is one such hymn, and it is a dramatic illustration of Cowper’s faith.

The hymn speaks of a fountain filled with blood, symbolizing the cleansing of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It emphasizes themes of redemption and salvation, with lines expressing that those who are “plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains”. The last verse, in particular speaks to Cowper’s hope of redemption.

*“When this poor lisping, stamm’ring tongue lies silent in the grave,
then in a nobler, sweeter song I will sing thy pow’r to save.”*

The mental breakdown at his examination left Cowper with a lisp and stutter that he had the rest of his life; however, he knew that there was a greater song to sing. He could not physically sing this song with his earthly voice as this is a song of high praise to the dying Lamb.

While we are sure that Cowper’s disability kept him from becoming the lawyer he studied to be, just look at how God used him! Think today of anything bad that ever happened in your life that turned out to be the blessing of your life. What did God block from coming your way that surely would have taken you out but did not? Every situation, properly and spiritually reviewed, is an opportunity for praise!! LOOK FOR IT!!



**“He Leadeth Me”
Sister Chelsea Goode**

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His mane's sake.

Psalm 23:2-3

What started out to be a month of sermons on the entire chapter Psalm 23, Pastor Joseph Gilmore (1834-1918) got no further than these two verses as they carried him to a particular struggle in American history. This hymn was composed in 1862 during the Civil War, a time of upheaval and insecurity. Later, the sermon was set to music by William Bradbury. Both Gilmore and Bradbury were stuck on “He leadeth me!”

*He leadeth me! He leadeth me!
By his own hand he leadeth me;
His faithful follower I would be,
For by his hand he leadeth me.*

We walk by faith, not by sight. In trying moments, I remind myself that it is God's plan that moves mountains and not my own. He leadeth me. Making decisions in my life (whether it be career, relationships, or finances) requires me to step back and let God take the wheel. It is okay to be His child. For everything you do will be covered by the blood of Jesus. He leadeth me.

**“Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross”
Cynethia Lewis**

What does the cross mean?

The cross represents the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also is a sign of the Christian faith, hope and joy of heaven. God yearns for us to walk with him and live close to him and fellowship with him on earth and all eternity, this is found in the cross. The way of the Cross is the way of love

Why do I want to be near the Cross?

Because I want to spend eternity in heaven being near the Cross gives me that assurance that I am in the presence of God. As long as I strive to live in the presence of the Cross nothing can destroy me and no power can defeat me. In the Cross.

In the Cross be my glory ever, till my ransomed soul shall find, Rest beyond the river.

**“Blest Be The Tie That Binds”
Unity in the body of Christ
By Agatha Lewis Stokes**

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of Peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

Have you ever noticed how different the individual members of the same family can be? One child may be melancholy while another is a live wire. One may be especially gifted in music, and another, has no interest in music but does excel in sports. There are even instances where none of the family members even favor each other, yet they share a bond that is stronger than their differences.

In the same way, within the Body of Christ churches develop their own unique personalities. Some may insist on formal worship services, while others thrive in a relaxed atmosphere. We have disagreements regarding the music, ministries, and even the pastor!! But we know that we have a common love for Christ and the assembly.

"Blest Be the Tie that Binds" is a hymn written by John Fawcett in 1782. This hymn talks about something we don't always associate with hymns: the church itself and how we come together to worship God. We must accept that every congregation is a mixture of diverse people. However, the tie that binds our hearts together is the love that God has for each of us, and the common love we have for God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Truth and our brethren.

Here's what the hymn says about that special relationship Christians have with their fellow believers, and how the church comes together to worship its heavenly Father.

No one is ever going to be perfect here on earth, so we must accept and love other Christians in spite of their faults. When we do see faults in other fellow believers, we should be patient and gentle. Is there someone whose actions and personality really annoys you? Rather than dwelling on that person's weaknesses or looking for faults, pray for him/her as you pray for yourself. Remember our calling is to love one another!!

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian Love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

**“It Is Well With My Soul”
By Ellen K. Bingham**

This hymn, written by Horatio Spafford after losing his daughters in a shipwreck, gives me assurance and comfort when I encounter difficult challenges in my life such as family loss, financial hardship, and even health issues. Life is full of unfortunate events, things we would not volunteer to experience. Dealing with these unfortunate events was a learning process for me. I have learned to focus my attention on what God has promised me in the scriptures. The word of God has always been a source of strength for me. As I called on the name of Jesus, I position myself to pray I would recite one of my favorite scriptures, Isaiah 41:10, “Fear not for I am with you, do not be dismayed for I am your God, I will strengthen you, and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” As I recite these words, I feel the Holy Spirit overwhelming me with peace and all is well with my soul.

Jesus loves and cares for you. You can trust that he is working for your good. In Christ, it can be well for you whatever the circumstances, because Christ died for you, he sympathized with your pain. God knows that you are hurting, and He will always guard you these periods of suffering, pain or grief. When you feel like all hope is lost and the weight of this world has got you down, call on the name of Jesus. Exodus 14:14 reads, “the Lord will fight for you and you only must be still. There always will be trials and tribulations in life but God will carry you through every storm in your life and give you the strength to make it. So, no matter how strong the storm, no matter how bad the situation, do not lose hope, God will be your refuge, He will never leave nor forsake you!

*Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, It is well, with my soul.
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*



**“Amazing Grace”
Deaconess Betty Rudd
Written by John Newton ~ 1779**

The meaning behind this song is the Gospel message: we were people who were spiritually blind, wretches, wicked in our innermost being, and separated from God. It is through the grace of God that one can find their way home to God.

The rest of the verses explain the benefits of God’s grace: it teaches us to revere God, it enables us to face our fears, it is precious, it can carry us through dangerous situations, defends us, and bring us to eternal life with Jesus.

I am so thankful for the forgiveness of God. He loves me and cares for me. I haven’t done anything to deserve it. Yet he loves little old me!! Who am I, just a speck of dust. Without your grace God, I could do nothing. I was once lost and in darkness, yet you saved me thru Jesus Christ dying on the cross for my sins. No greater love than one who would take on the sins of the world and save a sinner like me.

God’s Amazing Grace has sustained me thus far and I know He did not bring me this far to leave me. Thank you, God, for opening my eyes when I was blind and taking me out of darkness into your marvelous light. You alone are worthy of all praise and honor.
Amen

Testify daily of God’s Amazing Grace!!!

**“No Not One”
Shana D. Stokes**

The name **Emmanuel** was given to Jesus upon his birth. The Hebrew meaning is “God with Us”. This is important because His birth was the fulfilling of God’s promise to bring us a Messiah to be with His people despite their disbelief. Can we think of a friend who has always been there with us and for us every time we needed them? In our worldly lives, we face disappointments and fallouts from those we call friends. There are times we need to talk to someone about what we’re going through and we can’t find a soul.

Everyone is busy with their own lives and their own problems. At times, we can mistakenly feel like we are in this life alone. “But there’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus, no not one. No not one! None else could heal all our soul’s diseases, no not one. No not one! No friend like Him, so high and holy, no not one.

No not one! And yet no friend is so meek and lowly, no not one. No not one! There’s not an hour that He is not near us, no not one. No not one! No night so dark but His love can cheer us, no not one. No not one!

Jesus knows all about our struggles, He will guide till the day is done. There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus, No not one!”

**“The Old Rugged Cross”
Pastor A Lincoln James, Jr.**

For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ...Philippians 3:18

Often said to be America’s most popular hymn. It has been the most favored of the approximately 300 songs written by George Bennard. As Methodist evangelist, Bennard wrote the first verse of "The Old Rugged Cross" in Albion, Michigan, in the fall of 1912, as a response to ridicule that he had received at a revival meeting.

"The Old Rugged Cross" has been a country gospel favorite ever since it became the title song of Ernest Tubb's 1952 gospel album; it has been performed by some of the twentieth century’s most important recording artists, including Al Green, & Mahalia Jackson.

On one occasion, as he was thinking of Christ’s crucifixion, an original melody ran through his mind. Although it was a complete melody, very few words came with it. He struggled to write some appropriate lyrics, but all that came was the passage, “I’ll cherish the old rugged cross.” The song seemed to take shape in bits and pieces. He returned from several preaching engagements to his home with a renewed meaning of the cross etched in his mind and heart. He took the song manuscript and placed it on the kitchen table. In a very short span of time, he was able to rewrite the stanzas with each word falling perfectly into place. He asked his wife to join him in the kitchen. She did so and he joyfully sang his prized, new song. She was very pleased, expressing that the song was great.

Today we think on the redemptive work of Jesus and how much He loved us. There is no greater love!!



Onward Christian Soldiers **By Deborah Williams**

Take your part in suffering, as a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:3 (GNT)

Many happy childhood memories flooded my thoughts when I saw the song, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," on the list for Lent. When I was a little girl, it was one of the Vacation Bible School's Top Hits and included the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and the Number One Song, "Jesus Loves Me." Perhaps the promise of getting our vanilla wafers and cup of Kool Aid before the boys did, motivated the girls to learn the words and to sing it better!

We learned the lyrics to those songs, but I must admit that I didn't understand what those words meant back then. The song's imagery is vivid in some areas but confusing in others. Even in my childhood, I understood that Christians were being compared to soldiers (First Verse). The song further suggests that we carried Jesus's cross at the front of this military offensive. I realize now that the offense initiates the action. By doing this, Christians are following Christ's mandate that we go out into the world and share the news of the gospel with all people (The Great Commission, Matthew 28:16-20)).

The offense does not respond like the defense does. Christian soldiers walk into battle. Surely, the soldiers expect wounds, but this army is being led by Christ, the royal Master. The troops follow Christ into battle by keeping their eyes on His banner.

Satan becomes a constant foe after we tell others about Jesus. The second verse warns us of his evil plans, but he is no match for Christ, so we will be victorious. Satan is powerful, but he is not as powerful as our royal Master! The third verse reminds us that others have fought in this army before, and we now occupy where they once were. This verse reminds us that if we stand united, we'll be victorious.

The last verse urges us to invite others to our army by blending their voices with ours in praise to our King. He deserves our honor and praise. Christians and angels will forever honor Him in song.

I had not thought about this song in many years. Perhaps it's because it was removed from many hymn books. Some believed that it supported Western imperialism and that some might see it as Christians calling for a military state. It was removed from several Christian hymnals, like The Australian Hymnal, or its title was changed, as in the Anglican hymnal which renamed it as "Onward, Christian Pilgrims." I can relate to both sides: We are fighting against the wiles of Satan, but we don't want to incite violence. Regardless of how you view it, this song is a sweet memory of when I "signed up" to fight for Jesus.

Today's Challenge: Work together in unity. Cultivate relationships with fellow believers, work together in the church and support each other in the faith.

“HARK THE HERALD ANGELES SING”

By Dr. Lucy James

The hymn “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” was written by Charles Wesley in 1739 while meditating on the birth of Christ. Inspired by the sounds of London church bells, Wesley composed the poem about a year after his conversion. The poem underwent modifications by Reverend George Whitfield before settling into its current form.

The hymn celebrates both the birth of Christ (symbolizing the past) and the mighty work he came to do (symbolizing the future). To see it as a Lenten song, one must consider the Sankofa experience. Sankofa is a Ghanaian Akan symbol that means “Look to the past to inform the future.” Simply put, you must consider where you have come from in order to move into the future.

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” is a Gospel-saturated anthem that points people to the Savior. The carol celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ and imagines humanity joining with the angelic chorus in glorifying and worshipping Christ as the newborn king. It highlights the virgin birth and the universal application of Christ’s coming to all nations and is based on Luke 2:8-14 telling of the angelic chorus praising God.

The first stanza describes the good news of the savior’s birth. God has sent the One who will reconcile the sinner back to Himself. Therefore, all the nations should rise and sing and proclaim the good news, which is Christ the King! The next stanza speaks to the mysticism of Christ’s coming and the good news in it. The final stanza tells of Christ’s accomplishment and the power it brings.

For well over two hundred years, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” has been a Gospel-saturated anthem pointing people to the Savior. This famed carol is loaded with rich theology. Future moving forward) reconcile the sinner back to Himself. Thus, the SANKOFA MOVEMENT!



**“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”
Rely on God, He Will Take You Through
By Monica Payne**

This hymn was inspired by Deuteronomy 33:27 "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

As the hymn is sung, contemplate what it means to find refuge in our heavenly father's arms in times of fear. Allow his joy and peace to replace our loneliness and anxiety. As a Christian, life has not always been easy. I have experienced some ups and downs but found peace and understanding through the arc of safety, leaning on the everlasting arms. This beautiful hymn pushes us to the savior's embrace.

In Christ, we are all God's spiritually adopted children, who can lean upon God's arms. God has called us in his covenant love into his embrace in that, we are safe and secure. What does this mean? Knowing we will face trials, tribulations, or even persecution has opened my eyes. These are causes for alarm, but in Christ, we are safe. The word leaning represents seeking guidance and support from God in times of trouble or if I am uncertain. This brings a sense of peace and comfort knowing he is always present. Everlasting is the ultimate celebration of the key to success, because his love is never-ending. God's arm is a refuge from the cold and a sanctuary for our weary souls.

During my journey, I learned that the key to peace is to trust God and know that he is dependable and trustworthy. To trust, we rely upon others. People and family may let you down. You have to stay confident. Let's take a minute to view some of the things we put our trust in. One is our money. It says in "God We Trust." The bank is trust, but trust is something deeper than faith. Do we trust God, leaning on him for now and in the future? The meaning and purpose of life is to learn to trust God. We trust in others like traveling and flying to our destination without even knowing the pilots, we love to eat we trust the cook will cook our food properly, and when we drive our car, we trust that others will not hit or harm us. I am guilty of all these things but I understand the power of Jesus and the importance of trust. Trust Jesus when you suffer, with your children, even your future and death. Lean on God have patience, walk with him, and don't be blinded by breaking news about wildfires, hurricanes, covid, shootings, and babies dying. What a fellowship what a joy divine leaning on the everlasting arms. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way leaning on the everlasting arms.

Finally, we reflect upon our fear and dread. In Christ, we should have no fear, no dread. Lean on God in every season, whether in joy or sorrow, make it a practice to rely on God's wisdom, not our own understanding!

“DOWN AT THE CROSS”
By Deacon Patricia Yarbrough

Down at the cross where my Savior died, Down where from cleansing from sin I cried,
There to my heart was the blood applied, Glory to his name. Glory to his name
(precious name) Glory to his name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to
his name!

As a member of the Junior Choir, “Down at the Cross” was among some of the old hymns we sang in rotation on youth Sundays. A popular hymn, we sang it with vigor and confidence. The alto section of which I was a member, added the intonation and sound our music director was looking for. And we took pride in our singing and appreciated the many “Amens” shouted by the members afterwards. At that age, most of us didn’t understand why the congregation was so moved by the song. To us, it was just something “old folks” did at church...(smile). But as life would have it, I would soon come to understand in time why those “Amens” meant so much to so many.

Contemplating the words of “Down at the Cross” would bring meaning, clarity and purpose to my life as a young adult. I would learn to pray with understanding and expectation that Jesus paid the ultimate price for my (our) sins, and that through his blood, we are saved if we believe in him. Because of the cross, I would try hard to be a good person; help others in need and show kindness even when it wasn’t always shown to me. Later in life as a wife and mother, I wanted to serve in my church as a way to honor God and be a true servant.

My journey in Christ is not so much unlike others who have faced challenges, unexpected pitfalls, pain, heart ache and hatred from others who resented your achievements and success. But because my eyes have been on “the cross”, tremendous joy, unwavering love, and happiness has filled my heart with knowing the goodness of the Lord, and all he wants for us.

I’ve learned to pray to be obedient to His Word and for his guidance in my daily walk. And so, I return to that favorite song...Down at the Cross - no longer with a child’s understanding, but as a more mature adult in the Lord Jesus Christ. The struggle to stay focused on the Cross is real and challenges us each and every day. I now find myself swaying to that old hymn being sung in church...knowing that giving “Glory to His Name” truly means something in my life.

God wants us to know his power, love and authority over everything, and for us to give Him all the glory due to His name.

I offer this to you today...If you have received the Lord, the Holy Spirit of God will be with you. Allow Him to lead you in all things and you will be transformed. **He is the Way, the Truth and the Life!**

**“Power in the Blood”
By Althelia Battle**

“There is Power in the Blood” is a hymn which highlights that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. The hymn was written and composed by Lewis Edgar Jones, who was born in Yates City, Illinois, on Feb. 8, 1865.

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with Guillain Barre’ disease, a disease I never heard of. Guillain Barre’ is an autoimmune disease that damages the peripheral nervous system causing a rapid onset of muscle weakness. My body’s immune system was attacking my peripheral nerves. In just a matter of days, I was unable to walk, talk, swallow properly, breathe on my own, or deal with toileting needs. In addition to various treatments, plasmapheresis was instrumental in slowing down the attack on my body. I underwent several treatments where I was hooked up to a machine that separated my blood plasma from my whole cells and then returned the blood to my system. This process was a game changer.

The hymn, “Power in the Blood,” is a powerful reminder of Jesus’ sacrifice for me and my faith in God. It is a game changer in that the blood Jesus shed for us provided for the forgiveness of our sins. Paul addressed the saints in Ephesus in Ephesians 1:7 and stated, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the richness of his blood.” Blood has the power to sustain life, but symbolically, blood has the power to affect a life-giving relationship with God. Through Jesus’ blood, all my sins are forgiven, something no one else can do for me. 1 John 1:7 states, “But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

**“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”
By Sis Sandra Clark**

When Praises Go Up, Blessings Come Down

God’s blessings have been given to us in his many promises throughout the Bible. The lyrics in this song of praise give us an understanding how we are encrusted in God’s blessings as Christians. The most important thing that we as Christians must do to receive his many blessings through his promises is to praise him unconditionally with respect, honor, and thanksgiving.

Several verses in the Bible encourages us to diligently through our faith, praise God with prayers of thanks. Psalm 100:4 states that we as God’s people, should enter his courts with praise giving thanks and blessing his name. When we do this are assured God’s promises are within our reach. Hebrews 13:5 presents the ultimate promise of God in which he promises to never leave us. What a blessing to know that God will be with us in the good times as well as the bad if we continue to give him the praise he justly deserves. The book of John 3:16 shows the ultimate sacrifice of love that God promised his people who praise and call his name, his son’s life and our eternal life, what a blessing.

Praise is the highest expression of love, honor and respect that we can give our God. We as believers see every day the wonderous blessings of our God, not only through the things he has provided like the sun, rain, nature, and worldly provisions, but also the internal blessings of peace, love and happiness that are intrinsic blessings. Therefore, Christian believers continue to praise God who has made promises that he has and will always keep.

Please read these other verses to help us understand what our commitment to praising God should be:

Psalm 150:1-6 Psalm 105:2 Psalm 145:3 Psalm 106:1

Isaiah 25:1 Ephesians 1:3



**“I AM THINE O LORD”
BY PASTOR JAMES**

Carlton Young points out that Crosby seems to mix her cleansing metaphors intentionally “pure water” and “bleeding side.” The connection becomes clearer when one reads the verses in Hebrews 10:

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into
the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living
way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the
veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest
over the house of God. . . .”

Like so many of Crosby’s hymns, “I am thine, O Lord” is written in the first person—a personal testimony of her relationship with Christ. Stanza one begins with a total surrender to Christ, “I am thine, O Lord,” and the desire to “be closer drawn to thee.” The second stanza appropriately draws upon the closeness of this relationship as an impetus of service: “Consecrate me now to thy service, Lord, by the power of grace divine.”

Stanza three defines the relationship further as one forged in prayer: “When I kneel in prayer, and with thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend!” In the final stanza, Crosby acknowledges that her relationship will not be complete until she reaches heaven (“cross the narrow sea”) and then she will find “rest in peace with thee.”

The refrain is the theological hub around which the spokes of the stanzas all connect: “Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to thy precious bleeding side.” In this case, it is Christ’s blood that cleanses and perfects the relationship. Fanny Crosby is thoroughly Wesleyan in her understanding of grace and perfection.

Fanny Jane Crosby (1820-1915) “set the standard for the ‘successful’ writing of gospel hymns,” according to UM Hymnal editor Carlton R. Young. She was the author of over 8,500 gospel songs.

Blind at six weeks of age, Crosby began composing texts at age 6. At 12 she began her study at the New York School for the Blind, a school she later served as a teacher. A friend of several presidents, she became one of the country’s most important advocates for the cause of the blind, addressing a session of Congress on the topic.

Her texts were set to the compositions of some of the most prominent gospel song composers of the day including William Bradbury, William Doane, Robert Lowry and Ira Sankey. Crosby composed under a number of pen names. She married blind musician Alexander Van Alstyne, and British hymnals have always used her married

name, Frances Van Alstyne. This hymn is one of many collaborations between Crosby and composer William Doane (1832-1915). The late Baptist hymnologist William J. Reynolds provides the context for the composition of the hymn in 1874 during a visit by Crosby to Doane's home in Cincinnati:

“One evening she and Doane talked at length about the nearness of God in their lives. When Fanny went to her room, her mind and heart were flooded with ideas from their conversation. Before she went to sleep, the lines of “I am thine, O Lord” were in her mind. . . . The next morning she recited the words to Doane, who wrote down the stanzas and composed the tune.”

The text appeared with the following inscription from Hebrews 10:22: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (KJV) Carlton Young points out that Crosby seems to mix her cleansing metaphors intentionally—“pure water” and “bleeding side.” The connection becomes clearer when one reads the previous verses in Hebrews 10

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God. . . .”

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BLESS THAT WONDERFUL NAME OF JESUS

By Dr. Lucy James

...for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (NIV)

"Bless That Wonderful Name of Jesus" is a spiritual hymn of undetermined origin. It is a popular praise song emphasizing deep reverence and gratitude towards Jesus. The lyrics express a sincere desire to honor and bless the name of Jesus, as it is considered the only name that holds true power, freedom, and hope.

Lent is the solemn Christian religious observance in the liturgical calendar commemorating the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert and enduring Satan's temptation, according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, before beginning his public ministry. Singing "Blessed That Wonderful Name", is a fantastic way to combat life's disappointments as we move through the Lenten season.

Whenever we encounter a roadblock or a brick wall, we should pull out the song "Bless That Wonderful Name of Jesus" and watch our Heavenly Father change what is going on or how we approach the difficult. "Bless That Wonderful Name" is one of those songs we should keep in our arsenal of songs.

This writer does not necessarily associate this song with the Lenton Journey, but since music is often said to soothe the savage beast, I would keep this song in my heart. Yet, even more importantly, music can be a vehicle for people to enter into repose (calmness/peacefulness), contemplation, and a more enlightened and spiritual state of being.

"Bless That Wonderful Name of Jesus" is a Worship song. When the storms of life are raging, "Bless That Wonderful Name of Jesus." When life just be "lifeing" as we are on the Lenton Journey, "Bless That Wonderful Name of Jesus." When you don't know which way to go, while on this Lenton Journey, look to hills from when cometh all your help and sing, "Bless that Wonderful Name of Jesus."

In the final analysis, a song like "Bless That Wonderful Name of Jesus" that we can refer to while on the Lenton Journey enralls us and becomes a powerful, emotional means of praising the Almighty.

**“Oh, How I Love Jesus”
Min. Cathy Bright**

Oh, How I Love Jesus, I couldn't begin to count the reasons to Love Jesus. The word says, there are so many things Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

God is love and everything He does is because of His love for me/us. God does everything in love. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God created me and you, and everything in it that we would need. God observed his creation to be very good which speaks to the mind and the character of God.

Love looked at me and said “very good”. Let that marinate in your spirit; when and how God created you, what He created you to be, why He created you, and the way God created you, He judged effective, functional, and good for His intended purposes. Oh, the sweet, precious and powerful name of Jesus. We call on that name, we are saved in that name, we pray in that name, we bow to that name, we live in that name, and there is power in the name of Jesus.

The word (that word being Jesus) became flesh and made His dwelling among us. What am I that God is mindful of me, and then God, had the audacity to make mankind a little lower than Himself, and to be His ambassador in the earth. “Y'all I'm God's agent.” We would not have known love if not for Jesus, who didn't consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation to show me Him-to show me love. The song continues and says, It tells me of a Savior's love. Who died to set me free. It tells me of His precious blood. The sinner's perfect plea.

Reading and singing these words I can't help but think about Jesus' work at Calvary. Jesus loves me, Jesus loves you, Jesus loves us so much that He, 100% man and 100% God, became the scapegoat for all. His life for my life, your life, and all human life.

Between the late 90s and early 2000s there was a popular saying WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) which served as a reminder to consider Jesus's actions and teachings when making life decisions. I often thought the better phrase would have been “What Did Jesus Do” (WDJD). Jesus didn't have to do it but He is the only one that could take my sin debt, and His shed blood is the only blood that could completely eradicate that sin, in order that I/we might be place in right standing with God. Bought and paid for with a price, declared not guilty, forgiven all sins, and guaranteed an eternal home in the Father's mansion. Who we talking about, my Lord and my redeemer, “That's My Jesus.”

So, What Did Jesus Do and Oh, how I love Jesus, you may ask; He is the hope of my glory.

Oh, how I love Jesus; I live to tell His story.
Oh, how I love Jesus; He took my place and made me new.
Oh, how I love Jesus; He is the way, He gives life, and He is true.
Oh, how I love Jesus; He never leaves, He never forsakes.
Oh, how I love Jesus; His Kingdom is eternal, a gift we must take.
Oh, how I love Jesus; abundant life He came to give.
Oh, how I love Jesus; it's a gift in place still.
Oh, how I love Jesus; my Prophet, Priest, and King.
Oh, how I love Jesus; He gave me a new song to sing.
Oh, how I love Jesus; Where His spirit dwells there is liberty.
Oh, how I love Jesus; Because, He first, loved me.

**“Just As I Am” by Charlotte Elliott
Cherry Watson**

Charlotte Elliott's hymn “Just as I Am” has become one of the most beloved and widely recognized hymns in Christian history. Written in 1835, this simple yet profound song has touched the lives of countless individuals, offering a message of hope, acceptance, and salvation through Jesus Christ.

The meaning of “Just As I Am” conveys that anyone can come to Christ without having to change first. God's grace and love is an invitation to accept forgiveness. We are accepted fully for our perfectly imperfect selves without need for pretense or putting on airs.

“Just As I Am” is a reminder of God's unconditional love and grace for us. In Christ we are seen as precious and valuable. “Just As I Am” is an invitation to accept forgiveness not based on one's own merits. It is a message of sin, forgiveness and salvation. For this day we are reminded that to God, we are precious, I am precious. He has equipped us with the skills to manage the various situations that this day will bring. I challenge myself to possess a Christ like attitude when interacting with believers and non-believers by displaying love, kindness and patience.

**“Jesus Is All the World to Me”
Rev. Wendy Bullock**

This hymn, Jesus is all the World to me was written by Will L. Thompson in 1904. Thompson was a gospel songwriter and composer who dedicated much of his life to writing Christian hymns. It is said that he was inspired by his visit to evangelist Dwight L. Moody on his deathbed. Moody reportedly told Thompson, “Will, I would rather have written ‘Jesus Is All the World to Me’ than to have earned millions.” This encounter affirmed the importance of Thompson’s work and likely reinforced his dedication to gospel music.

This hymn reflects our personal relationship with Christ through song. Jesus means everything to believers and this song speaks to our unshakeable faith. Our faith sustains us in good times and throughout our trials. The words of this song reminds us that Jesus is our EVERYTHING! We cannot depend on anyone or anything, we must fully rely on Christ. The hymn itself reflects a deep, personal relationship with Christ, emphasizing Jesus as a constant source of joy, strength, and guidance in all aspects of life.

In a world of uncertainties, this hymn reassures believers that Jesus is faithful and constant. We can always count on Jesus! This hymn serves as a beautiful reminder that no matter what happens in life, Christ is all we need.

The hymn "Jesus Is All the World to Me" beautifully expresses the heart of a believer who has placed their full trust and hope in Christ. It reminds us that Jesus is not just a distant figure in our lives but our closest friend, our source of joy, and our strength in times of trouble.

Each verse of the hymn speaks of Jesus in a deeply personal way:

My life, my joy, my all – He is the foundation of our existence.
My friend in trials sore – He never leaves us, even in our darkest moments.
My guide, my trust – He leads us with wisdom and grace.
Eternal life, eternal joy – He is our hope beyond this world.

As we reflect on our relationship with Christ this Lenten season, we are reminded that the world offers temporary pleasures, but nothing can compare to the lasting satisfaction found in Jesus. When we declare, "Jesus is all the world to me," we affirm that He alone is our everything—our peace in storms, our joy in sorrow, and our hope for eternity. Make sure during this Lenten season, that **JESUS IS YOUR EVERYTHING!**

**“Paid In Full”
By Sister Sheryl Bruce Johnson**

**Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.**

Words by E.M. Hall / Music by J.T. Grape

Amy was in line at the grocery store. She double and triple checked to make sure she had enough money to pay for her partially full basket of food. After losing her good paying full-time job because she violated a few company policies, ends didn't always meet. So, she was forced to choose between buying medicine or food. As she started to put a few items to the side, she heard the cashier explain that the previous customer had left more than enough to cover the cost of Amy's groceries AND her medicine!

This is an example of unexpected charity in the face of a self-inflicted dilemma. Amy broke company policies which resulted in the consequence of losing her job and income. Then, without an explanation and without being asked, a kind stranger paid her bill.

What Jesus did for us goes far beyond the generosity of Amy's benefactor. Jesus gave His LIFE in exchange for our sins! We owed a debt because we broke God's laws. That debt listed all the rules we failed to follow. But God forgave us that debt. He took away that debt and nailed it to the cross. (Colossians 2:14 ICB). All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The consequence of our sin is death (Romans 6:23a KJV). Yet, without being asked to do so, God sacrificed His only Son so that we would not perish. And the explanation? He loves us! He defeated the cross, hell and the grave. He shed His blood. He did it all because He loves us.

Unlike the one-time gift of the stranger in the grocery store, Jesus' blood covers our debt forever. It is PAID IN FULL!!

*O Lord, my strength indeed is small, but I find in You my all in all.
Your power and Yours alone can melt the heart of stone.
For by Your grace to claim, I wash my garments in the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.
Thank You for giving Your all; because of Your blood, my debt is paid in full.*

In the precious name of Jesus, Amen

“I Surrender All”
By Rev. Patricia Brown

“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God ~ this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

The phrase “I Surrender All” carries a profound and transformative meaning for me, one that resonates deeply within my heart. As I experience the weight of life’s burdens and the liberating power of letting go, and reflect on this concept, my heart swells with a mixture of humility, gratitude, and an overwhelming sense of peace.

Life often feels like a series of battles, each one demanding more strength, resilience, and determination. As I fight to keep control over circumstances, the future, and sometimes even my past, I come to realize that my true strength lies not in my ability to control, but in my willingness to surrender all that I am to God. “I Surrender All” is not a declaration of defeat for me, but rather a triumphant cry of liberation. It is an acknowledgment that I am not meant to carry the weight of the world on my shoulders, but an invitation to release my grip on the things that bind me, the fears that paralyze me, and the doubts that cloud my vision. It is a call to lay down my burdens at the feet of Jesus, trusting that in my surrender, I will find true freedom.

The act of surrender is an act of faith. It requires me to believe in the unseen, to trust in the unknown, and to rely on the unchanging nature of the love and grace of Jesus. When I surrender all, I open my heart to the possibility of transformation. I make room for healing, for growth, and for the miracles that can only occur when I let go of my need to be in control. In the song “I Surrender All, there is a beautiful harmony between the melody and the message. The gentle, yet powerful, lyrics beckons me to come Just as I am—broken, weary, and in need of rest. They remind me that I am enough, just as I am, and that in my surrender, I will be met with the compassion and unconditional love of God.

Surrendering all is not a one-time event, but a daily practice for me. It is a conscious choice to release my worries, my plans, and my desires into the hands of my Loving Savior. It is a journey of trust, patience, and unwavering faith. And as I walk this path of surrender, I discover the beauty of a life lived in harmony with the Divine. I experience the joy of being fully present in each moment, free from the anxieties of the past and the uncertainties of the future. I find peace in knowing that I am never alone, and that my journey is guided by a love that is beyond measure.

In moments of doubt or fear, I let the words “I Surrender All” be a reminder to me, of the strength that lies within me through the Power of the Holy Ghost. It is then that I embrace the power of letting go, and trust that in my surrender, I will find the courage to rise, the grace to heal, and the peace that surpasses all understanding.

“Come Ye Disconsolate”
by Sis Agatha Lewis Stokes

I love this song from a youth. Being raised in the Elizabethtown, North Carolina, I remember this song from the community revivals when they would preach there would be an alter call and the choir would sing this song. What an invitation God wants us forever invited to the throne of grace and mercy where he abides. We can bring all of our hurts, trials and tribulations and lay them at His feet. This song brings pure joy and peace to all who are hurting. It is an invitation to seek his face and blessings forever.

This is also a great hymn of comfort, encouragement for the disconsolate in the face of sorrow and loss. In Matthew 11:28-30 we are comforted by the words of Jesus "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." In Hebrews 4:14-16 we are reminded that through Christ, our High Priest, there is "mercy and grace to help in time of need," and we are told to "come boldly" before the throne and seek it. Are you carrying a heavy burden today? Are you discouraged and overwhelmed? If so, be assured that "earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal."

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish,
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
"Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot cure."

Here see the bread of life, see waters flowing
Forth from the throne of God, pure from above.
Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing
Earth has no sorrow but heav'n can remove.

Bearing My Cross
By Rev Dorothy Bruce

As I read each stanza of "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone", I was reminded of what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once responded to being called an extremist. After reminding everyone that many of Jesus' haters called His actions extreme, Dr. King shook off the cutting remarks with these words:

"The cross we bear precedes the crown we shall wear. To be a Christian, one must take up his cross, with all of its difficulties and tension packed content, and carry it until that very cross leaves its mark upon us, and redeems us to that more excellent way which comes only through suffering."

The Word of Jesus says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24 KJV). Yes, Dr. King understood what those words meant. However, as I listened to Sam Cook and the Soul Stirrers, I pondered, what does bearing my cross mean to me? I understood that bearing my cross means daily seeing others through the eyes of Christ. It means allowing my light to shine that others will see the light in me and glorify the Savior who is the LIGHT of the world. It is having a heart of love for my enemies.

Bearing the cross isn't easy. It means persecution and suffering, out-right hatred. And it means turning the other cheek. Because I am a follower of Jesus, bearing my cross means spreading love, for God is love (1 John 4:8b). My cross I will bear, until I receive my consecrated crown to place at my Savior's feet.

**The season of Lent is a time of spiritual
preparation that remembers Jesus' forty days in
the wilderness, where he fasted, prayed, and faced
temptations before beginning his public ministry.
Use this time to not only reflect on what Jesus did
for us, but draw closer to God!**

“JOY TO THE WORLD”

Brother Torrey James

“Joy to the World” is more than just a festive carol—it’s a timeless anthem of hope, celebration, and unity. At its core, the song speaks of a joy that transcends our circumstances, a joy that, when fully embraced, has the power to transform not only our lives but the world around us. Its message is simple yet profound: joy is something worth celebrating, and it is meant to be shared with others.

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it’s easy to lose sight of joy. We can become overwhelmed by challenges, stresses, and setbacks that cloud our perspective. Yet, “Joy to the World” reminds us that joy is not dependent on external conditions. True joy comes from within—it is a state of being, a mindset that we can cultivate. It is the peace that comes when we accept ourselves and others as we are, the gratitude we feel for the small moments, and the beauty we find in everyday life.

But joy is not meant to be kept to ourselves. It is a gift that grows when shared. The lyrics of “Joy to the World” invite us to not only experience joy ourselves but to extend it to those around us. When we spread joy—through acts of kindness, through smiles, through words of encouragement—we create an atmosphere that uplifts and connects people. Our collective joy can become a force for good in the world, reminding others that, no matter the hardships they may face, there is always a reason to celebrate life. In a world that sometimes feels divided and filled with uncertainty, joy becomes an act of resistance. It is a declaration that, despite the challenges, we choose to focus on what is good and beautiful. Choosing joy does not mean ignoring the difficulties or pretending that everything is perfect; it means acknowledging the struggles and still deciding to live with a heart full of gratitude and optimism. This is the kind of joy that transcends circumstance, a joy that is not fleeting but enduring.

The song also calls for a collective celebration. “Joy to the World” is an invitation to come together and rejoice in our shared humanity. When we embrace joy as a community, we strengthen our bonds, inspire each other, and create a sense of belonging. Whether it’s through a simple gesture or a grand celebration, joy brings people closer. It reminds us that no matter our differences, we all have something to celebrate in this world.

FAITH IN ACTION

So, let “Joy to the World” be more than just words sung during the holidays. Let it become a mindset we carry with us every day. Let us be intentional about choosing joy, not just for ourselves but for those around us. In doing so, we have the power to create a ripple effect of positivity, compassion, and hope. Because when we embrace and share joy, we don’t just change our own lives—we help make the world a better, brighter place for everyone.

“WHEN WE ALL GET TO HEAVEN”
By Deacon Everett J. Cannon

When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing it will be. This popular hymn of the church has four words that immediately stand out for the Christian believer. “When”, “All”, “Heaven” and “Rejoice”.

WHEN, the first word in the title refers to a place in time, a desired time, an unannounced time, the appropriate time, the right time, a bad time, or colored people time. Whenever the time, the hymn says what a rejoicing it will be when we all see Jesus.

ALL, the next word in the title identifies everyone. It doesn't eliminate anyone. All encompasses the whole group. All is inclusive of the entire world striving to do the same thing or accomplish the same goal.

HEAVEN, the next word describes the place. The new home of the soul after death. Heaven is being eternally in the presence of God after the body has fulfilled its purpose. Heaven is the place where God, angels, and deceased believers reside. Heaven is the place when you and I are striving to get to.

REJOICING, as a Christian trying to make Heaven our home who wouldn't want to rejoice, celebrate and be in delight after seeing Jesus. We will shout victory and sing joyously in delight. The hymn says, “we will sing and shout the victory”.

This hymn, written in 1898 by Eliza Hewitt and the melody by Mrs., J.G.(Emily) Wilson. The two met at Methodist camp meetings in New Jersey. Just for perspective, in 1898, the 25th President of the United States was William McKinley. Eggs were approximately 20 cents a dozen. The average home was approximately \$1200. This great hymn was often sung during revivals and church school meetings. All 4 stanzas of this great timely hymn of the church are directly correlated to Biblical scriptures as quoted in King James versions.

“When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing it will be. When we all see Jesus, we will sing and shout the victory.” I'm looking forward to that day. Are you?

Today, rejoice in God's Promises and cultivate an attitude of gratitude for the eternal life promised through Jesus Christ.

**“God Will Take Care of You”
by Rev. Floyd Brown**

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” ~ Deuteronomy 31:6 (NLJV)

As we are dealing with the twists, turns, and unforeseen challenges that can often leave us feeling uncertain and overwhelmed, we can trust that God will take care of us. This is a song that shows us God’s unwavering love that He has for us. You can trust Him to provide for your every need. You can trust God to protect and guide you through life’s challenges no matter what they are.

In Matthew 6:26, Jesus speaks of the birds of the air, noting that they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, yet our Heavenly Father feeds them. Jesus asks “Are you not much more valuable than they?” This simple and profound truth illustrates God’s intimate knowledge of our needs and our God’s deep commitment to providing for His children.

John 10:11 says “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” The good shepherd will strengthen us. The good shepherd who is Jesus, will encourage and empower us to feel God’s love. The good shepherd will give us provision and protection. He will protect us from some stuff and He will protect us in some stuff. God will give us peace in the midst of the storm. God will protect us from stuff that we are aware of and He will protect us from stuff that we are not aware of.

In closing, God has taken care of us by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus. He loved us so much that He took care of our penalty for our sins. He made the ultimate sacrifice, letting His children know that God will take care of us.

Be not dismayed whate’er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.
God will take care of you,
Through every day, o’er all the way;
He will take care of you; God will take care of you!!
Written by Civilla D Martin

Faith in Action: Listen to hymns and gospel music, but don’t just passively listen; instead listen with your heart and let the words speak to your soul!!

**“Love Lifted Me” by James Rowe and Howard E. Smith
By Sis. Cherry Watson**

Jesus spoke of if He was lifted up from the earth He would draw all people unto Him. He was speaking of his death.

God's love lifts us up by giving us a taste of His love and life and by shifting self-centered concerns to focus on Him. God provides us with these tools to walk with Him in the light-offering forgiveness, holiness, love, peace, mentorship and rest.

Forgiveness...God lifts us up to the status of a saved and forgiven sinner.

Holiness...God lifts up His people to a life of righteousness and purity.

Love...God lifts up His people by giving us a taste of his unfailing love.

Peace...God lifts his people up by giving us peace in the middle of storms.

Mentorship...God lifts His people up by providing guidance, presence, and direction along our journey.

Rest...God lifts His people up by giving us moments of time to recharge and be grounded in Him.

Love is a form of encouragement from Jesus when we are lonely even when others are around. When we feel lonely and detached, we can reflect on how God's love lifts us!! Love is encouragement to families to pour into one another by listening to and valuing each other especially when there are differences (mentorship and holiness). Love is encouragement to the community to acknowledge and strive to meet the basic needs like food and shelter so that no one is lacking in a community (peace and mentorship). Love and compassion shines bright when nothing else helps!!

"Love Lifted Me" is a popular hymn written by James Rowe in 1912. The lyrics draw from the stories of Jesus and his disciples at sea from the book of Matthew. Rowe plays upon the idea of sinking in water to sinking in sin and that Jesus can lift us out of despair to salvation.



**“We’ve Come This Far by Faith”
Sis Diane Gary-Jones**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of life to witness another sunrise. We ask you to forgive us for our sins. Have mercy on us, teach us to be more like you in all that we say and do. Teach us to live a life of gratitude and service to mankind according to your will. This is my prayer in the Mighty Name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

~

As a young girl, I can remember sitting in my hometown church of Wilmington, North Carolina, watching and listening to the men and women marching down the center aisle wearing long burgundy and white robes with hymn books in their hands. Their voices were loud, powerful, captivating, and definitely caught my attention to join in and sing along. I can remember thinking I want to sing like that one day.

It was clear to me that this particular hymn, “We’ve Come This Far by Faith,” meant something extra special to the Pastor, Deacons, Deaconesses, Ushers, and the members of my church. Everyone was singing along, even the youth waving their hands, some shouting “Thank You Lord” and “Hallelujah”!

Over the years as I have experienced this journey of life, the hymn, “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” has been an anchor of comfort and spiritual support for me. No matter what I am going through in life, I can sing or hum this hymn and become reassured that God is with me at all times.

“We’ve Come This Far by Faith” allows us to give God the Glory, Honor and Praise for all He has done and will continue to do for us. No matter the times—happy or sad—God is with us at all times, but we must...**Keep the Faith!**

Thanks to Albert A. Goodson, an African American who grew up in Los Angeles, California, in the 1930’s and 1940’s, who was led by God to write the melody and lyrics to this song, “We’ve Come This Far by Faith,” which was published in 1956.

**We Can’t Turn Around
We’ve Come This Far by Faith!**

***“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
”Hebrew 11:1***

**“A Song to Sing”
By Sis Phyllis Fountain**

Shout to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with joy; come before him with singing. Know that the Lord is God. He made us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep he tends.

Picture this... It's Sunday morning at TBC. The Ocie Rose Memorial Choir has lined up to march into Worship Service. Our leaders: Mrs. Bolling, Mrs. Murphy, Mrs. Carson and Deaconess Julia Blackwell, have worked hard to teach us the songs that we will sing this morning. Right now, they are working hard to keep us quiet as service is about to begin. During the week leading up to this day, these ladies made sure that there would be Bible study before rehearsal.

To be honest, I don't know if we really understood the connection between the things that we were taught during Bible study and the songs that we would sing on Sunday. We were young and at that time we hadn't experienced much in life. After all, the closest example of God's love for us was our parents. Our needs were taken care of and our wants were satisfied if possible. We didn't realize it at that time, but much later in life we would come to understand that they had taught us a "help me enter His presence song", much like the Lord's Prayer being a Model Prayer.

Just like there are times when I feel like I don't know what to pray, there are times we I feel the need to get into God's presence, but know I need some help getting there. That's when I go into a quiet place and begin to sing this song written by Myrna Summers in 1970. This song gives me the words to acknowledge the things that God has done for me and acknowledges that He is in control. Pretty soon, I'm sitting at his feet, singing to the top of my lungs. Hey, I'm not a soloist in anybody's choir, but for those moments my focus is laser beamed on God. I can feel that His focus is on me as I share with Him the Gift of a song that He gave to me. Can't nobody sing it like me. What a wonderful Gift! The Angels sing but they can't sing this song. All I can say is, "I've got a song to sing and you can sing it too as we enter into his presence."

God gave me a song
That the angels cannot sing
I've been washed in the blood of the crucified One
I've been redeemed

The Lord has been so good to me
He's opened doors I could not see
Sometimes when I am feeling low
No one to care – No place to go
My father is rich in houses and land
He holds the power of the world
In his hands, God gave me a Song

He holds the power in his hands -Power
He made the leaves on the trees - Power
He made the birds and the bees - Power
He made the oceans and the seas - Power

Power of the World in His hand
God Gave me a Song.

"I Am On The Battlefield"
By Agatha Stokes

*...your servants will cross over, everyone armed for war, to do battle for the Lord...
Numbers 32:27*

Sometimes it is hard to truly comprehend a threat that comes from things that we are not able to see. However, God warns us that the threat of spiritual warfare is very real and we must arm ourselves with what He has given us.

Whether you've experienced a dark time in your life that you couldn't explain or you're seeking to know and understand what the Bible says about spiritual warfare, it's important for every Christian to know and be aware of the war that is constantly raging around us. The Bible tells us to be watchful and to guard our hearts against the iniquity of sin.

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

As said in Ephesians 6:12, our struggle is against "spiritual forces of evil," meaning the real battle is the spiritual warfare of good versus evil. There is a spiritual war ongoing for the hearts of man, as the forces of evil want to turn us away from God and separate us from Him. But for those with God through Jesus, the battle is already won as Christ overcame death with the resurrection. We must be born again of spirit with faith in Jesus to be saved from the "second" death of the spirit (John 3). Additionally, according to Ephesians 6:13-17, our whole body needs to be armed with the power that comes from the Holy Spirit.

It is said that the evil can only enter us when we allow it to live in our hearts, like a vampire who must be let into your house. The first step to engage in this grand spiritual warfare is recognizing it exists and to genuinely examine your heart. "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

**“Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior”
By Sister Beverly Taylor**

One evening in 1868, while doing mission work Frances J. Crosby was visiting a prison, walking down a long aisle between cells, reciting the Bible verses she knew by heart, she heard a man call out, “Remember me! O Lord, please don’t pass me by.” Later, thinking back on that plaintive cry, Crosby wrote the hymn lyrics, touching our universal fear of being excluded and forgotten.

Sometimes many of us continuously submerge ourselves under a blanket of hidden sins, that we can’t let go of. This song echoes our feeling of unworthiness, guilt, and the shame we bare. (Romans 3:23) We wrestle with doubt, and unbelief, leaning on our own understanding, instead of trusting in the Lord. (Proverbs3:5) When in fear we sometimes discount the grace and mercy that is always available to us. (Ephesians2:8) When we are feeling lost and distant from God this hymn serves as a powerful reminder that when we cry out with humble trust, He never passes us by. We must ask the Lord for His help and salvation no matter how unworthy we may feel. (Romans5:8) When we raise our voices to the lyrics of this song we are earnestly longing for a deep encounter with the Lord and our need for His attention. When we hear the words in our own quiet space kneeling before the Lord in deep remorse our desire must be to seek him. (Deuteronomy 4:29) Asking the Lord to help us with our unbelief and for His forgiveness.

This song expresses the brokenness of our spirit and the yearning we have for healing and restoration. This song brings a sense of ultimate comfort and strength that only God can give. This hymn resonates the importance of having an intimate relationship with our Savior acknowledging Him and knowing in our hearts there is no one else in heaven or on earth that can feel that void. (Proverbs 3:6) Acts 4:12 Our Savior, was once mocked and rejected. He knows our pain. Singing this hymn, with faith and true belief again we cry, **“Do not pass me by. Remember me! Remember me! Remember me!”**

Genesis18:3 He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes my Lord, do not pass your servant by.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

Romans 5:8 But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Deuteronomy 4:29 But if from there you seek the Lord your god, you will find him if you look for Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your path straight

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

“Holy, Holy, Holy”
By Sheryl Bruce Johnson

You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created. Revelation 4:11 (NKJV)

Imagine you are sitting on the balcony of your beach-front Airbnb, watching the sun as it sits just above the ocean. In the stillness of the early morning, you breathe in the crisp air, and you hear the swooshing sound of the waves hitting the shore. You observe the seagulls as they scoop up their breakfast, and the fluffy clouds as they drift slowly through the sky. In this moment, you stand in awe of God's handiwork. *Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty. Early in the morning, our song shall rise to Thee!*

In the beginning, before anything was, there was God. Then He created: the heavens and the earth; day and night; land and seas; plants and trees; sun and moon; birds, sea creatures and beasts of the earth. And then, He made mankind in His own image. God saw everything that He had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1). *Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty. All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea!*

God alone is worthy of praise. He created us for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). As you look from your balcony at all of His marvelous work, your true response is to give unto the Lord the glory due His name as you worship Him in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 29:2). *Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee. Perfect in power, in love and purity.*

As the sun starts to climb higher in the sky, the beach fills with sights and sounds of sun bathers and swimmers. The quietness is replaced with the shouts of street vendors. But you hold onto the earlier special moment, and you echo the words of the angels who cried one to another: *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: The whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isaiah 6:3)*

*PRAYER: God, holy is Your name! With one word, You created everything. You alone are holy, and You alone are worthy of my worship. In the morning and throughout the day, I will lift my songs of praise to Thee. God in three persons, Blessed Trinity!
Amen*

**“Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus Ye Soldiers of the Cross”
Standing Up For Jesus No Matter the Situation or the Circumstance
By Shirley Montague**

I will begin by giving the history behind the song Stand up, Stand up for Jesus. Stand Up Stand Up for Jesus was composed in the year 1858 during the time of slavery by a Presbyterian minister named George Duffield Jr. George Duffield Jr. was an associate of an Episcopalian evangelist named Dudley Atkins Tyng. The evangelist Dudley Atkins Tyng had just been removed from his Episcopalian community for speaking out against the institution of slavery. These were dangerous times for anyone who chose to speak out against slavery. Duffield stood up in support of Dudley Tyng by assisting Dudley in a revival of evangelism in Pennsylvania which resulted in over 1000 men giving their life to the Lord. Dudley's sermon during this revival was taken from Exodus 10:11 - "Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord." Not long after this, Dudley Atkins Tyng was seriously injured in a farming accident. Before Dudley died, Dudley told his father - "Tell my brethren of the ministry, wherever you meet them, to stand up for Jesus." In other words, Dudley left a message of encouragement and strength to Christians in standing for what is right before the LORD no matter the opposition of man. George Duffield Jr. then wrote the song Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus based on the message of encouragement from a dying friend's last words. This hymn became popular and was sung by both the Union and the Confederate soldiers in the American Civil War.

Dudley Atkins Tyng and George Duffield Jr. both spoke out against the mistreatment of man. They spoke the truth. Although Dudley was removed from his local church community, God had provided a friend who stood by Dudley's side in support of truth. They both have a promised Blessing from the Lord for bringing others to Christ by evangelizing to over 5000 men which resulted in 1000 men confessing Jesus as the Son of God and acknowledging Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The Word of the Lord promises in Matthew 10:32 that - "Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." The Word of God also tells us in Matthew 10:38 - "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." As a Christian there will be many crosses we will bear. We must be bold and know that God is by our side. He promises that He will give us strength because He is our GOD. We must continue to follow and honor Christ no matter what we are up against in the world. Both Dudley and George took up their cross as missionaries when they put their lives in danger by promoting truth and the Love of God when they spoke up against the Institution of slavery.

The day-to-day worries and activities of life pull us in many directions. Our goal in life should be to put God first in all that we do and to examine our goal in life. Are we living the purpose that God our creator made us? Isaiah 43:7 reveals the purpose GOD created man. Mankind's purpose is to glorify GOD our Creator. Isaiah 43:7 states - "Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory. I have formed him; yea I have made him." Stand Up, Stand Up for JESUS and allow the Holy Spirit's guidance in your life by giving GOD all the praise, honor and the glory that only He deserves.

**“I Give Myself Away”
By Deacon Jacqueline McMullen**

“The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:7-8(NIV)

The tax collector and persecutor Saul was not pleasing to God before becoming Paul. (Acts 9:8). But still he became a willing vessel to please God. “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul... 1Peter 2:11(KJV)

The Christian journey is building our faith in God. Trusting and believing in God is an option we all have. When the disciple said to Jesus let me go bury my father, Jesus replied, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.” Matt. 8:22 (NIV). Jesus told his disciples “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Matt, 16:24 (NIV) Jesus gave himself away when he died on the cross for us. (Matt 27:50).

We must always fight to do our best to be obedient to God’s law. “Giving Myself Away” to God is the best journey to be on everyday of our life. Reading, meditating, and seeking God’s face is a sacrifice all by itself. Our Lenten season is a time to give God your all. This is the time we “Give Ourselves Away” to God. The rewards are better than the sacrifice.

Here I am, here I stand, Lord my life is in your hand,
Lord I am longing to see your desires revealed in me.
I give myself away so you can use me!!