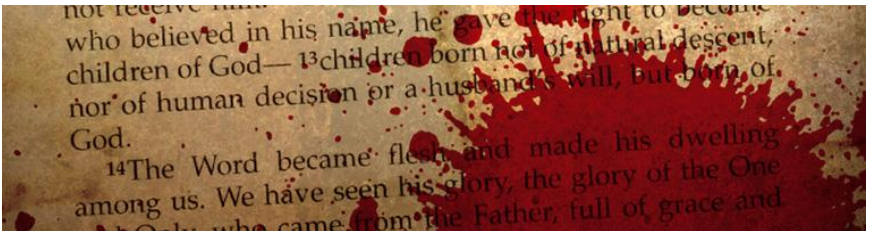




ST. PAUL CLINTONVILLE

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD



Lent Hymn Sing - *A Journey from Death to Life*
Sunday, March 12, at 6:30pm

Tonight we sing songs about God's great love for sinners that he sent his Son to die an innocent death on our behalf. The pain, the ridicule, and the suffering of Jesus' journey to the cross was immense. We are struck to the heart by the price he paid for our redemption. However, we do not stop there tonight. We continue our journey with Jesus from the cross to the grave and to life again. Without the resurrection, there would be no life after death for us, but because Jesus lives we know that death and sin have been defeated once and for all! All those who believe in Christ are connected with him, in death and in life. That is something worth singing about!

120 – What Wondrous Love Is This

The author of this great hymn is unknown. William Walker heard it on his journey through the Appalachian region of America and decided to write it down. It was first published in 1811. That region was well known for having many Scottish and Irish immigrants, which fits well with the haunting text and minor tune.

"What Wondrous Love Is This" captures our attention right from the beginning with its simplicity and persistence – "What wondrous love is this" is sung three times. This repetition is not the sign of a weak poet who has a narrow range of expression, but a fellow traveler who has experienced profoundly the sacrificial love of Christ and can only express again and again – "What wondrous love is this." It is the kind of repetition that sounds trite when spoken, yet gains strength and power through singing. These are not the carefully crafted words of a theologian, but utterances directly from the heart or, even more profoundly, from the soul.

What wondrous love is this, that the Son of God would willingly die for me? Even though my sin drags me down again and again, Jesus loves me and forgives me again and again when I turn to him. What wondrous love is this, O my soul!

125 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I Survey is one of 600 hymns written by the great hymn writer, Isaac Watts. He wrote many of his hymns before he turned 22! How many of you have written a song, much less 600 in perfect meter, rhyme, with carefully crafted theology?

Many consider this hymn the finest in English church history, and Charles Wesley (another prolific hymn writer) reportedly said he would rather have written this hymn than all his own.

Isaac Watts composed this hymn based on Galatians 6:14: *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”*

Throughout the hymn, Watts builds up the beauty of the cross where our Savior sacrificed himself for us, but he tears down the false treasures, pride, and hopes of this world. The cross changes us, our world, and our future.

127 – Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

These sober lyrics, set to a somber tune, make for an ideal Lenten hymn. The opening line draws from Isaiah 53:4 and its description of the Messianic Suffering Servant: “We considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.” In verse two, we are forced to consider the depth of Christ’s passion, his groaning, his betrayal, his insults, and his unmatched grief. The deepest stroke that pierced him, however, was the stroke that divine justice gave.

Sometimes we hear the cross described as a symbol of how precious we were to God. This is true, so long as we understand that we were not some diamond in the rough that irresistibly drew God to us. The cross certainly shows us the depth of God’s love, but is a love wholly undeserved. For the cross, verse three

reminds us, displays the true nature of sin and human guilt. Verse four elegantly summarizes the hope of the gospel: "Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, sacrifice to cancel guilt! None shall ever be confounded who on him their hope have built."

Thomas Kelly (1769-1855) wrote more than 750 hymns, including this one in 1804

139 – Jesus, in Your Dying Woes

This hymn was authored by Thomas B. Pollock during the 1800s. Each verse describes what Jesus did with each of his final seven words on the cross:

Part 1: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."
(Lk 23:34)

1. Jesus, in Thy dying woes, Even while Thy lifeblood flows,
Craving pardon for Thy foes; Hear us, holy Jesus.

Part 2: "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Lk 23:43)

2. Jesus, pitying the sighs Of the thief, who near Thee dies,
Promising him paradise; Hear us, holy Jesus.

Part 3: "Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy mother!" (Jn 19:26-27)

7. Jesus, loving to the end Her whose heart Thy sorrows rend, And
Thy dearest human friend: Hear us, holy Jesus.

Part 4: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46)

10. Jesus, whelmed in fears unknown, With our evil left alone,
While no light from Heav'n is shown: Hear us, holy Jesus.

Part 5: "I thirst." (Jn 19:28)

13. Jesus, in Thy thirst and pain, While Thy wounds Thy lifeblood drain, Thirsting more our love to gain: Hear us, holy Jesus.

Part 6: "It is finished" (Jn 19:30)

16. Jesus, all our ransom paid, All Thy Father's will obeyed, All Thy suff'rings perfect made: Hear us, holy Jesus.

Part 7: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46)

19. Jesus, all Thy labor vast, All Thy woe and conflict past, Yielding up Thy soul at last: Hear us, holy Jesus.

146 – His Battle Ended There

Our next hymn has an interesting origin story. The hymn tune comes from an African Angoni war song. The original purpose of this tune by the local people in Malawi, Africa was as a war marching song as they went out to attack another village.

However, when missionaries came to Malawi to share with them the good news about Jesus, they started marching to a completely different beat! This war song was adapted to be a marching song of victory in Jesus. The new words tell of the battle of all time already having ended at the cross. Jesus overcame death when he rose, alive again. Sin had failed. Goodness had prevailed.

Pay attention to each verse and how it describes Jesus defeating the enemies of all human beings once and for all. Jesus has life that could not fail. He won for us. Alleluia!

157 – Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" was first written in Latin titled "Surrexit Christus hodie", as a Bohemian hymn in the 14th century by an unknown author.

It is a beautiful triumph song about the Resurrection of Jesus based on these passages:

Matthew 28:6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Acts 2:32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Revelation 1:17-18 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

152 – I Know that My Redeemer Lives (1-2, 5, 7-8)

Our author of this famous Easter hymn is Samuel Medley (fitting name for a hymn writer!). He was born June 23, 1738 in an English Village. His father and grandfather were sincere believers, who planted the seeds of grace in Samuel's heart, thought it took years for them to sprout.

Samuel joined the navy when he was 17. He spend three years about a warship in the Mediterranean. That time was spent in corruption and carelessness. He had a remarkable personality that made him everyone's friend, but for a time he wanted nothing to do with godliness or godly people. But then war broke out. During a battle with the French, his leg was badly injured and his wounds became gangrenous. One night the surgeon told him his leg would have to be amputated the next day unless there was improvement.

Samuel earnestly cried to God for mercy and, remembering that he had a Bible buried away in his chest, he sent for it. That night he read the Bible and prayed in anguish and great earnestness.

The next morning the surgeon was amazed at the difference in the appearance of the wound. His leg was spared.

Samuel returned to his grandfather's house to heal, and afterward was baptized and called to preach. "He left the sea," it was said, "and became a faithful preacher of that Savior whose name in early life he often profaned."

Through hardship, God brought Samuel to his knees and into the presence of his Holy Word. That Word shares the beautiful truth of a living Savior. Later, when Samuel was on his death bed, he expressed his full confidence that he knew his redeemer who lives. Despite being hours from death, he smiled and said joyfully, "Look up, my soul and rejoice, for they redemption drawth nigh!" And later he said, "Dying is sweet work! Glory, glory! Home, home! Then he yielded up his spirit into the hands of his heavenly father. This is what it means to know that our redeemer lives!

752 – In Christ Alone

In Christ Alone is a newer hymn, written in 2001, by Keith and Kristyn Getty along with Stuart Townend. Here are a couple comments from the authors themselves about this hymn:

"Of all the hymns we have written, "Keith wrote, "this hymn is the most popular wherever we go. Ironically it is the first hymn we ever penned together. I had a strong very Irish melody that I could imagine a large crowd singing. I wanted it to become a hymn that would declare the whole life of Christ and what it meant..."

As well as being a creedal song, it fires people with hope that there is a God who even death cannot hold. 'No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me.'"

Keith tells of one particularly moving letter from a soldier at war, who said he listened to this hymn day and night. "As I drive down the highway," wrote the soldier, "with my M-16 pointed out the

window and my 9MM pistol tucked in my flak jacket pocket, I can tell you that I feel more secure in claiming the promise, 'No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from His hand till He returns or calls me home' that I do with that rifle and pistol."

Do you know the same comfort before danger, schemes of man, guilt, pain, and even death? In the love of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the power of Christ, you can always stand. In Christ Alone our hope is found.