



**CHURCHES TOGETHER
IN CENTRAL BROMLEY**

CTCB Lent Course 2021

My Favourite Hymn

Starter activity (in small groups): ***Wherever did you get that idea?!***

Each of the Bible verses in the left-hand column inspired one of the hymns on the right. Can you match them up? One has been done for you!

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. <i>(Exodus 13:21)</i> | O God, our help in ages past |
| When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? <i>(Psalm 8:3-4)</i> | When I survey the wondrous cross |
| May the king endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. May he rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. <i>(Psalm 72:5, 8)</i> | Glorious things of thee are spoken |
| Glorious things are said of you, city of God. <i>(Psalm 87:3)</i> | Guide me, O thou great Redeemer |
| Lord, you have been our dwelling-place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. <i>(Psalm 90:1-2)</i> | How great thou art |
| I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ. <i>(Philippians 3:8)</i> | Blessed assurance |
| Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <i>(Hebrews 10:22)</i> | Jesus shall reign |

Session 6: Modern

Bible passages for reflection and discussion

The hymn *In Christ alone* is the number-one used hymn in the United Kingdom for the past seven years, according to the Christian licensing group CCLI. It was sung at the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury and has been called the *Amazing Grace* of this generation. The New Testament passages printed below give some of the theological background to the hymn.

Galatians 3:7-14

New International Version

⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ^a ⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰ All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." ^b ¹¹ Clearly no-one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." ^c ¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." ^d ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ^e ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Note that Paul uses these Old Testament quotations in the above passage:

^a *Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18*

^b *Deuteronomy 27:26*

^c *Habakkuk 2:4*

^d *Leviticus 18:5*

^e *Deuteronomy 21:23*

John 3:16-17

New International Version

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Now consider the following questions in your small group:

1. In the Galatians 3 passage, Paul starts by telling his readers (that's us!) that they are blessed by God just as Abraham was in the Old Testament. Can you work out why Paul says we are blessed?
2. Paul now contrasts blessing with curse. If those who have faith are blessed, what sort of people does Paul say are cursed? What might that look like today?
3. In the hymn we sing that "sin's curse has lost its grip on me". What caused this to happen, according to the hymn? Is this the same as Paul's explanation in Galatians 3:13?
4. We often struggle to understand why God acted in this way to rescue us. How does Jesus answer this in John 3:16? How well does the hymn reflect this?

And finally...

What have you learned on this course? What has particularly struck you? What would you like to remember? What will you thank God for?

Before the end of this final meeting, there may be an opportunity to offer our individual prayers of thanksgiving for all that God has taught us.

Closing prayer (The Lord's Prayer, traditional version)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory;
for ever and ever. Amen.

For further details about this course or other events please contact:

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Stuart Townend, *Tips for Writing a Successful Hymn*

There are probably more hymns and worship songs being written today than in any period of church history. But relatively few will stand the test of time. And that has always been the case: for every “Amazing grace” or “And can it be”, you can bet there are several hundred trite, interminably dull ditties that did the rounds at the time, but have now thankfully faded into blissful obscurity.

So how can we make sure what we write is worth singing for years to come? Here are a few ideas that I try to put into practice myself:

- **Study the Scriptures.** The best hymns demonstrate insight and understanding of the Bible, and consequently bring the truths of the Christian faith to life. If you don’t know the message of the gospel, you can’t write something that will enable others to worship in spirit and truth.
- **Be poetic, not pompous.** Sometimes when people set out to write a hymn, they use phrases which might sound ‘hymny’, but actually mean very little. Make your phrases mean something!
- **Combine objective truth and subjective response.** When a hymn is just a statement of theological truth, it may be accurate, but it can be dry. Equally, when a hymn is just about how we feel, it’s wishy washy. The best hymns powerfully express the emotions of the worshipper, but as an emotional response to the objective truth of the gospel.
- **Look for musical dynamics.** A hymn should have musical peaks and troughs, and there should be a sense of building to a climax where the melody soars while expressing the main theme of the hymn.
- **Make every line count.** I see hymns that contain a few good ideas, but some of the lines are clearly there as just ‘filler’, and let the whole thing down. Don’t just stick in a line because it rhymes, or because you couldn’t think of anything else to say.
- **Prune it mercilessly.** Once you think you’ve finished, go through it carefully, and get rid of anything that distracts from the main theme you’re expressing. Better to have two compact, punchy verses than four rambling, unfocused ones.

So get writing!

Stuart Townend, 2004

(www.philipandjenny.com/2006/09/15/tips-for-writing-a-successful-hymn)

Five well-known modern hymns

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age to same;
his holy Name--the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Words 1962 by Timothy Dudley-Smith (b 1926)

In Christ alone my hope is found, he is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled,
when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All, Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied -
For every sin on Him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine - bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Words by Stuart Townend & Keith Getty © 2001 Thankyou Music

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure,
that he should give his only Son to make a wretch his treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss - the Father turns his face away,
as wounds which mar the chosen One bring many souls to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders;
ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished;
his dying breath has brought me life - I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power, no wisdom;
but I will boast in Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from his reward? I cannot give an answer;
but this I know with all my heart - his wounds have paid my ransom.

Words by Stuart Townend © 1995 Thankyou Music

My Jesus, my Saviour
Lord there is none like you
All of my days, I want to praise
The wonders of your mighty love
My comfort, my Shelter
Tower of refuge and strength
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship you.

*Shout to the Lord all the earth let us sing
Power and majesty, praise to the king.
Mountains bow down and the seas
will roar at the sound of your name
I sing for joy at the works of your hands
Forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand
Nothing compares
to the promise I have in you.*

Words by Darlene Zschech © 1993 Hillsong Music

Glory and power to the one who loves us,
Honour and praise him forever; come Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus.

Glory and power to the one who freed us
From all our sins by his blood; come Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus.

*See him coming on the clouds of heaven, Every eye behold him now.
He's the Living One, the first and last
Who once was dead, but now he lives forever and ever.*

Glory and power to the one who made us
A kingdom of priests for God's service; come Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus.

Jesus is the Living One, who died and came alive;
Jesus is Almighty Lord, who was and is to come!

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