

Week 15: Conclusion

In Christ Alone

Text: Stuart Townend (1963–), 2001

- Youngest of four siblings, whose father was an Anglican priest in Yorkshire, England
- Began writing worship music at 22, while working as a worship leader for the Church of Christ the King, an evangelical, nondenominational church in Brighton, England
- Recorded several Christian albums and spent time touring before beginning to collaborate in songwriting with musician Keith Getty in 2001

Tune: Keith Getty (1974–), 2001

- A native of Northern Ireland, studied flute under Sir James Galway
 - Originally a professional orchestrator and arranger, began writing worship music after meeting his wife Kristyn, who was working as a church worship leader
 - “In Christ Alone” was Getty’s first collaboration with Townend, and launched a string of many more
1. From the time it was written, this hymn has become wildly popular and consistently lands in “top Christian song” lists published by CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing International). Some have gone so far as to call it “the greatest Christian hymn of this generation”. Looking at the lyrics and music, what do you see that makes the song so captivating?
 - a. Consistent refrain: “here in the _____ of Christ I stand”
 - b. Joining ideas into pairs is used as a poetic device (many examples not listed here):
 - i. “heights of love” / “depths of peace”
 - i. Note word-painting in the music, where “heights of love” rises in the melody and “depths of peace” is falling
 - ii. “fullness of God” / “helpless babe”
 - iii. “light of the world” / “by darkness slain”
 - iv. “first cry” / “final breath”
 - v. “power of hell” / “scheme of man”
 - c. Word choice is accessible, but rich and vivid (and decidedly biblical!)
 - i. Names for God: “light”, “strength”, “song”, “cornerstone”, “solid ground”
 - ii. Stages of life: “first cry” and “final breath”
 - d. Tone is uplifting and optimistic
 - i. At the same time, the lyrics are neither shallow nor naïve
 - ii. Rising melody and wide leap reinforces this feeling
 - iii. Trochee at the start of every other line gives an extra “punch” to the otherwise smooth meter
 2. Getty has said that in writing the hymn, he wanted to “tell the gospel story in one song”. Do you find that it achieves this goal well? Is there anything missing? How does it compare to other hymns you know that share the same goal?

Hymns in Review

1. Looking over the following list of hymns we’ve studied (organized by topic), are there any that:
 1. You were familiar with before, but found a new understanding or deepened appreciation for?
 2. You were not familiar with before, but really resonated with you or has become a “new favorite”?
2. Which hymn would you consider the “most underrated”, that would be most beneficial for others in the church to study more deeply?