

Inner Hope is one of several books published by BeaconLight to encourage Christians who are serving a prison sentence. It reflects our special concern for those in prison.

We have brought together sixty favourite hymns, and have linked each to an appropriate scripture with a short narrative. The hymns were mostly written in the 18th century, all reflecting the truth of God's Word, and all remaining popular today.

We are confident that those who have chosen a life of following Jesus will draw comfort, strength and encouragement from *Inner Hope*. And they will be constantly reminded of the cost of their salvation; the willingness of Jesus to endure the most horrific death so that all who believe might receive God's forgiveness.

The book is not only for those who are already Christians. Those who are exploring what the Christian faith is about, or wish to start finding out more, will also find it helpful.

It is our prayer that, through the scriptures and hymns in *Inner Hope*, God Himself will speak to all who long that He would do so – and who read it with that expectation.

Barbara J Parsons
John Phillips

Barbara Parsons and John Phillips both live and worship in Banstead, Surrey.
John is Publishing Director of BeaconLight.


BeaconLight
www.beaconlight.co.uk



INNER HOPE

Parsons and Phillips



INNER HOPE

for those in prison

Words of hope from
favourite hymns and
scriptures

Barbara J Parsons
and John Phillips

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scriptures**

**Barbara J Parsons
and John Phillips**

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Published by Beaconlight Trust
150 High Street, Banstead
Surrey, SM7 2NZ
United Kingdom
www.beaconlight.co.uk

Email: books@beaconlight.co.uk

ISBN 978-1-906526-58-0

Design: Mel Dixey
Cover Design: Adam Shah

Print management by Printbridge
Mount Pleasant, Cutmere Lane,
Tideford, Saltash PL12 5JT

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FOREWORD

I am delighted to be asked to commend this book to you. Even after nearly 29 years as a Prison Chaplain, I can still be surprised by prisoners' comments, and one made a few weeks ago from a young prisoner has stayed with me. 'Can't we have the proper Lord's Prayer?' he asked. Despite being only 27 years old, he was put out that we were using the modern rendering of the prayer in our Holy Communion Service. Somewhere along his life journey, he had encountered the older version; perhaps at school or at his grandparents' church and had a spiritual and emotional connection with it.

Although, in my own prison, we use mostly contemporary worship songs, sometimes there are occasions when the more traditional hymns will be the ones with tunes that are vaguely familiar to the congregation. I often find myself, after singing one of the hymns in this book, trying to explain why the words are wonderful and insightful and have eternal truths for us to take in.

I remember a service which included the hymn *Amazing Grace*. I took time to talk about 'grace' and what it means. 'Oh,' said one of the men sitting in front of me who was always happy to contribute whether invited to or not, 'I always thought grace referred to a woman!' I was delighted to be able to put him right and very entertained by the idea of Grace being a favourite friend of John Newton! That man went on to explore the gospel truths embedded in that wonderful hymn and, since his release, he has gone from strength to strength as a disciple of Jesus.

The careful choice of hymns, alongside the selected scriptures, has resulted in a book that is full of Biblical truth. Those who are

walking with Jesus will draw comfort, strength and encouragement from it – and will also be challenged. At the same time, it may well prove a way into faith for others as it triggers memories or deepens understanding. My prayer is that it will.

Revd Jo Honour B.Ed. MA. OMS

Anglican Chaplain, HMP Sudbury

Trustee, Prison Fellowship

INTRODUCTION

It is easy to take for granted the abundance of hymns that God has inspired to be written over the centuries, many of which remain popular today, alongside modern worship songs. But it is easy to enjoy singing them without fully grasping their truths from God's Word.

Hymns lead us to thank, praise and worship God; to reflect upon Christ's sacrifice of His life; to recognise and confess our sins; to encourage us when we are weary; to challenge us towards a closer walk with Christ; to spur us on through trials; and to remind us of the glorious day of His return.

This collection of hymns, with appropriate scriptures and very short reflections, has been compiled for men and women in prison who are following Jesus and His teachings. Its aim is simple – to encourage them and help them to draw strength from God's Word while serving their sentence.

But we do hope that those who have yet to make a decision to follow Jesus will also find the book helpful. If you are in that situation, or if you are unclear what that really means, we recommend that you read the following pages, *What Is A Christian?*, before you go any further. It is crucial to understand what the Bible actually teaches, rather than go along with any of the commonly held ideas.

You will gain most from the book if you go through it slowly; perhaps focusing on just one or two devotionals each day. Ask God to show you if there is something specifically He wants you to note, either from the scripture or from the hymn. There are blank pages at the back of the book for any notes you want to make. You may then wish to give thanks to God, confess a sin or ask for His help if

something is troubling you.

As you work through the book, you will find suggestions for prayer for your prison. Please use them. You can make a difference by praying regularly. If possible, meet with others to pray.

It is our prayer that God will be pleased to use *Inner Hope* to bring hope to all who dip into it and bring glory to Himself.

Acknowledgements

We must first acknowledge the 50 writers of the hymns selected for this book. Undoubtedly, it was only by God's inspiration that their hymns would be sung for several generations. Many were written in the 18th century. We thank God for inspiring the writers to present His truths to be sung for His glory. We have included very short biographies of nine of the hymn writers.

We are enormously grateful to Mel Dixey for her patience over many hours, skilfully and creatively converting our script into this book. We thank Adam Shah, too, for using his skills in the design of the cover.

Monica Farthing was very gentle with her many suggestions – gladly accepted – to improve, and correct, our drafts. We really appreciate her help, as we do Nicola Goddard's help with the final proofreading.

We wish to thank the many friends who spurred us on with their gentle enquiries about the progress we were making. The enquiries seemed to come mostly when there was a marked lack of progress! We were greatly encouraged by their optimism that the project was not destined for the dreaded back burner.

Barbara Parsons

John Phillips

November 2023

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

Missing the point

Many people completely miss the point about what it means to be a Christian. Some think that you are a Christian if you are born into a Christian family or even in a 'Christian country'.

Others realise that being a Christian is more than a label: it's about the beliefs you hold about God and the way you live, such as loving your neighbour and doing your best to obey the Ten Commandments. And others believe that attending church is necessary.

But all those ideas miss the point.

The Bible is clear

The Bible is clear: it is about a personal relationship with God that matters. And that relationship only comes through being a follower (or disciple) of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that:

- God created the whole world. And He created us in His likeness, to be in relationship with Him.
- we are all sinful. That is our nature. We inherited it from Adam when he sinned in the Garden of Eden. We all break God's laws, by the way we behave and even by our thoughts.
- God Himself is absolutely holy and pure and cannot tolerate sin. And because He is holy, He is also just. That means He cannot simply ignore our sin; it has to be punished.

The Bible tells us:

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...

Romans 3:23

And so there is a dilemma. How can we enjoy a relationship with God, when He is pure and holy and cannot tolerate our sin? Impossible!

The impossible made possible

The Bible explains how the impossible has been made possible:

- the only way was for someone else to take the punishment we deserve – but it had to be someone who had never sinned themselves.
- there was only one person able to do that: God's only Son, Jesus Christ.
- Jesus came into the world and willingly sacrificed His life to take the punishment for our sin. He did that when He endured the most brutal and horrific death by crucifixion.

On the third day, Jesus was raised from the dead. Forty days later, He returned to be with His Father in heaven.

The Bible tells us:

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.

John 3:16

And Jesus Himself said:

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

This leaves us with a choice to make. We can accept Jesus' offer to take our punishment. God will then forgive us, treating us as though we have never sinned, accepting us as His children and welcoming us into heaven to be with Him forever.

The Bible tells us:

God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

Sadly, most choose to reject Jesus' offer. They reject Jesus Himself.

Jesus gave this warning – of the broad road that leads to destruction:

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

Matthew 7:13

We do not know when Jesus will return from heaven to judge us all. There will be no warning. Those who have chosen the broad road of life will be declared guilty. There will be no second chance.

Which road are you on?

Have you acknowledged your sin before God, repented of it and received His forgiveness, through trusting that Jesus died in your place? If not, then you are on that broad road.

Whatever mess you may have made of your life, you can get on to the narrow road that leads to heaven by:

- admitting that you are a sinner,
- accepting that Jesus died on the cross in your place and for your sins,
- repenting of your sins, that is, choosing not to continue to live as you have,
- asking God to forgive you, choosing to follow Jesus and live according to His teaching.

If you are ready to make that decision, you can do that now by saying this prayer.

Dear Father God,

I am really sorry for everything in my life, past and present, that is not right. I want to stop living that way. I want to get right with you.

Thank You for sending Jesus to die in my place, in order to save me from the punishment I deserve. I want to live to please Jesus and to make Him the centre of my life – to be my King.

So please forgive me and accept me as Your child.

Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit to help me live this new life with Jesus.

Amen

If you have prayed this prayer and been sincere, God welcomes you into His family as His child. Do not worry if you do not feel any different. It is important to rely on God's promises in the Bible rather than on your feelings.

Tell a chaplain or a Christian friend of your decision and ask them to help you to start reading the Bible. It is also important to meet with other followers of Jesus. They will help you as you begin your new life.

You are also welcome to contact us, whether you have prayed that prayer or whether you have questions you would like to ask. We will be pleased to help you in any way we can.

SOLID ROCK

Jesus answered (Thomas),
'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one
comes to the Father except through me.'

John 14:6

Question: 'Will I go to heaven?' Answer: 'It all depends!'

What it *doesn't* depend on is our past lives; our achievements; our good works or the opinions of others. The only issue is whether we are trusting Jesus.

No one else and nothing else will be of any value when Jesus returns from heaven to judge everyone. He is our one and only hope of heaven.

And it is not an uncertain hope. It is backed by God's Word, which assures us that '... Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name ... by which we must be saved..¹

Take a moment to thank God that nothing you have done will count against you; you will be welcomed into heaven because you have repented and your hope is firmly resting on Jesus.

¹Acts 4:12

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.

*On Christ the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand.*

When darkness seems to veil His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant and blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

Edward Mote, 1797-1874
Born London

HE LOVED FIRST

This is love: not that we loved God,
but that he loved us ...
We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:10,19

We only love Jesus in response to His love, which He demonstrated by purchasing our pardon at Calvary.

We should not only continue in our love for Him; we must also thank Him, and the Holy Spirit, for revealing His love to us. Until then, our minds were kept blinded by 'the god of this age'.¹ We must thank Jesus, too, for using Christians to tell us of His love.

Let us also ask God to help us speak to those of our families and friends (and those in prison), whose minds remain blinded to the truth of His amazing love.

When did you last tell Jesus that you love Him? Why not make a habit of it?

¹2 Corinthians 4:4

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me,
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

In mansions of glory and endless delight,
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

William R. Featherston, 1846-1873
Born Montreal

SING FOR JOY

Shout for joy to God, all the earth!
Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious.
Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds! ...'

Psalms 66:1-3a

We can only truly praise and worship God with real joy, if we recognise His majesty and power and if we have experienced for ourselves His grace and mercy.

Once we recognise God's character, acknowledge Him as our creator and Jesus as our redeemer, we will want to pour out our praise to Him every day.¹

Whilst it is good to praise God privately, even greater joy comes from gathering with other Christians to sing His praises.

God is pleased, too, when we honour His Name by letting others know how we love to praise Him.

Do you praise God every day? And is corporate worship with other believers a priority for you each week?

¹Psalms 145:1-2

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease,
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life and health and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

To God all glory, praise, and love
Be now and ever given;
By saints below and saints above,
The Church in earth and heaven.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

Read about Charles Wesley, the writer of this hymn, on page 87

NEVER ALONE

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have
summoned you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will
be with you; and when you pass through
the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

Isaiah 43:1b-2a

This hymn reminds us that God's Word is the solid foundation for living for believers. And these words from Isaiah, referred to in the hymn, remind us of the depth of His love for us.

Think through the truths. Firstly, we learn that God has summoned us by name; our relationship with Him is deeply personal. Secondly, we are promised that God will be with us whatever we face; He will not allow anything to overwhelm us.

Let us never neglect God's Word, which reveals His character and His love for us, reassuring us of His constant care for all His children.

How crucial to your spiritual diet in prison is 'God's excellent Word'?

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said –
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, I am with thee, O, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee thy trouble to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not harm thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

Writer uncertain.

THE TEST, THE JOY, THE CROWN

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12

In chapter 1 verse 2, the apostle James encourages believers to consider it 'pure joy' whenever they face trials. It's a warning that there will be tough times, including battles against temptation and all that the powers of this dark world will throw at us.

But, in verse 12, there is a promise: the crown of life to Jesus' followers who persevere through their trials.

The trials are temporary, but the 'crown' will be a personal welcome by Jesus into an eternal home with Him. We cannot imagine the joy – an abundant joy – of being welcomed 'home' by Jesus.

If you are facing a trial, is there another Christian who will pray with you? Or perhaps there is a Christian who is struggling and would appreciate you praying for them.

Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face;
Life with its path before us lies;
Christ is the way, and Christ the prize.

Cast care aside, lean on thy guide;
His boundless mercy will provide;
Lean, and thy trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its life and Christ its love.

Faint not, nor fear, His arms are near;
He changeth not, and thou art dear;
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

John S. B. Monsell, 1811-1875
Born Londonderry

I KNOW WHO I BELIEVE

... because I know whom I have believed, and
am convinced that he is able to guard what
I have entrusted to him until that day.

2 Timothy 1:12

Paul has explained that his suffering, and imminent death, is the result of continuing to proclaim the gospel. But there is no complaint. He is convinced that God, whom he knows and believes, is totally trustworthy and will take care of him.

The hymn records some of the many things that we do not know, for God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours.¹

Let us not worry about things that God has chosen not to reveal to us. Rather, let us hold firm to what we do know and believe. And let us declare that same trust in God that Paul had.

Do you have that same confidence as Paul? If not, be honest with God about your doubts.

¹Isaiah 55:8-9

I know not why God's wondrous love
To me hath been made known;
Nor why, unworthy as I am,
He claimed me for His own.

*But I know Whom I have believed
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day.'*

I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart;
Nor how believing in His word
Wrought peace within my heart.

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin;
Revealing Jesus through the Word,
Creating faith in Him.

I know not what of good or ill
May be reserved for me,
Of weary ways or golden days,
Before His face I see.

I know not when my Lord may come,
At night or noon-day fair,
Nor if I'll walk the vale with Him,
Or 'meet Him in the air'.

D. W. Whittle, 1840-1901
Born Massachusetts

DIVINE LOVE

This is how God showed his love among us:
he sent his one and only Son into the world
that we might live through him.

1 John 4:9

God's love excels any expression of human love: it is far beyond the love we have experienced in any relationships. He is love.¹

And there is no limit to His love. But that does not mean, as many people think, that He will not punish 'good' people.

God loves everyone – but He hates their sin and cannot ignore it. As sin cannot enter heaven, God sent Jesus to pay for our sin Himself. That is divine love.

One glorious day, all who have repented of their sin and have welcomed Jesus as Saviour will take their place in heaven, 'lost in wonder, love and praise'.

The hymn includes the words, 'Take away the love of sinning ...' Why not make that prayer your own?

¹1 John 4:8

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find Thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning,
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation:
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

YOUR WILL, NOT MINE

... I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now
live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

As followers of Jesus Christ our King, we must allow Him to have complete control over our lives, just as the apostle Paul did.

The hymn presents the picture of us being clay in the potter's hand.¹ But clay cannot resist what the potter wants to make with it! For us, it is more difficult; we must submit our mind and will to Christ – and resist Satan who wants to have his way.

In Psalm 139, David bravely invites God to search his heart to 'see if there is any offensive way' in him.²

Are you willing, as David was, to invite God to search your heart? Is there something that you wish you could hide from God?

¹Jeremiah 18:1-6 ²Psalm 139:23-24

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way;
Thou art the potter, I am the clay;
Mould me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way;
Search me and try me, Master, today.
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way;
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray.
Power, all power, surely is Thine;
Touch me and heal me, Saviour divine.

Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way;
Hold o'er my being absolute sway;
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me.

Adelaide A. Pollard, 1862-1934
Born Iowa, USA

EVER IN HIS CARE

Humble yourselves, therefore, under
God's mighty hand, that he may lift you
up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on
him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Looking back through our lives, we recognise many scene changes. For most of us, there will have been times of happiness and contentment and times of sorrow, fear, anxiety and failure.

This hymn was taken from Psalm 34 which was written by David at a time when he was surrounded by enemies.

Was he afraid? Yes!

Did he run and hide? Yes!

Did he stop praising God? No!

David placed himself under God's mighty hand and so must we. Fear Him and we have nothing else to fear. God cares – even when it seems that no one else does.

This may well be an anxious time for you in prison. If so, give your anxiety to the Lord; no one cares for you like He does.

Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

O magnify the Lord with me,
With me exalt His name;
When in distress to Him I called,
He to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Deliverance He affords to all
Who in His mercy trust.

O make but trial of His love,
Experience will decide
How blest they are, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.

Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
Your wants shall be His care.

Nahum Tate, 1692-1715
Born Dublin

Nicholas Brady, 1659-1726
Born Bandon, County Cork

WHEN JESUS RETURNS

... suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, '... This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'

Acts 1:10-11

As the disciples watched Jesus ascend to heaven, they were told that He will come back in the same way. No event will be more divisive: some will shed tears of indescribable joy and others will be overwhelmed with distress.

He will welcome those who are waiting for Him as their Saviour.¹ But it will be a time of judgement for those who have rejected Him.²

Scientists continually strive to find ways of predicting natural disasters. But no one will ever predict the time of Jesus' return. He will come unexpectedly, just like a thief breaking into a house at night.³

Are you looking forward to Jesus' return? And are you warning those who are not?

¹Hebrews 9:27-28 ²John 3:18 ³Matthew 24:42-44

Lo he comes with clouds descending,
Once for helpless sinners slain!
Thousand, thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train:
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
God appears on earth to reign.
Every eye shall now behold him,
Robed in dreadful majesty,
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed him to the tree.
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.
Yea, amen let all adore thee,
High on thine eternal throne!
Saviour, take the power and glory;
Claim the kingdom for thine own.
O come quickly, O come quickly, O come quickly,
Hallelujah! come Lord, come.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

PRAYING FOR YOUR PRISON

At various points through this book, you will come across prayers – and suggested topics for prayer – that you might wish to use to pray for your prison, for the families affected by the imprisonment of their loved ones and for the victims of the crimes.

We hope that you will be encouraged to pray regularly if you are not already doing so, and that you will find the suggested prayers and topics helpful. But they are only suggestions and some will need to be adapted. And there will almost certainly be other needs particular to your own prison.

And you may not have to pray alone. Could you meet with another Christian – or two or three – to pray together for your own personal needs as well as for the prison?

As you pray, expect God to answer your prayers – and always give thanks as He does. And especially, never cease to thank Him for Jesus, the Saviour of all who trust Him and follow Him.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for those for whom this prison is their place of work. I pray that they will not view their work as just a job to earn a living; rather an opportunity to support people who are hurting and need care, alongside the punishment of imprisonment.

Please protect all who work in this prison, both from physical injury and exhaustion and from mental and emotional stress.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Almighty God,

I pray for everyone in this prison – residents and those who work here – who do not know You and do not know anything of Your love.

Please reveal Yourself to them by revealing to them Your Son, Jesus, who surrendered His life to save us from the punishment we all deserve.

I thank You that Jesus is my Saviour. Thank You for opening my eyes to the truth of Your Word.

In my Saviour's Name.

Amen

Pray also –

- for the officers on duty on your landing today
- for those in segregation
- for peace and calm across the prison

COMING HOME

Let the wicked forsake their ways and the
unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to
the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

Isaiah 55:7

God longs to show mercy and to pardon all who confess their sins and repent. As the song says, 'Our sins they are many, His mercy is more.'¹

This hymn reminds us of Jesus speaking of the owner of a hundred sheep searching for one who had wandered off.² It is a picture of God's loving and tender care and concern for every one of His children.

Is Jesus calling you back to Himself? Or is there someone you know who has wandered away from the Saviour whom you can encourage to turn back?

Can you think of a time when Jesus may have been pleading for you?

¹Matt Boswell and Matt Papa, 2016

²Matthew 18:12-14

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me;
See, on the portals He's waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.

*Come home, come home;
You who are weary come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!*

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
Pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
Mercies for you and for me?

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing,
Passing from you and from me;
Shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming,
Coming for you and for me.

O for the wonderful love He has promised,
Promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
Pardon for you and for me.

Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909
Born East Liverpool, Ohio

THE FAITHFUL FRIEND

Do not be anxious about anything ... by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God ... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Friends are important. We all need someone we can talk to and rely on, especially in times of sadness or difficulty.

And there is nothing worse than being abandoned by friends, for whatever reason, when we need their support more than ever.

Jesus will never let us down; there is no other friend like Him. Whatever sadness we go through; whenever others turn their backs on us; whenever we are afraid or anxious, Jesus invites us to cast all our cares upon Him. Take it to Him in prayer: He is our greatest friend and wants to share our sorrows.

Joseph Scriven, who wrote this hymn, faced a great deal of grief in his life, but he found comfort in his relationship with Jesus and in prayer. And you can too.

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and grief to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged –
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge –
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
'Thou wilt find a solace there.

Joseph Medlicott Scriven, 1819-1886
Born County Down, Ireland

Read the background to this hymn on page 86

A PARDONING GOD

Who is a God like you, who pardons
sin ...? You do not stay angry for
ever but delight to show mercy.

Micah 7:18

Does anyone stand before a judge and not long to be pardoned? It is the defence lawyer's job to present the best possible case on behalf of the accused. And then follows the nervous wait for the verdict.

How different it is with God; we should know His verdict. He will pardon us, whatever our sin, if we truly repent. He delights in showing mercy.

And we must never allow Satan to cause us to doubt. If we doubt and choose not to repent, we will suffer, just as King David did until he finally acknowledged his sin and repented.¹

Do you ever doubt God's willingness to forgive you? If so, memorise Micah 7:18 – God is a pardoning God.

¹Psalms 32:1-5

Great God of wonders, all Thy ways
Are matchless, godlike and divine;
But the fair glories of Thy grace
More godlike and unrivalled shine.

*Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?*

In wonder lost, with trembling joy,
We take the pardon of our God,
Pardon for sins of deepest dye,
A pardon sealed with Jesus' blood.

O may this strange, this matchless grace,
This godlike miracle of love,
Fill the whole earth with grateful praise,
And all th'angelic choirs above.

Samuel Davies, 1723-1761
Born Delaware, USA

THE DEEPEST LOVE

I pray that you ... may have power ... to grasp
how wide and long and high and deep is
the love of Christ, and to know this love
that surpasses knowledge – that you may be
filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17b-19

We can often feel unloved or even unlovable – especially if there is shame over things we have got wrong. And lost human love can bring heartbreak. God's love is different. For Him, love is not just a changeable feeling. It is His essential nature and that never changes.

Even when we have accepted Jesus as our Saviour, we may not appreciate the enormity of His love. The apostle Paul recognised that and so prayed that the believers might have the power to grasp the depth and height of His love and be filled with all the 'fullness of God'.

Why not ask God to give you the power to grasp just how deeply Jesus loves you?

If you are unsure what it means to have Jesus as your Saviour, you will find it explained on pages 9-12, What Is A Christian?

It passes knowledge, that dear love of Thine,
My Jesus Saviour; yet this soul of mine
Would, of that love in all its breadth and length
Its height and depth, its everlasting strength,
Know more and more.

It passes telling, that dear love of Thine,
My Jesus Saviour; yet these lips of mine
Would fain proclaim to sinners far and near
A love which can remove all guilty fear
And love beget.

It passes praises, that dear love of Thine.
My Jesus Saviour; yet this heart of mine
Would sing of love, so rich so full so free,
Which brought a guilty sinner, such as me,
Back home to Thee.

I am an empty vessel, not one thought
Or look of love, I ever to thee brought,
Yet I may come and come again to Thee
With this, the sinner's only plea –
Thou lovest me.

And when my Jesus, face to face I see,
When at His lofty throne I bow the knee,
Then of His love, in all its breadth and length,
Its height and depth, its everlasting strength,
My soul shall sing.

Mary Shekleton, 1827-1883
Birthplace unknown

LIFT UP YOUR VOICE!

For the Lord Most High is awesome,
the great King over all the earth.
For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm of praise.

Psalm 47:2, 7

The world is not in good shape. Every day we are confronted by the evidence: wars, earthquakes, famine, brutal regimes, human trafficking, the indoctrination of children over gender, and much more.

Satan, the 'prince of this world',¹ may be wreaking havoc but he is condemned² and will finally be overthrown. It is the Lord who is the great King over all the earth. He rules and He does whatever pleases Him.³

There is no need to despair; there is every reason to rejoice! Lift up your heart: Jesus, the Saviour, reigns.

According to the hymn writer, what are the several reasons we have to rejoice?

¹John 12:31 ²John 16:11 ³Psalm 135:6

Rejoice, the Lord is King;
Your Lord and King adore!
Mortals, give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
The God of truth and love;
When He had purged our stains,
He took his seat above;
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus giv'n:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord and judge shall come
And take His servants up
To their eternal home:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

THE DEBT: CANCELLED

... Christ came as the high priest ... He did not enter by means of the blood of goats or calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood.

Hebrews 9:11a, 12

In Old Testament times, once a year the high priest slaughtered an animal, and sprinkled the crowd of worshippers with its blood as 'cleansing' for their sins.¹

Then he went alone into the Most Holy Place carrying the blood on behalf of the people. No one could follow him. Every year, he made the same sacrifice to God for his own sins and the sins of the people.

At Calvary, Jesus shed His own blood once, for our forgiveness. Receiving Him as our Lord and Saviour, we no longer face the wrath of God. Jesus entered heaven carrying His own sacrificial blood. And now we can follow Him there.

Read through the last verse of the hymn. This is how our souls know peace and freedom. Peace and freedom are for you.

¹Exodus 24:8

Now why this fear and unbelief?
Has not the Father put to grief
His spotless Son for us?
And will the righteous judge of men
Condemn me for that debt of sin
Now cancelled at the cross?

*Jesus, all my trust is in Your blood.
Jesus, You've rescued us
Through Your great love!*

Complete atonement You have made,
And by Your death have fully paid
The debt Your people owed.
No wrath remains for us to face;
We're sheltered by Your saving grace
And sprinkled with Your blood.

*How sweet the sound of saving grace;
How sweet the sound of saving grace:
Christ died for me!*

Be still my soul, and know this peace:
The merits of your great high priest
Have bought your liberty.
Rely then on His precious blood;
Don't fear your banishment from God,
Since Jesus sets you free!

Original Verses by Augustus Toplady, 1740-1778
Born Farnham
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THE SAME MINDSET

In your relationships with one another,
have the same mindset as Christ Jesus ...

Philippians 2:5

What was Jesus' mindset? It was to honour and obey His Father. It cost Him His life. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He asked that He might not have to endure 'this cup' – the crucifixion He was facing. But He was willing to do so if that was what His Father wanted.

To have the same mindset as Jesus is to be obedient as He was. It means obeying His two great commandments; to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and to love your neighbour as yourself.¹

When you allow the love of Christ to control all you do and say, it will not go unnoticed; you will be like a light in a dark place. Pray that God will get the glory.²

¹Matthew 22:36-40 ²Matthew 5:14-16

May the mind of Christ, my Saviour,
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and power controlling
All I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.

May the peace of God, my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self-abasing,
This is victory.

May we run the race before us,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As we onward go.

Kate B. Wilkinson, 1859-1928
Born Timperley, Cheshire

DEATH DEFEATED

He is not here; he has risen!

Luke 24:6a

If Jesus, the Son of the Living God, had not been raised to life, then death would be triumphant and Satan would have won the eternal battle between good and evil. Hell would have been the only option for mankind.

As the Bible says, if our hope in Christ is only for this life, our faith is futile and of all people we are most to be pitied.¹

But Jesus was raised to life again and He broke down the gates of hell; destroyed the sting of death and made a way to heaven for all those who acknowledge Him as King.

Hallelujah!

Whatever your circumstances, rejoice in your risen Saviour and know that one day you will meet Him face to face.

¹1 Corinthians 15:17, 19

‘Christ the Lord is risen today’,
Sons of men and angels say.
Raise your joys and triumphs high;
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply.
Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ has burst the gates of hell!
Death in vain forbids His rise
Christ has opened Paradise.
Lives again, our glorious King;
Where, O death is now thy sting?
Once He died, our souls to save;
Where thy victory, O grave?
Soar we now where Christ has led,
Following our exalted Head.
Made like Him, like Him we rise;
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.
Hail, the Lord of earth and heaven!
Praise to Thee by both be given.
Thee we greet, triumphant now,
Hail the Resurrection thou!

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

MY RANSOM PAID

He himself bore our sins in his body
on the cross, so that we might die
to sins and live for righteousness;
by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 2:24

John Newton, who wrote this hymn, had lived a harsh ungodly life as a slave trader until he gave his heart and life to Jesus. Then everything changed.

Writing this hymn, he pictured himself standing at the cross and looking up at Jesus as Jesus looks down at him. In that moment he knows that it is his sin that has caused Jesus' death.

The second look from Jesus is a look of forgiveness. And seeing that look of love he understands, 'Jesus is dying to pay my ransom'. There is life for the sinner only in the death of the Saviour.

Imagine it is you standing at the foot of the cross. What do you understand?

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.

*Oh, can it be, upon a tree,
The Saviour died for me?
My soul is thrilled, my heart is filled,
To think He died for me!*

Sure, never to my latest breath,
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair,
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there.

A second look He gave, which said,
‘I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that you might live’.

John Newton, 1725-1807
Born Wapping, London

THE BREATH OF GOD

And with that he (Jesus) breathed on them
and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit ...'

John 20:22

When Jesus met His disciples after His resurrection, He made this pledge: they would receive the Holy Spirit. And they did – on the day of Pentecost about 40 days later.

We receive the Holy Spirit when we accept Jesus Christ as Saviour. But the purpose of the Spirit is not simply to make us feel good and safe. His main purpose is to change the believer's life, making them more like Christ.

In his letter to the Galatians, the apostle Paul tells us about the fruit of the Spirit; it is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.¹

If any of those Christ-like characteristics are not yet evident in your life, ask God to fill you with all the fruit of the Spirit.

¹Galatians 5:22-23

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with Thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch, 1835-1889
Born Derby

Dear Lord,

I pray for victims of crime, especially the victims of the crimes committed by those now serving a sentence in this prison. There will be so many. You

know the exact number and who they are.

Please bring healing to those still in pain, whether physical or emotional. Please comfort those grieving the loss of loved ones. And please release them from any hatred and bitterness that they have towards those responsible.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Dear Father God,

I pray that You will help me to be a light in the darkness, like a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, just as Jesus taught. Please help my light to so shine

that people will see my good works and glorify You, Father, not me.

I pray this, too, for all in this prison who belong to You, so that there will be much light throughout the prison and many good works of kindness and compassion that bring glory to You.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Pray also –

- for those who work in education
- for those who are just beginning their first sentence

Dear Father God,

I pray for those who have particular anxieties; for those (including staff) concerned about their own health or the health of a loved one; for those worried about choices their children are making; for those facing the breakdown of a relationship; and for those shortly to be released and facing the possibility of being homeless. Lord, please draw close to them and help them to know Your presence.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Almighty God,

I know that You have a special concern for the weak and vulnerable, as Jesus had. And children are vulnerable. I pray for all the children of those imprisoned here, especially those already at risk of engaging in crime. Please protect each child and young person from unhealthy friendships, drugs and everything that will cause them harm.

Please grant strength and wisdom to those who have taken responsibility for their care.

I ask these things in Jesus' Name.

Amen

Pray also –

- for those who work in healthcare
- for drug workers and for gym staff
- for peace and calm across the prison

SAFELY HELD

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:9-10

The Lord's right hand denotes His strength. If we belong to Him, we have the promise that He will hold us fast, wherever we might venture and whatever situations we might encounter.

We find the same message in Jude's letter – that God is able to keep us from stumbling and we will be presented before His glorious presence.¹

Jesus described Himself as the good shepherd and promised that He will never allow anyone to snatch any of His sheep out of His hand.²

We who are God's children are secure; we are held fast. We must hold fast to that promise.

Reflect upon and grasp the truth in this hymn, that 'those He saves are His delight'.

¹Jude 24-25 ²John 10:28

When I fear my faith will fail,
Christ will hold me fast;
When the tempter would prevail,
He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold
Through life's fearful path;
For my love is often cold;
He must hold me fast.

*He will hold me fast,
He will hold me fast;
For my Saviour loves me so,
He will hold me fast.*

Those He saves are His delight,
Christ will hold me fast;
Precious in His holy sight,
He will hold me fast.
He'll not let my soul be lost;
His promises shall last;
Bought by Him at such a cost,
He will hold me fast.

For my life He bled and died,
Christ will hold me fast;
Justice has been satisfied;
He will hold me fast.
Raised with Him to endless life,
He will hold me fast
Till our faith is turned to sight,
When He comes at last!

Ada R. Habershon, 1861-1918
Born Marylebone, London

BE PREPARED

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but ... against the spiritual forces of evil in the
heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full
armour of God, so that when the day of evil
comes, you may be able to stand your ground,
and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ephesians 6:12-13

Governments spend billions of pounds on defence. And, along with businesses and institutions, they are continually battling to protect their data against cyber attacks. Their defence measures have to be constantly upgraded.

Yet, the devil's strategies against Christians are the same that trapped Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; they remain just as effective and powerful today.

But the armour needed in Paul's day has not lost its protective powers either.¹ The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, together with the sword of the spirit, are still crucial for us today.

How did Jesus defeat the devil when tempted? Read Matthew 4:1-11.

¹Ephesians 6:13-17

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in His mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God:
To keep your armour bright,
Attend with constant care,
Still walking in your Captain's sight
And watching unto prayer.

From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle and fight and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down
And win the well-fought day.
That, having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone,
And stand complete at last.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

TRUE DISCIPLES

... Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching,
you are really my disciples ...'

John 8:31

Obedience is a test of whether we are a true disciple of Jesus. And how can we be sure that we are being obedient? Only by getting to know His teaching through studying God's Word.

The final verse of this hymn reminds us of the time when Jesus visited the home of Mary and Martha.¹ Martha, busy with preparing hospitality for Jesus, was unhappy that her sister was not helping.

Martha did not get the sympathy she felt she deserved. Jesus commended Mary for choosing to sit at His feet, listening to Him. Mary, He said, had chosen 'what is better'.

If you identify with Martha, as many of us do, how can you discipline yourself to spend more time 'at Jesus' feet'?

¹Luke 10:38-42

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Not a burden we bear,
Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief nor a loss,
Not a frown nor a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove
The delights of His love,
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favour He shows,
And the joy He bestows
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet
We will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way.
What He says we will do,
Where He sends we will go,
Never fear, only trust and obey.

John H. Sammis, 1846-1919
Born Brooklyn

THE PERFECT PLEA

For we do not have a high priest who is
unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but we have one who in every respect has
been tested as we are, yet without sin.
Let us therefore approach the throne of grace
with boldness, so that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16

‘It is finished’ were Jesus’ final words before He ‘gave up his spirit’ on the cross.¹ He had accomplished the Father’s purpose of paying the penalty for our sins. But His work did not finish there.

He is now our great High Priest in heaven. His time on earth prepared Him for it. He is able to sympathise with our weaknesses, for He Himself was tempted, as He was in Gethsemane; He would have wanted ‘the cup’ to have passed from Him.² But there was no other way to satisfy God’s wrath on account of our sin.

*Never fear approaching your great High Priest, ‘whose name is love’.
You will always be sure to receive mercy and grace whatever your
need.*

¹John 19:30 ²Matthew 26:39

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea;
A great High Priest whose name is love,
Whoever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in Heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Saviour died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there, the risen Lamb!
My perfect, spotless Righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace.
One with Himself I cannot die;
My soul is purchased with His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Saviour and my God.

Charitie Lees Bancroft, 1841-1923
Born Dublin

WHEN LOSS IS GAIN

... 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
garbage, that I may gain Christ ...

Philippians 3:8

God revealed Himself to Saul (as he was known then) on the road to Damascus. Prior to that, Saul would have boasted about his upbringing, and education, as a strict Jew. It had led him to be zealous in his hatred of believers and in his determination to persecute them.¹

Now, as a believer, Paul knew what it was to be persecuted himself. And yet, he compares all the privileges he once enjoyed, and has now given up, with his life with Christ Jesus as Lord. He has no hesitation in saying that everything from the past is like garbage, in comparison with knowing Jesus.

Are you able to say that nothing in your past life compares with the joy of knowing Jesus?

¹Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-19

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art;
Be Thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Both waking and sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
Be Thou ever with me, and I with Thee, Lord;
Be Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son;
Be Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be Thou my whole armour, be Thou my true might;
Be Thou my soul's Shelter, be Thou my strong tow'r,
O raise Thou me heav'nward, great pow'r of my pow'r.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;
Be Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Be Thou and Thou only the first in my heart,
O high King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, Thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys, after vict'ry is won;
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be Thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Eleanor Hull, 1860-1935
(Based on a translation of an Irish hymn
by Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931)

PROVIDED, PARDONED, GUIDED

If you love me, keep my commands. And
I will ask the Father, and he will give you
another advocate to help you and be
with you for ever – the Spirit of truth.

John 14:15-17a

Before Jesus died, He promised that the Father would send His disciples another helper: the Holy Spirit. This hymn is a prayer to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The prayer to the Father is for guidance and protection through the difficulties of life.

The prayer to Jesus, our Saviour, is for forgiveness for our weaknesses. Jesus understood what it was like to live in the world.

The prayer to the Holy Spirit is that He will fill us with heartfelt joy, love and lasting peace.

God, in three persons, is the giver of guidance, forgiveness, love, joy and peace – and of every good thing we enjoy.

The more time we spend with God in prayer, the deeper our relationship with Him will become.

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but Thee;
Yet possessing every blessing
If our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
All our weakness Thou dost know;
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
Lone and dreary, faint and weary,
Through the desert Thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
Love with every passion blending,
Pleasure that can never cloy;
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.

James Edmeston, 1791-1867
Born London

THE ONE FOUNDATION

... you are ... also members of his household,
built on the foundation of the apostles
and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself
as the chief cornerstone.

Ephesians 2:19-20

There are some beautifully built churches right across the world.
Sadly, many are no longer places of worship.

But the buildings are not the Church – they were built so the people
of God can gather to worship Him. And no matter where God's
people are, whether alone in a cell or meeting in secret or in a great
cathedral, they are His people and they are His Church on earth.

And the wonderful thing is that His Church cannot fall because it is
built on the firmest foundation: it is established on Jesus Himself –
His treasure and His glory.

*Do you make it a priority to meet with other members of God's
household in your prison? Take a moment to read Hebrews 10:24-25.*

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord:
She is His new creation
By water and the word;
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.
Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.
Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.
Yet she on earth hath union
with God the Three-in-One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee.

S. J. Stone, 1839-1900
Born Whitmore, Staffordshire

LOST AND FOUND

I am the good shepherd; I know
my sheep and my sheep know me
...and I lay down my life for the sheep.

John 10:14-15

Imagine a shepherd who cares for his sheep and knows each of them by name.

Picture the one sheep who wanders off by itself and who, as night falls, is in great danger from howling wolves. So the shepherd sets off into the darkness to find it and bring it safely home.

Jesus used this story to explain why He left the glory of heaven to rescue the lost. Following Jesus is not an easy option. We will still face sorrow, hardship and even persecution. But He is leading us to glory where we will join with the multitude of believers and sing for joy.

We have a song to sing – not just in glory, but here and now. Lift up your voice!

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me;
How He left His home in glory
For the cross on Calvary.
I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray.
Threw His loving arms around me,
Drew me back into His way.

I was bruised, but Jesus found me
Faint was I from many a fall,
Sight was gone and fears possessed me,
But He freed me from them all.
Days of darkness still come o'er me,
Sorrows path I often tread,
But the Saviour still is with me;
By His hand I'm safely led.

He will keep me till the river
Rolls its waters at my feet;
Then He'll bear me safely over.
Where the loved ones I shall meet
Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory,
Gathered by the crystal sea.

Francis H Rowley, 1854-1952
Born New York

MY HIDING PLACE

If we confess our sins, he is faithful
and just and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Our sin not only hurts others and ourselves but it has a way of clinging to us. And we can never undo our wrongs. Even time in prison doesn't wipe away the guilt and the damage.

Our only plea before God is the blood of Jesus: He is our unshakeable hiding place. When we truly confess and repent, all our sins are forgiven – past, present and future.

Although we are forgiven and saved, God is hurt as we continue to sin – as we all do. And so we must confess our sins to keep us in a right relationship with Him, purified from all unrighteousness.

Are there sins you have chosen not to confess, expecting God to overlook them? Today would be a good time to confess them and set things right with God.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demand;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me Saviour or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgement throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Augustus Toplady, 1740-1778
Born Farnham

AS WE FORGIVE

And forgive us our debts, as we
also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:12

God expects us to regularly ask Him to forgive us; it is a key part of the Lord's Prayer. But there is a condition attached to His forgiveness – we must have forgiven those who have hurt us.

Jesus emphasised this with a warning '... if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.'¹

As the writer of this hymn has noted, the debts owed to us are trivial in comparison with the debt owed to our Saviour.

And the apostle Paul wrote, 'Get rid of all bitterness ... forgiving each other...'²

*Are there people whom you have been unwilling or unable to forgive?
Reflect again on the price paid to clear your debt, and ask God to help
you to forgive.*

¹Matthew 6:15 ²Ephesians 4:31-32

‘Forgive our sins as we forgive’,
You taught us, Lord, to pray;
But you alone can grant us grace
To live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless
The unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let
Old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals
The truth we dimly know:
What trivial debts are owed to us,
How great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls
And bid resentment cease;
Then, bound to all in bonds of love,
Our lives will spread your peace.

Rosamond Herklots 1905-1987
Born Masuri, India

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HYMN WRITERS

Biographies can be very interesting and especially the biographies of writers. It is useful to know something of their background.

It is especially helpful to know their motivation for the writing of the book, the poem or song – what inspired it. That insight will often help us to enjoy it more.

That is certainly true of the hymns we sing. Many would have even greater meaning if we knew of the writer's circumstances at the time of writing and what prompted or inspired the hymn.

Sadly, for the vast majority, we know very little of the background, if anything. However, there are some 'stories behind the hymns' that have been recorded for us. We think that you will enjoy the few that we have selected.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL, 1836-1879

Born in Astley, Worcestershire

Frances was the youngest child of a Church of England minister. Despite frail health, she led an active life, in demand as a concert soloist. She was also a brilliant pianist and learned several modern languages as well as Greek and Hebrew.

But it is her faith for which she is remembered – and her poetry and hymns. Frances had begun reading and memorising the Bible at the age of four and wrote her first poems when seven. She never wrote a line of poetry without praying over it.

Her passion was to encourage people to turn to Jesus and to encourage believers to seek a deeper spiritual walk.

Take My Life and Let It Be was inspired during a short break with other women. Frances wrote,

There were ten persons in the house; some were unconverted and ... some converted but not rejoicing Christians. [God] gave me the prayer, 'Lord, give me all in this house.' And He just did. Before I left the house, everyone had got a blessing.

On the last night, with much rejoicing and without the need to sleep, the words of the hymn came to Frances, finishing with '... ever only, all for Thee!' That was on 4 February 1874 when she was 37. She died five years later.

**Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Page 133**

PHILIP BLISS,

1838-1876

Born in Pennsylvania, USA

Philip's family was poor but it was a happy home. He was taught to pray, read the Bible and sing. It is said of him that 'he was born with a melody in his heart.'

With no money available for his education, he started working alongside men at a lumber camp when he was only eleven. He made his first public confession of faith in Christ when he was twelve.

In 1859 he married Lucy and began working with her father on his farm. Lucy's grandmother recognised his musical talent and paid for him to have music lessons. He became a music teacher with a great tenor voice, writing many hymns which are still sung today.

Philip then worked with an evangelist at gospel meetings, singing hymns including some he had written himself.

On 29th December 1876, Philip and Lucy were travelling by train to a gospel meeting in Chicago. As the train was crossing a bridge spanning a river, the bridge collapsed and the carriages plummeted into the chasm below. A fire ensued and there were few survivors. The bodies of Philip and Lucy were never recovered.

Philip's premature death was a great tragedy – and Lucy's too. But Philip left a wonderful legacy of hymns behind for us.

**Man of sorrows, what a name
For the Son of God, who came,
Page 91**

FANNY CROSBY,

1820-1915

Born in New York

When she was six weeks old, Fanny became blind. Her father then died when she was just six months old. Her mother and grandmother brought her up and taught her to learn passages from the Bible by heart. From the age of ten, she learnt five chapters a week until she could quote whole books from the Bible.

She married in 1858 and wrote *Safe in the arms of Jesus* when their new-born baby died. Her hymn writing really began in earnest a few years later, in 1864.

Fanny had a great compassion for the poor, choosing to live in a dismal flat in Manhattan so that she could be generous to the broken and the homeless.

She also took great delight in sharing the gospel and often spoke and sang in prisons and at gospel missions.

She would say that her blindness was a gift from God because '... the first face I will ever see will be His!'

Fanny died at the age of 94, leaving Christians with a treasury of wonderful hymns in praise of the Saviour. It is uncertain how many she wrote for she used many pseudonyms to preserve her modesty; the number is thought to be at least 8,000.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine:
O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Page 99

GEORGE MATHESON,

1842-1906

Born in Glasgow

Despite his failing eyesight, George studied at university to be a preacher and graduated with honours at 19. A year later he was completely blind.

Having got engaged, he was devastated when his fiancée returned the ring, having decided that she couldn't face life with a blind husband.

George put all his energy into his ministry and became a very prominent preacher across Scotland. In 1885, he accepted an invitation to preach to Queen Victoria at Balmoral.

George only wrote a few hymns. The most well-known (see below) was written on the evening of his sister's wedding. This sister had supported him since he lost his sight. He was no doubt very saddened by the loss of her support and by the memory of his broken engagement 20 years earlier.

George later recounted his experience that evening:

... Something happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice rather than of working it out myself. I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes...

**O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
Page 107**

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

1771-1854

Born in Irvine, Scotland

James became an orphan while at boarding school. His parents died in the West Indies where they were serving as missionaries.

On leaving school, he worked for a Sheffield newspaper where he later became editor. He was passionately against the wrongs in society and used the newspaper to speak out.

When the infamous Bastille prison was destroyed by French rioters, he openly approved of its destruction and was arrested and imprisoned. Years later he was again sent to prison for his public criticism of a magistrate.

James gave considerable time to fighting for the rights of the oppressed, campaigning against both slavery and against the use of boys as apprentices to chimney sweeps. The boys lived in squalor and many were seriously injured or killed while working in the chimneys. Eventually, both practices were abolished.

He left the newspaper but remained a prolific writer of poems and hymns. He wrote about 400 hymns, including the Christmas carol, *Angels from the realms of glory*.

Like Jesus, James Montgomery was a champion of the poor. And he was a righteous, outspoken man of God.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed;
Page 105

JOHN NEWTON,

1725-1807

Born in Wapping, London

John was only six when his mother died. She had taught him the truth of the Bible and the power of prayer. But he wandered from the faith when he was eleven and began to work alongside his father, a ship's captain.

Seven years later he was forced to join the Royal Navy. Because he tried to desert, he was punished by being sent to engage in the slave trade; his ship transported boys and men from African countries into slavery across the world.

John eventually became captain of his own slave trading ship. One night a fierce storm put the ship in grave danger. Recalling what his mother had taught him about the power of prayer, he called out to God, pleading with Him that the ship, and all the crew, might be saved.

His prayer was answered. He responded by committing his life to Christ, recognising God's 'amazing grace'. He was ordained as a church minister and wrote hymns, most famously, *Amazing Grace*, inspired by his own conversion.

Recognising the evil of slavery in which he had been involved, John supported William Wilberforce in campaigning for its abolition. He died just a few months after Parliament passed the Abolition of Slavery law.

**Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!**

Page 115

HORATIO SPAFFORD,

1828-1888

Born in New York

Horatio, a wealthy American lawyer, lived in Chicago with his wife, Anna, and their four daughters.

When the Great Chicago Fire destroyed the city in 1871, Horatio lost most of his investments, including properties in which he had invested just months earlier.

Despite their losses, as Christians they felt it was right to use the money they had to support the many thousands of other victims.

In 1873, they decided to travel to Europe. At the last minute, Horatio was detained on business and so Anna and their daughters embarked on the journey without him. Tragically the ship never arrived. It collided with a sailing vessel and quickly sank.

Anna survived but their daughters were amongst the 220 people who died. On his way to join his distraught wife, now in Wales, Horatio passed the spot where the disaster had occurred. At that point, he wrote the hymn, *It is well with my soul*.

Instead of blaming God for his loss, Horatio clung to Him in his grief. And whenever life hurts, the arms of God are our only safe place. Even through our tears, we too can sing, 'It is well with my soul'.

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Page 89

JOSEPH SCRIVEN, 1819-1896

Born in County Down, Ireland

After graduating from Trinity College, Dublin, Joseph enrolled in a military college. However, poor health forced him to give up his ambition of an army career. Then he was struck by the tragic loss of his fiancée on the night before their wedding. He watched in horror as her body was dragged from a river.

A few months later, now 25, he emigrated to Canada, where he sought to live according to Jesus' teaching, giving and sharing all he had and often doing menial tasks for the poor and physically disabled. He became known as 'the Good Samaritan of Port Hope'.

In 1855, he wrote a poem to comfort his mother in Ireland, on hearing that she was very unwell.

In 1860, Joseph got engaged but suffered another tragedy. Again there was no wedding; his fiancée died after contracting tuberculosis.

When he was very ill himself, a friend visited and spotted a copy of the poem that Joseph had sent to his mother. When asked who had written it, Joseph answered, 'the Lord and I did it between us.' That poem is now one of the most loved of all hymns, *What a friend we have in Jesus*.

Shortly after that, delirious with a fever one night, Joseph staggered outside the house. The following day he was found drowned in a creek.

**What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!**

Page 39

CHARLES WESLEY,

1707-1788

Born in Epworth, Lincolnshire

Charles was one of 19 children, nine of whom died in infancy, born to Samuel Wesley, the Rector of Epworth, and Susannah. When 19, he went to study at Christ Church, University of Oxford, where he got 'lost in diversions' from his studies.

He recorded that, in his third year, with two or three other students, '... I went to the weekly sacrament ... and observed the method of study prescribed by the statutes of the University'. He became known as 'the Methodist'; Methodism traces its origins to Charles and his older brother, John.

The two brothers visited debtors in the filthy Oxford prisons before going to Georgia, USA to support men who had been transported there. But Charles struggled and returned home, a broken man, bad tempered and addicted to drink.

Charles attributed his conversion to one Sunday in 1738 when he suddenly found himself 'at peace with God'. He began writing hymns again and preaching. He soon started to travel the country on horseback, drawing crowds of up to a thousand or more.

His concern for prisoners remained, often praying through the night with men in Newgate Prison in London, before their execution.

Charles Wesley had a remarkable ministry as an evangelist and as the writer of more than 6,000 hymns.

Inner Hope includes eight of Charles Wesley's hymns

ALL IS WELL

Therefore, since we have been justified
through faith, we have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 5:1

The writer of this hymn was once a prosperous family man. Then, through no fault of his own, he lost everything. Yet, he could still say, 'It is well with my soul'.

The soul is that part of a human which is not physical. It is the real 'us'. The body will die, but the soul will live on to face a righteous, holy God.

The souls of those who turn away from Jesus in life will face eternal judgement. But those who believe and follow Jesus find peace, knowing that all is well with their soul. Nothing in life is more important.

Do you have that same confidence that Horatio Spafford had – that all is well with your soul?

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
'Tis well, it is well, with my soul.'

It is well with my soul;
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
'The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
O trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

Horatio G Spafford, 1828-1888
Born New York

Read the background to this hymn on page 85

THE MAN OF SORROWS

He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53:3 (ESV)

How would it feel if we were to leave a wonderful place filled with light and love, to rescue undeserving people who don't know us?

And how dreadful it would be if we came to a place of darkness and evil, where those we came to rescue, turned on us with cruel hatred. And how dreadful it would be if they publicly shamed, tortured and murdered us.

That is what Jesus experienced. He came from His throne in heaven to die so that we could be forgiven. So now, heaven is home for all who repent, believe and follow Him into the light.

'Man of Sorrows' well describes Jesus' time on earth. What does His sorrow mean for you?

Man of sorrows, what a name
For the Son of God, who came,
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood,
Sealed my pardon with His blood:
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Guilty, vile and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He,
Full atonement – can it be?
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Lifted up was He, to die;
‘It is finished’ was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high;
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we’ll sing:
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Philip Bliss, 1838-1876
Born Pennsylvania, USA

Read the background to this hymn on page 80

HOLINESS TAKES TIME

Abide in me as I abide in you ... Those who
abide in me and I in them bear much fruit,
because apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:4-5 (ESV)

This is a warning that we all need – that, disconnected from Christ, we cannot do anything that will be fruitful for the Kingdom. Jesus makes that absolutely clear with the picture of Himself as the Vine and ourselves as the branches.

We know what happens to any branch of a fruit tree that gets severed: it immediately loses its capacity to bear any fruit. It is just the same with us.

The apostle Paul expressed the same truth: ‘So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him ...’¹

When you can, take a few minutes to read John 15:1-12 – slowly. It is a great passage.

¹Colossians 2:6-7a

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;
And run not before Him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

William D. Longstaff, 1822-1894
Born Sunderland

OUR PROMISE TO JESUS

Whoever serves me must follow me; and
where I am, my servant also will be. My
Father will honour the one who serves me.

John 12:26

Our lives are full of promises we have broken. A promise is a promise; it ought to be kept. And yet, sadly, many are made lightly and with the inevitable result – we fail to keep them.

Others, such as finance agreements and, more especially the marriage vow, demand the most serious thought before we finally commit to them.

For Christians, the greatest promise we have ever made was to follow and to serve Jesus. We may have wavered with our promise. But God will keep every promise of His. And that means He is preparing a place for us in His house.¹

As you read the hymn, take special note of the requests to God. You may like to use them as your own personal requests. And you may wish to renew your promise to serve Jesus.

¹John 14:1-3

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me,
My Master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel Thee near me:
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear Thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, Thou hast promised,
To all who follow Thee,
That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my friend.

John E. Bode, 1816-1874
Born London

HOLY, MERCIFUL, MIGHTY

And they (the seraphim) were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.

Isaiah 6:3

Nowhere in the Bible do we find such emphasis upon any of the attributes of God as we do here: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty'. To be holy is to be unique and distinct. The seraphim are declaring the infinite holiness of God.

And in addressing Him as the Lord Almighty, they also recognise that He is all-powerful.

Isaiah's reponse to this vision is to recognise his own sinfulness. Once he appreciates God's holiness, he utters despairingly, 'Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips ...'¹

When addressing God, in worship and in prayer, do you acknowledge that He is supremely holy? And do you confess that, like Isaiah, you have 'unclean lips' as we all do?

¹Isaiah 6:5

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou are holy, there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Reginald Heber, 1783-1826
Born Malpas, Cheshire

REST ASSURED

... we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Hebrews 6:18b-19a

Can we be sure of anything? It seems as if nothing in this world is certain.

But we have a Saviour whose Spirit is with us. We have a Father in Heaven who never changes, who always keeps His promises and has love and compassion for us, without limit.

This is our security, our anchor, in a changing world. Whatever life holds for us, we know that we are saved; that there is a place for us in glory and everlasting life with our Saviour Jesus. Be encouraged. Such assurance is the greatest blessing of our earthly lives.

Do you sometimes lack self-assurance? Don't let anything rob you of the joy of knowing that you are secure as a loved child of Almighty God.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine:
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Fanny Crosby, 1820-1915
Born New York

Read about Fanny Crosby, the writer of this hymn, on page 81

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

May I never boast except in the cross of our
Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world
has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Galatians 6:14

The things that people desire, worship and to which they cling, have hardly changed at all with time. But none of them truly satisfy us.

The young woman who wrote this hymn pictured herself beneath the cross of Jesus. As she did, she found herself in a safe place with a peace and joy that the world could never offer her and can never offer us.

What she saw was Jesus, suffering and dying in her place. And what she found was acceptance, forgiveness and love, despite her unworthiness. And so can we, unworthy as we are too.

*What do you see when you picture Jesus suffering on the cross for you?
What do you feel?*

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand –
The shadow of a mighty rock
Within a weary land;
A home within a wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat
And the burden of the day.

Upon that cross of Jesus
Mine eyes at times can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart, with tears,
Two wonders I confess –
The wonders of redeeming love
And my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow
For my abiding-place!
I ask no other sunshine than
The sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by,
To know no gain or loss –
My sinful self my only shame,
My glory all – the cross.

Elizabeth Clephane, 1830-1869
Born Edinburgh

CLEAR VISION

And let us run with perseverance the race
marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus,
the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Hebrews 12:1b-2a

The Bible describes Satan, our enemy, as ‘the prince of this world.’¹ His influence is all around us, especially in telling us how to act and which fashionable false-thinking we should follow.

We must take care not to be misled or we will lose our way from the ‘race marked out for us’ by Jesus and will finish up in despair.

It is only when we fix our eyes on Him that the clamour and darkness of this world will grow strangely dim. And then, with the Bible as our guide, we can clearly see our safe way through the darkness and deceit of the enemy.

It is easy to become spiritually imprisoned by the false values of this world. Fix your eyes on Jesus and stay close to Him. That is freedom.

¹John 12:31

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.*

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Saviour,
And life more abundant and free!

Through death into life everlasting
He passed and we follow Him there;
O'er us sin no more hath dominion,
For more than conquerors we are!

His word shall not fail you, He promised;
Believe Him and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell.

Helen Lemmel, 1863-1961
Born Wardle, England

FROM OUR HEARTS TO HIS HEART

... when you pray, go into your room, close
the door and pray to your Father, who is
unseen. Then your Father, who sees what
is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:6

In Jesus we have precious access through prayer to our Father in Heaven.

As we pray, the important issue is that our souls connect with Him. It's not just our words; it is our awareness of Him that draws us close.

Our prayers will vary, but whether it's a cry for help or a prayer of thanks, prayer must come from our hearts to His heart.

There are times when we can't find the words. He understands. But it is still good to spend time in His presence, and while we are there, to listen to what His heart is saying to our hearts.

Today's verse comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 and 6). It is well worth reading through both these wonderful chapters. Let them speak to you!

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice
And cry, 'Behold, he prays!'

O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod –
Lord, teach us how to pray!

James Montgomery, 1771-1854
Born Irvine, Scotland

Read about James Montgomery, the writer of this hymn, on page 83

EVERLASTING LOVE

... Return to the Lord your God, for he
is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love, ...

Joel 2:13

Jesus told the story of a father whose youngest son left home and wasted his life until he had nothing left.¹ The son decided his only hope was to return to his father and ask for forgiveness.

The father, when he saw his son coming, ran to meet him, threw his arms around him and welcomed him home. His love for his son had not changed.

The father is a picture of our Heavenly Father. No matter how far we have wandered, when we turn back to Him, we find all the love and joy and light that can never be found anywhere else.

If you have wandered from your Heavenly Father, He is waiting for you to return.

¹Luke 15:11-32

O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Light that follows all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seeketh me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that lifteth up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust, life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

George Matheson, 1842-1906
Born Glasgow

Read the background to this hymn on page 82

Heavenly Father,

I pray for the chaplains. Please sustain them with the heavy demands upon their time from those in need of emotional support.

Please give them the right words as they comfort those who are grieving and hurting.

Please help them in their preparation for Bible studies and for services and grant them the courage to teach Your truth boldly.

Thank You for the volunteers. Please bless them as they support the chaplains and serve us.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Almighty God,

I pray for those in this prison who are consumed with guilt and shame on account of their offending behaviour.

Please help them to understand their need of Your forgiveness; that You are a God of mercy and forgiveness who delights in forgiving all who repent of their sin and call upon the name of Jesus. Please humble them so that they will repent before You and be set free from their guilt.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Pray also –

- for the maintenance staff
- for new officers
- for peace and calm across the prison

Father God,

The Governors and Senior Managers need your help to fulfil the heavy responsibilities they carry.

Please grant them wisdom in all the decisions they face on a daily basis. Please help them to be fair with their adjudications.

I pray that You will help them to manage their time effectively and develop strong supportive relationships with staff. Please protect them from excessive stress.

I ask this in Jesus' Name.

Amen

Dear Lord,

I pray for all the families of those in this prison.

Please sustain the family members and friends who are providing extra support, especially with the care of children.

I pray for those struggling financially because of the loss of an income. Please keep them free from any anger on account of the pressures they are facing; rather, help them to be supportive of their loved one in prison.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Pray also –

- for those who work in the kitchens
- for staff who are off sick recovering from injuries or from stress
- for residents on your landing

LACKING NOTHING

The LORD is my shepherd,
I lack nothing.

Psalm 23:1

Children, young people and some adults have little difficulty in producing lengthy lists of 'wants' when it comes to their birthday or at Christmas.

But the elderly often respond differently, 'There is really nothing I need; I have everything I want.' And so they may receive flowers or chocolates!

It is thought that David wrote this psalm during his reign as king. But it wasn't on account of his wealth and power that he was able to say that there was nothing he needed. It was because the LORD was His shepherd; he knew that he needed nothing more.

In prison, it will be easy to grieve over everything that you are lacking. Ask the Lord to remind you that He is your shepherd. He is able to meet your deepest needs.

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed;
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And O what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days,
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever!

H. W. Baker, 1821-1877
Born London

PRAISE GOD – EVERY DAY

Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.

Psalm 145:2-3

When life goes sour, most of us are more inclined to grumble than to praise our Maker. That is understandable. But no matter what, He still deserves our praise.

Our holy, almighty God doesn't change. He doesn't get weaker or more distant or less loving. But if we focus only on our struggles, we can lose the wonder of who He is.

Praise is an attitude of thankfulness and a way of life which flows from an understanding of His love for us. Let us never forget that, 'in all things God works for the good of those who love him...'¹

Life can be difficult and miserable, it's true. But your God is powerful and has not deserted you. Let your whole life praise Him!

¹Romans 8:28a

Fill thou my life, O Lord my God,
In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone,
Nor even the praising heart
I ask, but for a life made up
Of praise in every part.

Praise in the common things of life,
Its goings out and in;
Praise in each duty and each deed,
However small and mean.

Fill every part of me with praise:
Let all my being speak
Of Thee and of Thy love, O Lord,
Poor though I be and weak.

So shalt thou, Lord, from me, even me,
Receive the glory due;
And so shall I begin on earth
The song forever new.

So shall each fear, each fret, each care
Be turned into a song;
And every winding of the way
The echo shall prolong.

So shall no part of day or night
From sacredness be free;
But all my life, in every step,
Be fellowship with Thee.

Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889
Born Edinburgh

AMAZING GRACE

... because of his great love for us, God, who
is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ
even when we were dead in transgressions
– it is by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:4-5

The apostle Paul followed up these words by saying that we are 'saved by grace through faith' in God. In other words, salvation is God's totally undeserved gift to us. It is an offer which He invites us to accept.

This is great news for all who are willing to admit that they will never deserve God's love. Paul knew that was true of him; he called himself the worst of sinners.¹

Likewise, this hymn was John Newton's response to being saved by God's grace.

How foolish that anyone should think that they can ever earn God's acceptance by their good works.

If someone told you that God would never accept them on account of their crimes, how would you try to explain that is not true?

¹1 Timothy 1:15

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright, shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

John Newton, 1725-1807
Born London

Read about John Newton, the writer of this hymn, on page 84

ONE GLORIOUS DAY

At that time they will see the
Son of Man coming in a cloud with
power and great glory. When these
things begin to take place, stand up
and lift up your heads, because
your redemption is drawing near.

Luke 21:27-28

Writing to Christians suffering on account of their faith, the apostle Peter encouraged them to think about the inheritance they had in heaven.¹

Similarly, Paul reminded the believers in Philippi that their citizenship is in heaven and they should be looking forward to the return of their Saviour.²

What a glorious day that will be when Jesus returns to receive everyone who has truly claimed ‘this Jesus is mine’ – those who have died and those still living! We should not assume that we will not be alive when He comes; that glorious day could come any day – even soon.

Read what Jesus Himself said about His return: Matthew chapters 24 and 25.

¹1Peter 1:3-5 ²Philippians 3:20

One day when heaven was filled with His praises,
One day when sin was as black as could be,
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin,
Dwelt amongst men, my example is He!

*Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;
Buried, He carried my sins far away,
Rising, He justified freely for ever:
One day He's coming – O glorious day.*

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain,
One day they nailed Him to die on the tree;
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected;
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He!

One day they left Him alone in the garden,
One day He rested, from suffering free;
Angels came down o'er His tomb to keep vigil;
Hope of the hopeless, my Saviour is He!

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer,
One day the stone rolled away from the door;
Then He arose, over death He had conquered;
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore!

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,
One day the skies with His glory will shine;
Wonderful day my beloved ones bringing;
Glorious Saviour, this Jesus is mine!

J. Wilbur Chapman, 1859-1918
Born Richmond, USA

OUR SUBSTITUTE

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he
was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment
that brought us peace was upon him and by his
wounds we are healed ... and the Lord has laid
on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5,6b

That cross ought to have been used for a criminal such as Barabbas, but it was the sinless Jesus who was crucified there. Barabbas walked free.

What those who crucified Jesus didn't understand was that the Son of Almighty God was laying down His life willingly. Nor did they understand why. And they would never understand just how much He suffered.

The innocence and sacrifice of God's only Son was paying for our guilt. Only His blood has the power to wash away the sin of repentant, believing sinners. And only His blood could open heaven's door for us.

Do you agree with the statement in the last two lines of the hymn?

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
Born Southampton

UNDER HIS WINGS

Whoever dwells in the shelter of
the Most High will rest in the
shadow of the Almighty.
He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;

Psalm 91:1,4a

In these verses, we see two metaphors that help us to understand God's care and protection. First, there is the shadow. When the heat of the sun becomes unbearable, we seek the shade where we can rest. When life itself becomes intense, we will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Secondly, there is the wonderful picture of a bird covering its young under its outstretched wings, fearing possible predators. The bird protects those who are its own. And so it is with God. His care is for those who dwell in His shelter – those who permanently reside with Him.

There is much more in Psalm 91 that illustrates God's care and protection of those who belong to Him. Why not take time to read it and reflect upon it?

Under His wings I am safely abiding;
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild,
Still I can trust Him – I know He will keep me,
He has redeemed me and I am His child.

*Under His wings, under His wings,
Who from His love can sever?
Under His wings my soul shall abide,
Safely abide forever.*

Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow!
How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!
Often when earth has no balm for my healing,
There I find comfort, and there I am blessed.

Under His wings, O what precious enjoyment!
There will I hide till life's trials are over;
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me,
Resting in Jesus I am safe evermore.

William O Cushing, 1823-1903
Born Massachusetts, USA

MERCY FOR ALL

... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst
... I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

1 Timothy 1:15-16

The apostle Paul claimed for himself the title, ‘the worst of sinners’. But he could not possibly have realised how his words would encourage so many, grieving over their sins and their crimes, to repent and seek God’s mercy.

God Himself gave those words to Paul. He wanted to make known His love, compassion and mercy for us all, and especially for those most undeserving of it.

Perhaps Paul’s words were a challenge to John Newton, who called himself a wretch in his wonderful hymn, *Amazing Grace*.¹ And the Lord has used that hymn to draw many to the Saviour.

Do you know of any in your prison who desperately need to hear Paul’s words? Might God be asking you to share His ‘depth of mercy’ with someone?

¹Page 115

Depth of mercy! Can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?

I have long withstood His grace:
Long provoked Him to His face;
Would not hearken to His calls;
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.

I my Master have denied,
I afresh have crucified,
Oft profaned His hallowed name,
Put Him to an open shame.

There for me the Saviour stands,
Shows His wounds and spreads His hands:
God is love! I know, I feel;
Jesus weeps, but loves me still!

Now incline me to repent!
Let me now my fall lament!
Now my foul revolt deplore!
Weep, believe, and sin no more.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

WEAK, WORN, BROKEN

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

These words of Jesus demonstrate His special compassion for the weak and weary and broken.

Jesus' attitude was in sharp contrast to that of the religious leaders. They laid down many trivial rules that had to be kept by would-be followers. They demanded observance of rules in order to earn acceptance. But Jesus promised rest and gentle instruction.

His way of training was like the practice of a younger animal being yoked to the plough, alongside a stronger and more experienced ox who leads gently. Jesus has not changed. When we are yoked with Him, He leads us at an appropriately gentle pace.

If you are feeling weary and overwhelmed, is it time to turn to Jesus to rest?

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down
Your head upon My breast’:

I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink, and live’:
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘I am this dark world’s light;
Look unto Me, your morn shall rise,
And all your days be bright’:
I looked to Jesus and I found
In Him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I’ll walk
Till travelling days are done.

Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889
Born Edinburgh

THE NEEDY WELCOMED

... It is not the healthy who need a doctor,
but those who are ill. I have not come
to call the righteous, but sinners.

Mark 2:17

Jesus spoke these words to the Pharisees when they complained that He was having a meal with 'sinners'. They could not understand Him wanting to spend time with people like tax collectors.

Jesus told a parable to explain that God will humble the self-righteous (such as the Pharisees) and exalt those who humble themselves before Him.¹

The writer of this hymn, Joseph Hart, rebelled against God for many years. He was 45 when he heard words of hope in a chapel and sought God's mercy. After becoming a minister, he wrote hymns like this to encourage 'sinners' to turn to Jesus.

Will you pray for those in your prison who do not realise that Jesus stands ready to save them?

Our short book, *Can I Forgive Myself*, has been written especially for the many men and women in prison who say they cannot 'forgive themselves' and cannot accept that God will forgive them. See details at the back of the book.

¹Luke 18:9-14

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power;
He is able, He is able,
He is willing: doubt no more.

Now, ye needy, come, and welcome;
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief, and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh;
Without money, without money,
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him:
This He gives you, this He gives you;
'Tis the Spirit's glimmering beam.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Bruised and mangled by the Fall;
If you tarry, till you're better,
You will never come at all;
Not the righteous, not the righteous,
Sinners, Jesus came to call.

Joseph Hart, 1712-1768
Born London

NEVER APART

For I am convinced that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons, neither the present
nor the future, nor any powers, neither height
nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will
be able to separate us from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

It seems strange that *Abide With Me* should be adopted by the Football Association and the Rugby League; it has been sung at their cup finals for decades.

Although suffering from a serious illness when he wrote the hymn, Henry Lyte knew he had nothing to fear. He reflected on the truth of the apostle Paul's words – that nothing, not even death, can separate believers from God's love.

Whilst prison walls isolate people from their families and friends and communities, they have no effect upon the Christian's relationship with God. On the contrary, they can bring a greater awareness of His presence and of His love.

In times of darkness – or at any time – pray Henry Lyte's prayer, Abide With Me. Then, read Paul's words (from Romans 8 above) with the same conviction that he had when he wrote them.

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see:
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and strength can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Henry Francis Lyte, 1793-1847
Born Ednam, Kelsam, Scotland

Heavenly Father,

Please comfort those who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

Grief is always painful but it is incredibly hard to cope with when you have not been able to say 'goodbye' and when you are separated from the rest of your family. And the ongoing pain often becomes acute at anniversaries and birthdays.

I pray that you will help chaplains and others who give their time to counsel and support them.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Almighty God,

It is good to remember that You are present in this prison, as is Your Church. I pray for every member of the body of Christ, both residents and staff, that You will help them to live for You.

I pray that You will grant Your wisdom, Your strength and Your peace, to those undergoing trials. And I pray for any who may be doubting whether their prayers are being heard, that You will assure them that You are with them.

I ask these things in Jesus' Name.

Amen

Pray also –

- for those who work in security
- for those who work in probation
- for peace and calm across the prison

Dear Lord,

I pray for all in the prison who have been victims themselves. Some may still be suffering as a result of the harm others have caused them.

I pray for their healing. I pray that they will be able to access the support they need.

And I pray for any who are holding on to anger and bitterness. Please help them to realise they are inflicting pain on themselves. Please enable them to forgive those who have hurt them.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Dear Father God,

Many in this prison have served several sentences and some will have given up all hope of their life ever changing. But that is not your purpose for them. You love each one and long that they will turn to You.

Please draw them to Yourself, in whatever way You choose. Please open their eyes to the way of salvation and to the new life that You offer – both now and for eternity.

In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Pray also –

- for the operational support grade staff
- for the residents who self-harm
- for those desperate to be free from their addictions

LIVING FOR JESUS

And he died for all, that those who live should
no longer live for themselves but for him who
died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:15

Jesus left the glory of heaven for our sake. He lived a life of poverty for the love of us. He surrendered His life for our forgiveness and to shield us from condemnation. And He rose to life again so that we might know the joy of heaven and everlasting life.

That is why we give up the right to please ourselves. And why we must take up the privilege of living to please Him. When we make that choice, we will experience peace and joy in this life, whatever difficulties we may face, and we will have the assurance of eternal life.

It takes courage to live for Jesus, but that courage also comes from Him. And it comes through prayer.

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879
Born Astley, Worcestershire

Read the background to this hymn on page 79

No LONGER CONDEMNED

... there is now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

Would you or I willingly suffer torture and a ghastly, prolonged death in the place of someone else? That is what Jesus did – even for His enemies.

Why would He do that? It was to save us from God's righteous anger against sin and from being condemned. How amazing is God's love for us all.

Our old nature is like a dark prison, causing us to be alienated from God. This is not what God intended for us.

So by dying in our place, Jesus has offered us forgiveness – and the light of a new life, as we open our hearts to follow Him.

Reflect on the time when God's grace and mercy were first revealed to you. Give thanks to Him and to those He used to speak of His amazing love.

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love, how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above –
So free, so infinite His grace –
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray –
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Born Epworth, Lincolnshire

HIS FOREVER

I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

John 6:51

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus made one of His 'I am' statements, appropriately 'I am the bread of life.'¹ It is followed by the wonderful assurance – that Jesus' true followers who feed on Him, the living bread, will live forever.

This promise is reflected in the words of the hymn, '... I am His, and He is mine, forever and forever.' This may be especially comforting if you are facing a lengthy sentence, with little or no immediate prospect of freedom in this life.

The hymn also reminds us that Jesus first drew us to Himself with 'cords of love'.

Are you able to rejoice that you will be with Jesus forever, however bleak your future in this life may seem?

¹John 6:48

I've found a friend, O such a friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him:
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.

I've found a friend, O such a friend!
He bled, He died to save me;
And not alone the gift of life,
But His own self He gave me:
Naught that I have mine own I call,
I'll hold it for the giver;
My heart, my strength, my life, my all,
Are His, and His forever.

I've found a friend, O such a friend!
So kind and true and tender,
So wise a counsellor and guide,
So mighty a defender!
From Him who loves me now so well
What power my soul shall sever?
Shall life or death? Shall earth or hell?
No! I am His forever.

James G. Small, 1817-1888
Born Edinburgh

FULLY SURRENDERED

Then Jesus said to his disciples,
'Whoever wants to be my disciple must
deny themselves and take up their cross
and follow me. For whoever wants to save
their life will lose it, but whoever loses
their life for me will find it ...'

Matthew 16:24-25

Jesus had just explained to His disciples what was going to happen to Him: the elders and chief priests would have Him killed. But three days later He would be raised to life.

Peter, no doubt acting as the disciples' spokesman, told Jesus that must never happen; Jesus immediately rebuked him.

Jesus explained that anyone wanting to be a disciple of His must also be willing to make sacrifices. They must not allow anything to get in the way of truly following Him. Being a follower of Jesus can be very costly but a great reward awaits those who remain faithful to Him.

Have you surrendered all to Jesus? Or are you holding back from fully committing to follow Him?

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

*I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,
I surrender all.*

All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Make me, Saviour, wholly Thine;
Let me feel Thy Holy Spirit,
Truly know that Thou art mine.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Now I feel the sacred flame.
Oh, the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory to His name!

Judson W. Van DeVenter, 1855-1939
Born Michigan, USA

DON'T BE TROUBLED - TRUST

(Jesus' words to His disciples)
'Don't let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God, and trust also in me ...'
John 14:1 (NLT)

It was only now, just a few days before Jesus would be arrested and then crucified, that His disciples finally grasped what Jesus had been telling them over many months.

Jesus knew exactly how they were now feeling. He was concerned for them, despite what He was going through Himself, as He faced the reality of a brutal death. And so He took time to encourage them to trust His Father and Himself.

As His disciples, Jesus' words are for us too. He knows when we are troubled and we are no less precious to Him as His first disciples were.

The hymn writer says, 'How I've proved Him over and over!' Can you recall times when you know Jesus has been faithful to His word? If so, can you encourage others to 'take Him at His word'?

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word,
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him over and over!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!

O how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood,
Just in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease,
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life, and rest, and joy, and peace.

I'm so glad I learned to trust Him,
Precious Jesus, Saviour, Friend;
And I know that He is with me,
Will be with me to the end.

Louisa M. R. Stead, 1850-1917
Born Dover

MARVELLOUS, WONDERFUL

... God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

The gospel is so simple and yet, as Jesus taught, few find the narrow road that leads to life.¹

Many who are on the broad road that leads to destruction refuse to acknowledge that they have any need to repent of anything.

But there are also on that road those whose thinking is quite the reverse; they know that they are sinners but believe they need to get cleaned up before God will accept them. They are wrong too; Christ died for us while we were still sinners and made our sins His very own. How marvellous! How wonderful!

Reflecting on the last verse of the hymn, do you find joy in singing of Jesus' love for you?

¹Matthew 7:13-14

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how he could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean.

How marvellous! How wonderful!
And my song shall ever be;
How marvellous! How wonderful!
Is my Saviour's love for me!

For me it was in the garden
He prayed, 'Not my will, but thine';
He had no tears for his own griefs,
But sweat drops of blood for mine.

He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them his very own;
He bore the burden to Calv'ry,
And suffered and died alone.

When with the ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see,
'Twill be my joy through the ages
To sing of his love for me.

Chas. H. Gabriel, 1856-1932
Born Iowa, USA

BE STILL

'Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.'
The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 46:10-11

These two commands from the Lord – to be still and to know He is God – were probably intended to comfort Israel and to warn their enemies.

But they are also words of encouragement to all believers. Being still means avoiding frantic activity, panicking and getting anxious, as many around us are prone to do – for example, on account of excessive concerns over the threat to our environment.

Knowing that He is God means to acknowledge that He is the Lord Almighty, all-powerful and sovereign, in whom we can have complete trust.

He will be exalted among the nations and He is with us.

Take time to read, and reflect upon, Psalm 46. It may become a favourite – if it's not already!

Be still, my soul! The Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul! Thy best, thy heav'nly Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul! Thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul! The waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul! When dearest friends depart,
And all is darkened in the veil of tears,
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.

Be still, my soul! Thy Jesus can repay
From His own fullness all He takes away.

Be still, my soul! The hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul! When change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Katharina von Schlegel, 1697-1797
Born, Germany
Translated by Miss Jane Borthwick

KNOWING AND GROWING

But grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:18a

Sadly, some people actively study the Bible – or attend church regularly – simply to satisfy a desire for knowledge about Jesus and His teaching, just as they might read books, and attend lectures, on any great person. There is no desire to know Jesus personally.

To gain knowledge for its own sake is definitely not what the apostle Peter – or this hymn – is advocating. Peter wrote his letter to urge the believers to stand firm against false teachers and scoffers and, also, to grow in their knowledge of Christ.

Why the need for knowledge? So that the believers might ‘make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him’ (God). (v14)

Are you growing in your knowledge of Christ; in your appreciation of His love for you and in your expression of your love for Him?

More about Jesus would I know,
More of His grace to others show;
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me.

*More, more about Jesus,
More, more about Jesus;
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me.*

More about Jesus let me learn,
More of His holy will discern;
Spirit of God, my teacher be,
Showing the things of Christ to me.

More about Jesus in His Word,
Holding communion with my Lord;
Hearing His voice in ev'ry line,
Making each faithful saying mine.

More about Jesus on His throne,
Riches in glory all His own;
More of His kingdom's sure increase;
More of His coming, Prince of peace.

Eliza E. Hewitt, 1851-1920
Born Philadelphia, USA

EVER LIVING, EVER REIGNING

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you
to be uninformed about those who sleep
in death, so that you do not grieve like
the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

Since Adam sinned against God, death has come to all mankind;
our earthly lives will end.

But because Jesus has broken the power of death, He lives. As
those who believe in Him, we will too. We will join the resurrection.
The Lord Himself will come down from heaven; the dead in Christ
will rise first and those still alive will be caught up with them in the
clouds to meet the Lord. We will live with Him forever.¹

There will be a joyful welcome from the Father whose beloved Son
died for our salvation: no more pain, no more death, no more grief!

*From the moment you believed and gave your life to Jesus, you were
'born again' and the words of this old hymn became yours!*

¹1Thessalonians 4:16-17

Jesus lives, and so shall I;
Death, thy sting is gone forever!
He who deigned for me to die
Lives the bands of death to sever.
He shall raise me from the dust:
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives, and reigns supreme:
And, His kingdom still remaining,
I shall also be with Him,
Ever living, ever reigning.
God has promised – be it must:
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives, and by His grace,
Vict'ry o'er my passions giving,
I will change my heart and ways,
Ever to His glory living.
Me He raises from the dust;
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives! I know full well
Naught from Him my heart can sever,
Life nor death nor pow'rs of hell,
Joy nor grief, henceforth forever.
None of all His saints is lost;
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives, and death is now
But my entrance into glory.
Courage, then, my soul, for thou
Hast a crown of life before thee.
Thou shalt find thy hopes were just:
Jesus is my hope and trust.

Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, 1715-1769
Born Hainichen in Saxony
Translated by Philip Schaff, 1819-1893

REPENTING, RETURNING

Consider how far you have fallen!
Repent and do the things you did at first...

Revelation 2:5

It is a wonderful moment when we surrender our life to Jesus, and begin to walk with Him along the narrow road that leads to glory.

But the journey is often tough. Walking purposefully we get to know Jesus better. But strolling casually, and without the company of other believers, may cause us to wander away.

But there is a way back; it demands heartfelt repentance. We turn away from whatever idols have led us astray. And we pray that the Holy Spirit will once more fill us with the joy of walking close to our Saviour.

Is it time for you to rediscover the joy of keeping close to God on your journey? Or is there someone on your wing you can encourage to rediscover that joy?

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

William Cowper, 1731-1800
Born Berkhamsted

CONTACT US

We trust that you have found *Inner Hope* helpful and that you will continue to dip into it.

Almost certainly we will not have included all your favourite hymns. The selection was far from easy and we were sad that even a few of our own favourites did not quite make it!

We would love to hear from you. We would encourage you to pass on any comments you have about the book or to let us know your own favourite hymns – and why they are favourites.

If you are not familiar with our other resources (a few of which are listed at the back of this book), please look out for them in the chapel. If copies are not available, ask the chaplaincy to contact us for further supplies. Alternatively, do get in touch yourself.

Throughout the book we have stressed the importance of being right with God, through trusting Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. What Is A Christian? (on page 9) explains what that involves. But if you have questions which are not answered there, please do write to us. We will be delighted to help you in any way we can.

Barbara Parsons

John Phillips

BeaconLight Trust PO Box 91 Banstead SM7 9BA

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GLOSSARY

A short glossary of Biblical words

Atonement

A sacrifice that brings enemies together again. Jesus made atonement for our sins by His sacrifice, enabling us to be brought back to God.

Cherub (plural - Cherubim)

An angelic being who serves and worships God. They are first mentioned in Genesis 3:24 as guardians of the way back into the Garden of Eden after Adam was banished.

Grace

Grace means 'favour'. In the Bible it refers to kindness which is undeserved. We can only be saved by God's grace, not by any works. (Ephesians 2: 8-9)

Hades

Hades is the place where the spirits of unbelievers go when they die. They remain there until the final judgement when Jesus returns. At the end of time, Hades and death are both destroyed in a lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14)

High Priest

The high priest represented the Israelites before God and made sacrifices on their behalf. Jesus, having sacrificed Himself, is our 'great high priest'. It is through Him that we can now approach almighty God. (Hebrews 4:14)

Mercy

Mercy refers to taking pity and holding back punishment that is rightfully deserved.

Messiah

The Messiah is the 'Anointed One' which means the coming King – that is the Christ. (John 1:41)

Omnipotent

Omnipotent means unlimited power. Only God is omnipotent.

Pentecost

The New Testament marks the day of Pentecost as the occasion when the Holy Spirit came and filled the twelve disciples, as Jesus had promised. (Acts 2)

Redeemer

In Bible times, a redeemer was someone who paid for a slave to be set free. Jesus is our redeemer, having died to set us free from the slavery of sin.

Repentance

To repent is to change our thinking and our direction. It involves confessing our guilt and receiving God's forgiveness and then turning from our past life to begin a new life with Jesus.

Salvation

Salvation is being safe from God's wrath and judgement. See 'Grace' which is the means by which we are saved.

Seraphim

A group of heavenly beings. They are mentioned only in Isaiah 6:2-7, where they are continually worshipping the Lord.

Transgression

To transgress is to break a law or to sin. In the Bible, transgression is used to refer to an act of rebellion against God's authority over us.

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Other resources from



Time With God

Written specifically for Christians in prison to provide hope and encouragement and to help them grow in their faith.

Prayers from Inside

A collection of short prayers in plain language for those in prison.

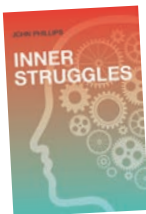


Making Sense of Forgiveness

This explains what it really means to forgive and, most importantly, how we can receive God's forgiveness.

Can I Forgive Myself?

A straightforward Biblical response to that very question, 'Can we forgive ourselves?'



Inner Struggles

Through reference to the Bible, this offers hope and comfort to those looking for God's help in their struggles.

Truth Unlocked

A workbook of 16 essential Bible studies to help you unlock the truth of God's Word.



BeaconLight Trust PO Box 91 Banstead SM7 9BA

