

J O H N S O N F E R R Y W O R S H I P

always
only
Jesus

devotional
guide

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Awaken

By Spencer Roth

Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. – Psalm 57:8-9

It's hard to talk about this song without talking about how the idea was planted. On a songwriting retreat, a group of us went on a short hike. It began to rain, so we all huddled underneath a tree to wait it out. As the storm cloud passed over us into the valley below, we watched in awe. When we got back to the house, we sat down and immediately began writing about the "storms of life". About ten minutes into it, one of our songwriters politely interrupted and shared that he was having a hard time connecting with the song the way we were writing it. He reminded us that so often the scriptures reference rain as a blessing. It was obvious God was at work when everyone immediately agreed and the entire direction of the song shifted.

The first line of the chorus says, "Awaken, my soul, arise!" How often do we completely miss the point of what God is doing? I would say that I misunderstand what he is doing the majority of the time in my own life. We sing this line as a charge to ourselves to wake up! Don't miss this! Remember that God is good and He is sovereign over everything. With this line we are stoking the fire in our own hearts.

I don't know if you have ever seen a hard rain in the springtime in the mountains (especially in the humid southern United States), but if you are up high enough, you can see the storms moving around for miles. After the rain comes, a foggy haze of humidity rises from the hills like a sigh of relief. We took what we saw and put it to paper. The metaphor here is exactly what our friend pointed out: the rain is a life-giving blessing!

***Prayer:** God, you are in control and your plan is good. Our joy, complete fulfillment, and our life is only found in you. We confess that we often take our eyes off of you. Thank you for your grace and patience with us. Thank you for reminding us of who you are and what you've done. Keep us from missing your plan. Set our eyes on your kingdom. You are worthy of all of the praise we could ever give you. Amen.*



Verse 1

*The sky is heavy, The Spirit near
The heavens stirring, you're welcome here
I am nothing apart from you
Come do what only you can do*

Chorus

*Awaken, my soul, arise
The rain has come, you're breathing life
The fog is lifting, you make me new
When you awaken me to you*

Verse 2

*My feet are dusty, this earth is dry
My soul is thirsty, my spirit tired
I am waiting, Lord, hear my cry
And satisfy*

Verse 3

*And from your fullness my joy abounds
You raise the lifeless up from the ground
And now I'm running in fields of grace
To your embrace*

Always Only Jesus

By Bobby Smith

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." – John 14:6

..surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. – Matthew 28:20

Nothing else will do. Though our every inclination pulls at us to trust anything other than Jesus, nothing else will do. To the soul who thinks you worship nothing, who do not believe in God, something still sits on the throne of your life. To the wandering heart who plays the pomp and circumstance of religious life, yet unquenched by its rituals, you too have a master on the throne. To the one who tries and tries but to no avail, your tasks are acts of worship to lesser things that still sit on the throne. None of these will do.

Only one is worthy. Only one satisfies. Only one was meant to. Only one will do.

As Saint Augustine so famously said, "Our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." Perhaps more freshly stated: we are looking for love in all the wrong places. How common this theme, yet countless the variations as we look to wealth, accomplishment, good works, status, sex, substances, and any other manner of things to fill our hearts with joy. They cannot do so. They were never meant to.

Only one is able. Only one is sufficient. Only one fulfills us. Only one will do.

Have you ever tried to convince someone how good something is? A movie? A restaurant? A favorite dish? You do your best to describe the experience...the taste...the aroma...the moment. Each word feels incredibly limited, no matter how hard you try. On and on you

sputter out analogies and comparisons, and all the while the essence is lost in translation. Perhaps you even come close to conveying the glory of this thing, yet it still doesn't compare to actually tasting and beholding. *Such it is with Christ.*

Once you have tasted, once you have seen, there is nothing greater. Nothing else will do. He is the only sufficient Savior, the only one worthy of worship. May you seek him and find him, dear friend. For the only heart that finds rest is the one who finds it *always only in Jesus.*



Verse 1

*Where divided, Christ, unite us
Scattered pieces be made whole
Where we're blinded, Spirit guide us
Set our eyes on Christ alone*

Pre-Chorus

Nothing else compares to who you are

Chorus

*Let it be always, only Jesus
Let it be always, only Jesus
In everything my soul will sing
"Let it be always, only Jesus"*

Verse 2

*Where we're striving, keep us quiet
Give us rest in what is true
Where we're lifeless, move within us
Stir our hearts to follow you*

Bridge

*In the morning when I rise
Be always only Jesus
When the world won't satisfy
Be always only Jesus
In my trouble I will cry
Always only Jesus
Let the anthem of my life
Be always only Jesus*

The Cross Still Stands

By Bobby Smith

...so also Christ died once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.” – Hebrews 9:28

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. – John 19:30

There is no guilt, there is no sin to make him bear the cross again. It was enough, our victory forever won at Calvary. The lyrics of this song should be the loudspeaker of affirmation to the heart of every believer. The most essential point of the gospel might be what the Reformers nailed down so long ago: by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. When Jesus bore the weight of that old rugged cross, *it was enough*.

If there is one universal truth that becomes more glaringly apparent in life with each passing day, it is the feeling of guilt and inherent wrongness in us. We might cover it up. We might rationalize it away. We may even celebrate it as good, but like a lurking beast, it gnaws at us. *Our imperfection*. We even say things like, “We’re all human,” or, “Everybody makes mistakes,” as though that excuses or alleviates this harsh truth. Yet one thing remains: *our sin*.

Apart from Christ, our sin wins. As the famed pastor Charles Spurgeon once said, “*As the salt flavors every drop in the Atlantic, so does sin affect every atom of our nature. It is so sadly there, so abundantly there, that if you cannot detect it, you are deceived.*” To the degree we behold our sinful estate and utter depravity, so shall we behold the Savior. Would you proclaim as John the

Baptist did, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world?” Or, is Jesus just another kind fellow? A gentle teacher? Or is he irrelevant?

For the one who rightly views their sin, broken by its burdensome weight, Jesus is their hope and stay. Their living water. Their daily bread. The power of the cross wasn’t just for that moment on Calvary, but for every moment following. The sacrifice is still sufficient. Behold, it is finished. *Forever He has won.*



Verse 1

*When faith is hard to find and I can't see you
When broken things of earth enslave my heart
When the pain won't end and shadows often linger
And my hopes of happiness are torn apart*

Chorus

*The cross still stands, and your love endures forever
In sorrow I'll remember, the cross still stands
The cross still stands, in triumph over darkness
In everything remind us, the cross still stands*

Verse 2

*When flesh gives way to sin and I am broken
When I'm sinking in my shame and my regret
When I want to run and hide I feel you reaching
In your love you seek me out, I won't forget*

Bridge

*There is no guilt, there is no sin to make him bear the cross again
It was enough, our victory, forever won at Calvary*

Burn It All

By Spencer Roth

Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. – Psalm 61:1-3

*Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. – Psalm 43:5*

*But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. – 2 Corinthians 12:9*

Burn it all. What a strange thing to say. It sounds like something someone would vengefully say in a movie, and it seems a little extreme! That’s because it *is* extreme.

Do ever feel like things are completely out of control? Not simply small things, like laundry piling up or a flat tire. I mean every single thing on a micro and macro level feels like total chaos. The lyrics of the song speak to this feeling.

In the first verse we ask him to re-warm our cold hearts, and we confess that we know he is so great and so powerful that we shouldn't ever be able to stand before him and walk away unchanged. Yet we forget. We forget the power and might of our God as we mindlessly go through the motions, even when things feel dire. Even still, he pursues us!

The chorus comes in with that extreme line. What do we mean when we sing, “Burn it all?” We are asking him to get rid of it — all of that chaos and insanity. Our hearts have grown cold, and we have become numb to the spirit moving in our soul. Why? Because there is just too much stuff going on! We are asking him to refine and wipe away all that is just noise and to give us himself.

So again I ask: do you ever feel like things are completely out of control? How do you respond when you feel that way? Do you try to gain control in anger? Do you give up and play dead? Next time you feel that way, remember who our God is. Remember that he is powerful and completely in control, and he still knows you by name and loves you more than you could possibly imagine. Ask him to mute the chaos, and ask for more of him.



Verse 1

*Refining flame ignite my heart again
I cannot stand before you and walk away the same
When I wander bring me back again to your holiness*

Chorus

*Burn it all, burn it all
Burn it all away, Jesus
'til nothing else remains
Forever I am changed, by your goodness
By your goodness I am changed*

Verse 2

*In the silence, sorrow, and the pain
In my suffering still your sovereign hand remains
By your word you teach me I can stand on your faithfulness*

Bridge

*You are The Risen King worth everything
My soul will sing
Lord be my hiding place, redeeming grace
No other name
Jesus The Risen King worth everything
My soul will sing
Lord be my hiding place, redeeming grace
No other name*

In Him I Live

By Kathryn Hansen Younker

We have an enemy...

This enemy will patiently wait for just the right time to strike. He watches you and knows exactly where you are vulnerable. He will bait his hook with *that thing* you want so badly, then lure you in with a tailor-made temptation for you to betray the Father. No detail will be left out of his deception.

He knows when you're at your weakest, and that's when he'll whisper just the thing you want to hear. He will smile as he ushers you into a prison cell, then hand you the key to lock the door you willingly closed on yourself. Once you've bought the lie, his smile will turn to malicious laughter as he accuses you of all your failings and mocks your broken fellowship with the father.

Yes, we do have an enemy...*but*, we have a greater Savior.

Our Savior is kind and gives us everything we need to resist temptation and obey him. He equips us to walk in *his* life by *his* power alone. The spirit gives us the strength to turn away from these traps, but when we fall he lovingly convicts us. This life-giving grace leads us to the path of peaceful restoration of fellowship with the father. This is only made possible by the forgiveness bought and paid for by Jesus' blood. Sin disrupts our fellowship, not our relationship. He does not mock us, nor he does not accuse us—he wants us to be reconciled to him.

Our Savior meets us at eye level just like a father would kneel down to meet the eyes of his injured child—picking him up, mending his wounds, and kissing the top of his head. He says to us, “I love you. Don't do that because it will always hurt you. Come on and follow me...I'll show you the way.” This is his grace: that he would give us new life in him, and then live that life *through* us by the power of his spirit. He gives us endless mercies and moment-by-moment rest in him alone. He will never leave us, nor forsake us. So...

Until we go home to him, or he comes to us—in him we live and ever stay.



Key Scriptures by Verse:

Verse 1

- Isaiah 61:1
- Colossians 1:27
- John 14:27
- Matthew 11:28-30
- 2 Corinthians 5:21

Verse 2

- Romans 7:14-8:1
- Isaiah 61:1-3
- Psalm 3:3
- Joel 2:12-13

Verse 3

- Romans 6:14
- Revelation 1:5
- Romans 8:38-39
- Ephesians 13b-14
- Luke 1:31-33
- John 15:4

Verse 1

*In deepest darkness lies in wait
A captor seething, filled with hate
I know not when his voice will sing
The lies that draw me from my King
I have not strength to turn and flee
But Christ the Son alive in me
He fills me with His peace and rest
And trades my shame for righteousness*

Verse 2

*Though times I listen to the words
Of one deceiving, there is heard
A gentle call, a calming plea
Oh please, my child, come back to me
And in that moment I find there
Neither reproach nor deep despair
But healing hands to lift my head
My father's loving arms instead*

Verse 3

*He sings the song of grace to me
The blood of Christ which sets me free
I am forgiven and I know
His love can never let me go
His Spirit keeps me and proclaims
There is no end to Jesus' reign
Until He comes that glorious day
In Him I live and ever stay*

Overwhelming

By Spencer Roth

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

—John 10:10-11

The very first lines of the song *Overwhelming* say “Your love is life.” The love of God quite literally gives us life. And we see in John 10 that it’s not just any life, but abundant life!

Can you remember a time when you felt far from God? I remember one night during my sophomore year in college when I felt like I was questioning everything I had ever known to be true. I felt as far as I had ever been from God. I felt like I was living out the answer to the line “What would I have done if it wasn't for the blood of Christ the Son?” Little did I know that God was still with me. When I sing this chorus, I can remember the feeling of panic and despair I felt in that moment, and be thankful that God was with me. I don't have to feel that way anymore because of what Jesus did on the cross. His love drives out fear and gives me confidence to sing in enjoyment of my restored relationship with God. His love has given me life!

Today, spend some time and try to consider what it would be like to be estranged from our heavenly Father. Let this idea drive you to worship Him more deeply as you respond in gratitude. Let it lead you to empathize with the lost and broken in the world. Listen to this song and let it drive you to tell others about the greatest love the world has ever known!

...but in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

—1 Peter 3:15



Verse:

*Your love is life, the very air I breathe
It satisfies, it's overwhelming
Your love sees past the brokenness in me
And bids me come, so overwhelming
You're overwhelming*

Chorus:

*What would I have done, if it wasn't for the blood of Christ the Son
His death defeated death and bought my life, his love has won*

Bridge:

*His life for my life, no greater Savior
His heart inside mine, no love is greater
His life for my life, no greater Savior
His heart inside mine, no love is greater*

Come Lord Jesus

By Jordan Watts

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. – Revelation 22:20

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us...For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. – Romans 8:18, 22-25

It doesn't require many days of living for a person to come to the conclusion that things in this world are not as they should be. There's a palpable heaviness hanging over creation, a tinge of darkness that mutes even the most vibrant of moments we experience (Proverbs 4:19).

For every life, there is a death. For every joy, there is a sorrow. For every victory, there is a failure. For every hope, there is a fear. It often feels like we're riding a roller coaster through life, trying to enjoy the view at the top while clearly understanding it's only a matter of time before we plummet again to the depths.

There's a longing deep within our hearts for more...of something. We've all tried at one time or another to fill that longing with the things this broken world offers us, and it results again and again in brokenness. Addiction runs rampant. Marriages are crumbling. Morality is governed by desire, and kindness and respect are much a thing of the past.

It might feel like a losing battle if we didn't already know the end of the story.

Praise God, He's told us the end of the story!

For those of us in Christ Jesus, we know that, although life on this earth will surely be comprised of *not-as-they-should-be* events, one day every single thing *will be made right*. All of our groaning and suffering *will* result in our redemption, and our adoption as children of God *will* be made complete. As followers of Jesus, we are called to live with an eternal perspective, constantly keeping heaven in view. It's the lens through which we should view everything, and our hope in this broken life is not anchored in our circumstances but instead is anchored in what is to come. Instead of focusing on what we see in the here and now, we hope for what we do not yet see, and we hold fast to the truth that God is moving and working toward the ultimate redemption of this messy and sinful world.

I love the hope that Proverbs 4:18 gives to believers: *"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day."* Every day we draw a little nearer to life as it should be, and every day the light of heaven shines a little brighter in our hearts and lives. And until we meet Jesus face to face, we must actively and intentionally make the decision to live every day waiting in persevering hope for the return of our King. *After all, the King is coming*



Verse 1

*You will break the chains, set the captives free
Darkness will lift eternally
You will dry our tears, make blind eyes see
Your glory now complete*

Pre-Chorus

*The whole earth groans from the weight of
sin
It begs to be released*

Chorus

Come Lord Jesus

Come Lord Jesus

Your kingdom here as it is in heaven

Come Lord Jesus

Verse 2

*You will speak a word, and bind the foe
Every ear shall hear, all hearts will know
The veil of death, will be released
You stand in victory*

Bridge:

We will wait on you, we will wait on you

All For Love

By Jordan Watts

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. – Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

As the lyrics to *All for Love* state, darkness is deepening around us with every passing day. People are more spiritually blinded than ever before, and there is a heaviness that hangs over all of creation. The most beautiful mystery is that, in spite of this seemingly sad news, the shadows of this broken world and the darkness of a very real and present evil *cannot deny the light of Christ*.

Ever.

I doubt this will come as a surprise to you, but the majority of the world looks upon Christ followers with pity; even disdain. We're considered fools in the eyes of many worldly scholars, and we're usually labeled as outdated and intolerant. Many times, we are completely disregarded. This shouldn't stop us from proclaiming the glorious news of the gospel to the world; on the contrary, it should spur us on to shout the name of Jesus more loudly and more emphatically than ever before! And honestly, I'd rather be a fool for Jesus than be considered wise without him (1 Corinthians 4:10).

The more broken this world becomes, the more apparent it is how desperately people need a perfect Savior. For those of us who claim Christ and have submitted our lives to his lordship, we must regularly evaluate our spiritual fitness for the race that has been “set before us.” We, the children of God, are the vessels through which God most often moves in ministry to the hearts and lives of the lost and hurting. We must be ready to risk everything we are and all we have for the sake of proclaiming the truth and the power of Jesus Christ to a spiritually void place. Only He awakens hearts, and He allows us to be a part of the work He’s doing in the hearts and lives of the people around us.

What a privilege it is to run this race we call life, a race with an eternal finish line, in pursuit of the one who made us. The living God. Our perfect Father. The one who gave it all for the sake of love.

What a story we have to tell the world, and what a race we’re on. Oh Lord, that we’d give our lives to know you and show your love in all that we do. There’s no question that you’re worthy of our sacrifice.



Verse 1

*Some call it foolishness, this narrow way
But we believe that you are God
Our eyes are set on things we cannot see
Our hearts are chasing after you*

Pre-Chorus

*Laying aside all that weighs us down
Nothing will hold us back*

Chorus

*Jesus, King of Heaven
We’re your people, who will risk it all for love
We are running, to your Kingdom
And we will risk it all
Cause you gave it all for love*

Verse 2

*Darkness is deepening each passing day
But shadows can’t deny your light
We’ll carry hope into a desperate world
Cause only you awake our hearts*

Pre-Chorus 2

*Lord, we confess we are not our own
Our lives begin and end with you*

Bridge

*We give our lives to know you
We give our lives to show your love*

No One Can Steal Your Glory

By Anders Henson

Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves...”— Genesis 11:14

And the king (Nebuchadnezzar) answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”

— Daniel 4:30

If you are familiar with the stories of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4, you know that the Lord did not honor the pride and arrogance of either people. In Genesis 11, the Lord confuses their language and disperses them throughout the known world, and in Daniel 4, the King is humiliated by being given the mind of a beast and made to live as a beast in the wilderness until “seven times have passed over him.”¹

These were both feeble and failed attempts to stand in the Creator’s place of honor among the creation. Think back on the last week. How many times have you looked at your job, your family, or any accomplishment, and given yourself a pat on the back? Welcome to the Daniel 4 club.

Colossians 1:15-17 says this,

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and **in him all things hold together.***

According to Paul’s words at the end of verse 17, if Jesus was to take his will off creation for any length of time, it would all literally fall apart. The chair you’re sitting in right now, or the floor your standing on, or even the paper these words are printed on would cease to exist completely if Jesus were to remove his grip from his creation.

¹ Although there is no consensus among scholars, most suggest this to mean seven years, or seven sets of seasons.

Everything we know, everything we have, everything we love has been given to us by him who is above all things. There are countless examples of men and angels attempting to steal God's glory throughout the Scriptures, but they are always mere attempts. No one (not man, angel, demon, nor satan himself) can steal God's glory because nothing can come close to matching God in the very intrinsic things which make God who he is. He will always be stronger, he will always be wiser, and he will always be immeasurably more and better than anything or anyone imaginable.

God is in control. Rest knowing that the battle is His, and so is the glory. Forever.



Verse 1a

*God of the earth and heaven
Works of your hands sing praises
You hung the stars in the sky
And you know them by name*

Verse 1b

*You are the Lord Almighty
I am a man undeserving
You hold the weight of the world
And you still know my name*

Chorus

*No one can steal your glory
No one compares
Matchless in all your beauty
Creation declares
No other name is worthy, Jesus
No one can steal your glory*

Verse 2

*You took our sin and wore it
Death on a cross, all was darkness
Walked from the grave into life
And forever you reign*

Bridge

*No work of man, no mortal thing
Can match your worth, outshine the King
Our hearts cry, our hearts cry
Nothing now or evermore
Can take the place of who you are
Our hearts cry, our hearts cry*

Trinity

By Anders Henson

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.” Gen. 1:1-3

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:1-3

Take a minute to find the word “Trinity” in the Scriptures. Can’t find it? Well, that’s because it’s just not there. You may be asking yourself, “Why write a song about something the Scriptures don’t speak to?” That’s a great question, and the answer is found in the passages written above. Still don’t see it? Let’s take a closer look.

In Genesis 1:1-2 we see two of the three Persons clearly listed: God the Father and the Holy Spirit. This passage paints a picture of God the Father existing from the beginning, with the Spirit hovering over the “deep.” In verse 3, the Scripture says that as God speaks, creation is born. It is no mistake that in the New Testament John opens his testimony about Jesus with the same phrase used in Genesis 1, “*In the beginning*.” John says that the “Word” was in the beginning. What is the “Word?” John clarifies this idea in verse 14 of chapter 1 when he says,

*And the **Word** (same Greek word used here and in verse 1) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The “Word” is Jesus. When God speaks in Genesis 1:3, that is Jesus going forth and creating all that was created. There is the whole picture of God, as clear as day in the opening verses of God’s revelation of himself to us. The Trinity is paramount to understanding God in both who

he is and how he operates. The heart of this song is simply to magnify who God is in each of his three Persons.

For those of us who have put our faith and hope wholly in Jesus, we are the children of the Father, the temple of the Spirit, and the ransom of the Son.



Verse 1

*We are your children, desperate and fragile
Come father us
Our steady shelter, near to the broken
Come lift us up*

Chorus

*Father, Spirit, Son
Our God three in one
You make all things new
We worship you
We worship you*

Verse 2

*We are your temple, ready and waiting
Come move in us
Our willing helper, at work within us
Come strengthen us*

Verse 3

*You were rejected, Jesus Messiah
Then crucified
Rose from your deathbed, defeated darkness
Made way for life*

The Vine

By Bobby Smith

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. – John 15:5

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
– John 15:11

Surrender is not typically a favorable position. It admits defeat. It lays down arms. It is the position of weakness. Yet, all of Scripture frames up surrender as the necessary posture for approaching God. Romans 12 reminds us to “*present our body as a living and holy sacrifice,*” or so beautifully stated in Mark 8 that “*for whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.*” We are encouraged to surrender ourselves to God’s hand. This goes against every fiber of our natural being. We hate to lose control.

In my freshman year of college, there came a point where I lost all control. It wasn’t the typical tomfoolery and debauchery of college life that claimed me, but rather a real and foreboding season of depression. In a life marked by endless optimism and joy, this unwelcome guest stole every ounce of positivity I possessed. I was paralyzed in senseless fear and existential dread. It was debilitating and incredibly foreign. I remember shouting out to God for deliverance and relief. *But none came.*

I searched the scriptures for answers and even threw my Bible out the window in utter frustration. *God felt far gone. God felt silent.*

Eventually I stumbled on to Psalm 43:5:

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

My answer presented itself: cling to Christ. Abide in Him, for feelings are fickle and deceiving. No, I did not ‘feel’ God, nor did I experience relief immediately. I did, however, surrender. I gave up my life to his trustworthy hand, and *in due time*, I did again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Are you struggling with surrender? Dear friend, put your hope in Christ and abide in Him. For apart from Him, you can do nothing. Yet, in Him, you can do all things.



Verse 1

*You are the Vine, Lord
I am a branch that is broken
Restore me, make me new*

Chorus

*I will abide, Lord I will hide under your wing
Surrender it all, humbled I fall down to my knees*

Verse 2

*You are the Vine, Lord
I am a branch that was broken
You restored me, and made me new*

Bridge

*Only in you, only in you, I am made whole
Only in you, only in you, Jesus*

God of My Journey

By Jordan Watts

The steps of man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the One who holds his hand. I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken... — Psalm 37:23-25a

A few years ago, after decades of dysfunction, I looked on as my parents' marriage fell apart. Even as a grown 30-something-year-old, the pain that overtook me was all consuming, and I was almost paralyzed by the magnitude of the situation. And as difficult as it was for me, I know it was even more so for my mother.

My mother had prayed for 33 years that God would restore her marriage, and for 33 years she waited on God. Some seasons were better than others, but my parents' marriage was always under some level of stress. Then after all of her prayers and unwavering commitment, she could only stand by as my father announced that he might be ready to call it quits, that he wasn't sure he wanted to be married to her anymore.

This was not how she—or I—foresaw our family's story would go.

I'm thankful to be able to say that God not only used this painful process to save my parents' marriage, but he also brought wholeness and restoration to their relationship that had never been there before. He got a hold of my father's heart in a profound way, and he cared for my mother through the most trying time in her life. He gave them both the strength to fight, and he sealed their victory in his faithfulness to their cries for deliverance.

I wrote the lyrics to this song a couple of years ago as I sat on my parents' back porch in North Carolina, thinking back over all God has done for my family. He used this terrible situation to remind me that whether we're in the highest place, where joy reigns supreme and all feels right

with the world, or whether we are in the shadow of the depths, where sorrow threatens to consume us, he is faithful. He is there. He secures our every step, and he prepares the way before us. Praise God that he knows where we're going, even when we don't. Nothing takes him by surprise, and we can rest easy in his care, even when the winds and waters rage around us.

My favorite lines of the song reads: *Your sovereignty reigns over me/What then shall I fear/Each step may be a mystery/But I am not afraid.* This is my life song, and if you've trusted Christ as your Savior, it's yours, too. Whether you find yourself in the highest place today, or whether you're barely breathing in the shadow of the depths, sing this truth loud today.

If there's one thing I know, it's that I (and my mother) can attest to the truth in Psalm 37: "*I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken...*"

He will never forsake you.



Verse 1

*When I reach the highest place, you are there
In the shadow of the depths, you are there*

Pre Chorus

*You secure my every step
You prepare the way before me*

Chorus

*You're the God of my journey
You're the author my story
Nothing takes you by surprise,
In your hands you hold my life
Ever faithful*

Verse 2

*In the still and quiet place, you are there
When the winds and waters rage, you are there*

Pre Chorus 2

*You set my feet upon the rock
You shine bright the way before me*

Bridge

*Your sovereignty reigns over me
What then shall I fear
Each step may be a mystery
But I am not afraid
I am not afraid*

To God be the glory.

Amen.