

Week 12: Writing I

How Firm A Foundation

Text: Anonymous, 1787

- Published in *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors, Intended As an Appendix to Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns* by John Rippon, with the author only indicated as "K—"
- Most scholars believe this refers to Richard Keen, music director in the London church where Rippon was pastor
- The hymn was almost instantly popular, especially in America where it was re-published just three years later

Tune: Anonymous, 1832

- First included in *A Compilation of Genuine Church Music* by Joseph Funk and later in *Southern Harmony* and *The Sacred Harp*
 - Funk was born in Lancaster County, PA, into a German Mennonite family that moved to the Shenandoah Valley, VA, soon after
 - Working as both a farmer and schoolteacher, Funk published music collections on the side and his *Compilation* is in its 24th revision and still in use by Mennonites today
 - Although originally listed as PROTECTION, then SINCERITY and SOLICITUDE, the tune is now known as FOUNDATION
 - Also sometimes sung to ADESTE FIDELES (tune for "O Come All Ye Faithful")
1. Fittingly for a hymn about scripture, the text quotes a number of bible verses off the bat, including Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 43:2, Deuteronomy 31:6, and Hebrews 13:5. How closely does the hymn text follow these passages?
 2. What rhetorical devices do you see used in the text that help keep it strong and memorable?

Exercises

1. As a class, brainstorm potential topics to use in writing a hymn together. Consider the following questions to generate ideas:
 - a. What advice would you give to a new Christian, from experience in your own faith journey?
 - b. What unique challenges does the church face today (both locally and globally)?
 - c. What lessons or ideas do you think are often underappreciated by other Christians?
 - d. What occasions or themes does the church currently lack quality music for?