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When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:37-40

The Cross is the symbol of Christians, and it is also a message to the whole world. The Cross signifies Forgiveness, Salvation, Affection, Anguish, Suffering, Victory, Contentment; all these words are from Christ himself that He spoke while on the

Cross of Calvary, which are known as the seven words from Cross. The Cross of Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith. The Cross reveals to us the character of God; His love for lost sinners and His perfect justice meet at the Cross. The Cross is the place where all the wounds of sin are healed and the solutions to humankind’s problems center in the Cross of Christ. That Cross became an altar where we behold the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. He was dying for somebody else; He was dying for humankind.

The shape of the Cross has a beautiful message. Its vertical and horizontal directions can be understood in Matthew 22:37-40. First it says Love your God with all your heart and will all your soul; this is definitely pointing vertical in direction; a Christian first should love his God. This ultimately says that our first priority is for God, in other words, “do not love the world” (1 Jn. 2:15). When a Christian loves His God truly, He then shall love his neighbor as himself, which is the horizontal direction of the Cross.

Loving one’s neighbor is to love each and every human being, expecting nothing in return. This is the real test for human character and the place where the reality of Christian character is forged. By this true Christians are identified. Christ himself lived this example while on the earth. He broke down all the barriers made by humans; He touched and healed the leper, “Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.” “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy” (Mt. 8:3). He fed the hungry; He helped the needy; He gave freedom to those left out, and ultimately, He was abiding in His Father’s will throughout His life. He sacrificed His life for all, and He set an example for all to follow a Christ-like life. When a Christian abides in God, then that Christian can align with his neighbor. This is the beautiful message of the Cross.



This message is supposed to be carried by every believer of Jesus Christ and only His true disciples can take the message forward by carrying the cross in this way, “Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’” (Lk. 9:23). The cross should be carried each and every day. Isaac Watts wrote a poem “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.” In this poem he described the affliction of Christ on the cross that resulted in salvation to humankind. Christ was abused, scorned, beaten badly, mocked, nailed, and crucified. This should be the everyday life of a disciple who carries the message of cross because the goal of the disciple is to deny the world and depend on God. Being Christians are we ready to carry the message of cross? This is the question we

need to answer for ourselves. Finally, the death of Jesus Christ signals the death of death. This is the message from the Cross.

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Quotes from Isaac Watts

Learning to trust is one of Life’s most difficult Tasks.

What’s amiss I’ll strive to mend, and endure what can’t be mended.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous cross
Oh 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 dead, 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?

His dying Crimson, like a Robe,
Spreads o’er his Body on the Tree;
Then am I dead to all the Globe,
And all the Globe is dead to me.

Where the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my fire, my all.

Source: Musixmatch
Songwriters: Riegger / Isaac Watts
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross lyrics © Oxford University Press, Shawnee Press, Inc., Bud-john Songs Inc, Wordspring Music, Llc

The Story Behind When I Survey the Wondrous

The hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", was written by Isaac Watts, and published in *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1707. It is significant for being an innovative departure from the early English hymn style of only using paraphrased biblical texts. The poetry of "When I survey..." may be seen as English literary baroque.

At the time of Isaac Watts' early years, churches in England sang only metrical psalms. But by the time of his death, he had developed a style of a much more complex hymnody. His 600 hymns found in seven collections made the transition from stringent, metrical psalmody to liberated, theologically-based hymnody.

At the time of Isaac Watts' early years, churches in England sang only metrical psalms.

Watts' hymns include theology in a format that is well suited for congregational singing. He believed that hymns should echo the theme of the sermon and insisted that songs in the church should be amply evangelical and not just additives to the Psalms. He thought that hymns should be freely composed and not just hold to the letter of Scripture; and that hymns should give straightforward expression to the thoughts and feelings of the singers and not merely recall events of the distant past. Watts played a vital role in the evolution and creativity of hymnody as we know it today.

The second line of the first stanza originally read "Where the young Prince of Glory dy'd". Watts himself altered that line in the 1709 edition of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, to prevent it from being mistaken as an allusion to Prince William, Duke of Gloucester, the heir to the throne who

died at age 11.

The hymn's fourth stanza ("His dying crimson...") is commonly omitted in printed versions, a practice that began with George Whitefield in 1757.

In the final stanza, some modern variations substitute the word "offering" for "present".

The hymn is usually sung to either "Rockingham" or "Hamburg", the former being more closely associated with the text in British and Commonwealth hymnals. "Rockingham" was written by Edward Miller, the son of a stone mason who ran away from home to become a musician, being a flutist in Händel's orchestra. "Hamburg" is an adaptation of a plainchant melody by American composer Lowell Mason.

In a popular hymnal compiled and edited by Alton H. Howard, *Songs of Faith and Praise*, the "Hamburg" tune is the one chosen with this note about the music: Gregorian Chant, arranged by Lowell Mason (w. 1824).

Richard Floyd wrote this about the theology of the song in an essay that was first written in 1995 for his study of the atonement with Professor Richard Bauckham at St Andrews University in Scotland. It later appeared as a chapter in his book *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross: Reflections on the Atonement*:

Twentieth century theology has been heir to two main strands of atonement theories. A more conservative strand has retained the language of the biblical affirmations and cast its theories in the thought-world of an earlier orthodoxy, heedless of the hermeneutical gap that atonement faces in engaging a contemporary audience. Such theories seem overly objective, transactional and mechani-

cal in their understanding of what God does in the atonement. Liberal theology, on the other hand, has tended to reduce the atonement to an object lesson, an illustration of the eternal mercy of God and lost the objectivity of the atonement and therefore its centrality for Christian faith. These two tendencies, which I have drawn starkly here as ideal types, correspond roughly to the two main traditions in Western atonement theology: the more objective “satisfaction” theories using legal language typified by Anselm, and the more subjective moral theories typified by Abelard. Today’s successors to these two main types have had little opportunity to be in conversation with one another, and the great church is poorer for this.

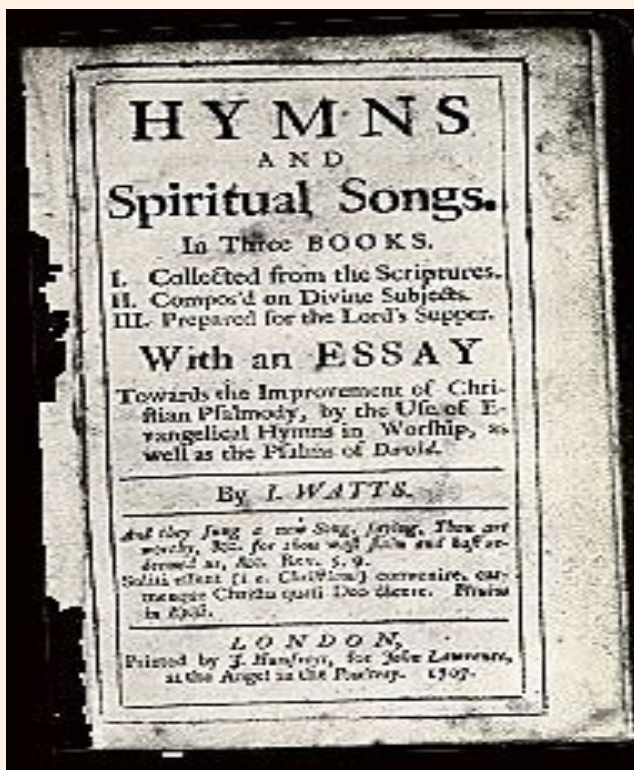
The more current preference for what we often call “Praise Songs” is decidedly different in content and style to the old traditional hymns like When I Survey the Wondrous Cross. While the old hymns attempted to convey Christian theology in a form suited for congregational singing, the Praise Songs are not as ambitious in their design. Praise Songs

are noted for simple phrases that are repeated over and over. Sometimes the musical score may vary a little, but often it is repetitive. While the old hymns are more like a sermon in song, the Praise Songs are more like an emotional outburst, a simple outpouring of a thankful heart, much like the content of many of the Psalms. As has always been the case, there are sometimes controversies among congregations about the types of songs that are used in worship. We may all have our own personal preferences, but surely there is a place for both Hymns and Praise Songs in the music of the church.

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(Sources for this article are Wikipedia, godtube.com and richardfloyd.com)



The Gospel of Wealth

A heartwarming story was reported yesterday from Japan. A police officer station north of Tokyo decided it was time to publicly honor an anonymous individual. This person, who has never been identified, recently sent an envelope stuffed with cash to the police station. 8,000 yen were enclosed, an amount less than \$75. What made this donation noteworthy was the fact that it was to be used for the "unprivileged people" of the community, and that this was the 400th such donation. Once each month since August of 1974, this anonymous donor has mailed in these gifts. The total of the contributions now stands at 1,774,000 yen (more than \$15,000).

Stories about benefactors are not new, of course. Every year we read stories about "secret Santas", individuals who make sure that poor children are not deprived of joy during the holidays. Many Humanitarian organizations in our society exist because donations are received regularly from thousands of individuals. There are many who feel a responsibility to share some of the blessings they have themselves received.

One of the most famous examples of philanthropy was Andrew Carnegie. While still a boy, his father moved the family from Scotland to the United States after having difficulty finding work. Andrew started out with menial jobs, working first in a cotton mill, then as a telegrapher. By age 24 he had been named a superintendent with the Pennsylvania Railroad. He had a keen eye for good investment opportunities, and by 1873 he devoted himself entirely to the steel factories he had been acquiring.

Carnegie became a powerful man, thanks to America's hunger for steel and the spread of railroads across the nation. By 1901, he controlled one-quarter of all the steel production in the U.S., as well as iron mines, coke ovens, ore ships and railroads. When he sold his holdings to the newly-formed U.S. Steel Corporation, he was paid \$250 million, a sum that was unbelievably large for that day.

Scrooge McDuck is a cartoon character who is often pictured sitting on his pile of gold coins, giddily counting his wealth. That character was not

based on Andrew Carnegie, wealthy though he was. In his later years, Carnegie made his mark as one of our nation's most generous philanthropists. His gifts, which totaled more than \$350 million, were due to his philosophy of wealth, articulated in his 1889 essay, "The Gospel of Wealth". Rich men, he wrote, are "trustees" of their wealth and should administer it for the good of the public. A long list of organizations and causes attest that Carnegie lived out the principle he wrote.

There are many philanthropists to be found today. In 2004 Business Week compiled a list of "The 50 Most Generous Philanthropists". On that list were familiar names like Michael Bloomberg, mayor of New York City, who had given over half a billion dollars to that point. The Walton family, descendants of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, had given a billion dollars to charities. At the head of the list were Bill and Melinda Gates; the journal estimated their lifetime gifts to be just under \$28 billion!

"Gospel" is a word that means "good news". In cases like these mentioned, the wealth accumulated by some has been dispersed in ways that have indeed been good news for the needy. Our world is not as bleak as it might otherwise have been because of such people.

Anyone who has read the Bible knows that stress is placed on the concept of giving to the needs of others.

It's not always possible, of course, to know the true motivation behind generous gifts. Sometimes the giver is looking for a personal tax break, and that somewhat tarnishes the gift. But when people follow the principles stated in the Bible, their gifts shine brightly.

Anyone who has read the Bible knows that stress is placed on the concept of giving to the needs of others. One statement that represents the teaching of God's word is 2 Corinthians 9:7: "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." God loves people who give, Paul taught. But more than just giving, God wants us to give cheerfully.

Some might object to such instruction, arguing that they have so little to give. Note what Paul went on to say in the following verse: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). That almost sounds as if God will provide us with the means to be givers. Is that really what it teaches?

Verse 10 makes the point clearly: "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness." If we're willing to "sow the seed" (give to the needs of others), God will make sure we never run out of seed. That's how much God wants us to become people who share with one another.

Mark's gospel tells about an occasion on which Jesus watched how people gave to the poor. In the temple, He and his disciples saw "...many who were rich put in much." Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood'" (Mark 12:41-44).

Some might say, "I'll become a generous giver - if I ever become rich!" The widow described by Mark wasn't rich. But she received high commendation from Jesus for setting her priorities properly. She didn't crave money, and she was able to give the little bit that she had so that others, who had nothing, might have enough. Generous giving doesn't depend on being rich.

The key is to make giving a priority in our lives. Paul made that point in Ephesians 4:28: "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." Most who will read this message understand the importance of a good work ethic. We must work hard so we'll have enough to feed our families and take care of our own needs. But that's not all Paul said. He said we are to aim toward having "something to give him who has need". Every one

of us should make it our goal to become a philanthropist. Though we may not have much, we can do something to help those around us.

And something else will happen when we learn to be generous givers: Greed will shrivel within us. Since our attention is no longer focused only on ourselves, we'll in effect starve that selfishness that often takes over a person's life. We'll be gracious - just like God is gracious!

"Wealth" is a relative term. When I compare what I have with what people in other parts of the world have, I discover I'm a very rich man. Why can't I give some of what I've been given? To the needy, my gifts will be good news. And the good news will apply to me, too, as I witness the transformation of my life into a person who cares about others, not just myself.

Timothy D. Hall
HEM-Lines 01/10/2008

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." 1 Tim 2:1-2

A Prayer

Remind me, O God, when I am lonely and perhaps, I feel despair;

Let not my ailing heart forget, that as a child of yours,
You hear my every prayer.

Remind me that no matter what I do or fail to do,

There still is hope for me,
As long as I have faith in you.

Let not my eyes be blinded by some folly I commit;

But help me to regret my wrong,
Repent, and to make up for it.

Inspire me to put my fears upon a hidden shelf,

And in the future,
Never to be sorry for myself.

Give me a restful sleep, I need before another dawn;

And bless me in the morning
With the courage to go on.

Author Unknown

(Written out by hand and given to me and Beverly Pretty by Carmyn Pitts on March 1, 2019)



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