

## Week 4: Self-Sacrifice

### Take My Life

Text: Frances Havergal (1836–1879), 1874

- Daughter of an Anglican minister, William Henry Havergal, who was devoted to improving the music of the Church of England
  - A visit to his church was striking to Lowell Mason, who reported it was far in advance of anywhere else in England at the time
- Largely self-taught, poor health prevented her from attending school regularly
  - Even so, she was very bright and became proficient in Hebrew, Greek, French, German, and Italian
- Evangelically-minded, printed most of her hymns as leaflets rather than books for easy distribution
- By her own account, this text was written in a single night after a visit to a house of 10 people who all gave themselves to Christ
- Insisted that the text be exclusively paired with her father's tune PATMOS, as it was originally
  - Patmos uses a 7.7.7.7 meter, which means two pairs of couplets per verse (for a total of six)
  - The current favorite HENDON is 77.77.77, still only two couplets per verse but repeats the second couplet to fill the meter
  - Our tune MESSIAH) uses 7.7.7.7 D for longer verses of four couplets each (resulting in only three verses total)

Tune: Ferdinand Hérold (1791–1833), 1839

- Born Louis Joseph Ferdinand Hérold in the Alsace region of France, an only child
  - His father was a pianist and composer, but discouraged him from a career in music
  - After his father's death in 1802, entered the Paris Conservatory of music
  - Moved to Naples, Italy in 1815 for health reasons, then to Austria and back to Paris due to political turmoil
  - Well known for his operas, of which he wrote more than 20 (he also wrote ballets and some concert pieces)
1. Consider the list of items offered up to God: life, time, hands, feet, voice, lips, wealth, mind, will, heart, love, and self. Are any of these more surprising or challenging than the others? Which ones speak to you personally, and what does it look like to *fully* sacrifice that?
- a. "hands": the word "impulse" implies reacting to every small direction, and with immediacy - no delay
  - b. "voice": singing *only* for God means excluding everything else; Havergal was a talented voice and piano performer, but after 1873 refused to sing anything but sacred music
  - c. "intellect": significant considering how smart Havergal was, its "power" is often underrated and overlooked
    - i. Romans 12:1-2 pairs the physical "bodies as a living sacrifice" with the intellectual "renewal of your mind"
  - d. "silver and gold": on one occasion, Havergal donated nearly all of her jewelry to charity, saying:  
"Take my silver and my gold" now means shipping off all my ornaments ... to the Church Missionary society where they will be accepted and disposed of for me... I had no idea I had such a jeweller's shop; nearly fifty articles are being packed off. I don't think I need tell you I never packed a box with such pleasure.
  - e. "heart": becoming a "royal throne" means inviting Jesus to reside there, as well as subjugating it to Him
    - i. Could also be read as forgoing earthly love - Havergal never married
  - f. "love": to "pour at Thy feet" matches pouring oil on Jesus' feet after He raised Lazarus (John 12:3)

# Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

Text: Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847), 1824

- Born in Scotland, abandoned by his father, orphaned at a young age after the death of his mother
- Struggling from lack of money and ill health, became an Anglican minister at 21 years old
- Experienced a re-invigoration of his faith after the death of a colleague in 1818, jump-starting his hymnwriting
- In 1823, was transferred to a parish in Lower Brixham, Devonshire, where he would spend most of his career
- This text was written shortly after his move to Brixham
- Best-known hymns include “Abide With Me” and “Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven”

Tune: Anonymous, 1831

- First published in the hymnal *Christian Lyre* of 1831
- Often attributed to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, though no evidence exists to support that claim
- The original name given was DISCIPLE, only appearing as ELLESDIE later
- The meaning of the name is uncertain, though some have theorized it could stand for “L. S. D.”, possibly the initials of the composer
- The most popular harmonization was written by Hubert Main in 1873; ours is from Austin Lovelace, organist, composer, and committee member for the 1969 *Methodist Hymnal*

1. In the hymn, Lyte lists a number of different sacrifices to be made in following Jesus - list all you can find, along with the hymn’s explanation why each is worthwhile.
  - a. “destitute”: spiritual riches are greater than earthly ones (see Mark 10:23-31)
  - b. “despised”, “forsaken”: the same people despised and abandoned Jesus too; God will not forsake or deceive you.
  - c. “trouble”, “distress”: only brings us closer to God through trust and dependence on Him
  - d. “faith” and “prayer” are the tools to get us through life; God Himself guides us; “hope” fixes our sight on the end goal
2. Knowing what you do about Lyte’s background, how do you see his experiences reflected in this hymn?
  - a. No parents, no money, poor health, (“destitute”, “forsaken”, “life with trials...”)
  - b. Many parallels with “Abide With Me”:
    - i. “foes may hate, and friends may shun me” ... “other helpers fail and comforts flee”
    - ii. “swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day” ... “swift shall pass thy pilgrim days”
    - iii. “God’s own hand shall guide thee there” ... “Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?”
  - c. Quiet and bookish, not a terribly social person
    - i. “Man may trouble and distress me”
    - ii. “Human hearts and looks deceive me”

# All Who Would Valiant Be

Text: John Bunyan (1628–1688), 1684

- Fought in the English Civil War at age 16, after leaving the army became a tinker
- Did not become a devout Christian until after his marriage, influenced by his wife (whose name is unknown)
- Joined a Baptist church that encouraged him to preach and evangelize in the community
- Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, was jailed for three months as a non-conformist
- At a release hearing, refused to agree to cease preaching and continued in imprisonment for 12 years
- While living in jail he wrote numerous books, including *The Pilgrim's Progress* from which this hymn is taken
- The text (originally a poem) comes near the end of the book, at the end of a conversation between “Mr. Great-heart” and “Mr. Valiant-for-truth”
- Heavily modified for inclusion in the 1906 *English Hymnal* by Percy Dearmer, its editor

Tune: Traditional English

- Based on a folk tune collected and harmonized by Ralph Vaughan Williams for this text in the *English Hymnal*
- The name MONK'S GATE is the name of a small town in Sussex, England where Vaughan Williams heard the tune
- Its origins are as a sea song beginning, “Our captain calls all hands on board tomorrow...”
- The source, a Mrs. Harriet Verrall, also introduced Vaughan Williams to the SUSSEX CAROL tune (“On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”)

1. Compare the hymn text against Bunyan's original. While Dearmer's version has been standard for quite a while, some recent hymnals are returning to the original text (including the Church of England's *Common Praise*. Which do you think is more appropriate for use today?

a. Dearmer himself said:

But when ... we had made a great hymn, it became easy for our imitators to complain that we had altered the words. We felt that we had done rightly; and that no one would have been more distressed than Bunyan himself to have people singing about hobgoblins in church. He had not written it for a hymn, and it was not suitable as a hymn without adaptation.

b. *The Gospel in Hymns* says:

...in our “cultured” times, editors have seen fit to tone down [Bunyan's] picturesque particulars into colorless generalities.

c. *The Hymnal 1940 Companion* says (about including the original text):

Bunyan's burly song strikes a new and welcome note in our Hymnal. The quaint sincerity of the words stirs us out of our easygoing dull Christianity to the thrill of great adventure.

2. How would you characterize the difference in perspective on “self-sacrifice” between the three hymns? Do you get a fuller picture of the topic looking at all three together?

a. Havergal is mainly concerned with sacrifices that we *choose* to make, but necessary to grow closer to Christ

i. Takes a small-scale view of individual things we should be doing

b. Lyte is concerned with sacrifices that are a down-stream *effect* of our choice to follow Jesus, placed on us by other people (and by the world)

i. Looks a “point-in-time” in the middle of the Christian walk, with a few specifics but looking forward to heaven as the goal

c. Bunyan takes both and works them into a hymn of encouragement, to continue on the path we have already started

i. Takes a large-scale view of the whole Christian journey, in broad strokes