

Sunday, May 31, 2026 pm

Sermons from Songs
NEAR THE CROSS
Hymns For Worship, #154

Tonight, being the 5th Sunday we want to resume our study of songs we sing from time to time. I has been 6 months since we examined the words of a hymn in this format.

This song was written by Fanny J. Crosby, who was a very well known and prolific song writer. She was blind from an early age, but that did not keep her from being productive. She is credited with the words to more than 4000 songs (some sources say 8000). She collaborated with several song composers who put her words to music. In this case, William H. Doane (1832-1915) composed the tune first and had Fanny create the message.

The song is a reminder to us of our need to cherish the cross. Not the wooden object of torture, but what it represents to us – salvation through the shed blood of Jesus. Galatians 6:14, Paul concluded his letter declaring, *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

This song is suitable for the Lord's Supper, but also at other times to simply remind us of what the cross OUGHT to mean in our lives.

I. Vs. 1 – What was accomplished at the cross.

- a. ***Jesus keep me near the cross*** – this song is written as a request (or prayer). Many of the psalms are written similarly.
 - i. Its theme serves as a reminder that the cross is at the center of our faith. Without the cross, the needed sacrifice is missing. The Hebrew writing in explaining the need for a new covenant emphasized this – cf. Hebrews 10:11--14
 - ii. If we are to remain faithful to our Lord it will be because we are near the cross continually. Daily we ought to be thinking about Jesus and what He did for us and God our Father did with His sacrifice.
- b. ***There a precious fountain*** – Zechariah 13:1, *“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.* The later half of Zechariah is filled with prophecies related to our Lord's coming and sacrifice. While Judah needed the admonition to keep restoring the 2nd temple, Zechariah and others promise a much greater hope in terms of a fountain – which cleanses as it flows.
- c. ***Free to all a healing stream*** – Revelation 22:1-2 mentions a pure river of water proceeding from the throne of God. It provides healing of the nations. Our salvation flows from heaven and cleanses us. Hebrews 9:12-13 contrasts the animal sacrifices of Israel with the blood of Jesus cleansing our conscience. 1 John 1:7 – when we walk in the light, His blood cleanses us – blood shed on that cross.
- d. ***Flows from Calvary's mountain*** – Luke 23:33 mentions Calvary (NKJV, KJV). The actual word (from which our English word *cranium* is derived) was “the skull.” Calvary is actually the Latin word. John 19:34 recalls that to verify Jesus was dead His side was pierced – blood and water came out. It was the shed blood of Jesus that flowed from that cross – for the remission of our sins – Matthew 26:28.

II. Vs. 2 – Describes coming to the cross – God's grace and mercy are found there.

- a. ***Near the cross a trembling soul*** – when we hear of what Jesus has done for us, how will we respond? Acts 2:37 – the trembled; Acts 9:6, Paul struck blind by the Lord trembled and asked what he needed to do. Acts 16:29 – the Philippian jailer trembling asked Paul what he needed to do. It is at the cross where we find our salvation - Romans 6:3-6 – this is where we come in contact with His blood.
- b. ***Love and mercy found me*** – Remember we are saved by the grace of God – Ephesians 2:4-5. Romans 5:6-10 – God demonstrated His love toward us.

- c. ***There the bright and morning Star sheds its beams around me –***
 - i. This is another description of Jesus from Revelation 22:16, “*I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.*”
 - ii. Malachi 4:2 speaks of “*The Sun of Righteousness shall rise, with healing in His wings...*”
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 1:18, *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
 - iv. It is through Christ Jesus and His sacrifice that we have our hope.. 1 John 1:5-7 – *if we walk in the light as He is in the light...*

III. **Vs. 3 – Reminds us to live our lives in the shadow of the cross**

- a. Vs. 2 was about coming to Jesus. Vs. 3 is about life IN Jesus. Living if you will, in the shadow of the cross.
- b. ***Near the cross O Lamb of God –***
 - i. Jesus was “*the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world*” – John 1:29.
 - ii. 1 Peter 1:19 – we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish.
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 5:7 – describes Jesus as our Passover, sacrificed for us.
 - iv. John in Revelation 5:5-6 elaborates on this presenting Him as the only hope we have
- c. ***Bring its scenes before me –*** anyone who has done a study of crucifixion knows the torture involved in it.
 - i. Jesus bore excruciating suffering to pay the price God demanded. It demonstrated how terrible sin really is and what it does to our relationship with God.
 - ii. We ought to seek to envision what He went through to appreciate what He really did.
 - iii. Philippians 2:5-8 reminds us He left heaven to come and die.
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 4:10-11 – Paul daily thought of the cross, through what he endured and gave up. He was willing to die. Why? Because that is what Jesus did for Him.
- d. ***Help me walk from day to day with its shadows o’er me –***
 - i. Matthew 16:24 – to follow Him, we have a cross to bear. 2 Cor. 5:14-15 speaks of how because He did, we no longer live for ourselves. Galatians 2:20 – I am crucified with Christ..
 - ii. How do we remain near the cross?
 - 1. By crucifying the works of the flesh with its passions and desires – Galatians 5:24
 - 2. Through the Lord’s Supper -Matthew 26:26-28
 - 3. Continued Bible reading – within its pages we are reminded what He did and why.
 - 4. Songs we sing – such as this one
 - 5. Regular messages in sermons – 1 Corinthians 2:2 - it was a regular part of Paul’s teaching. 1 Corinthians 1:21-24 – we preach Christ crucified.
 - 6. Through offering an invitation – the reason we offer an invitation is because of His sacrifice.
 - 7. Though obeying the gospel – Romans 6:3-4

IV. **Vs. 4 – Is a call to remain faithful until we reach our final goal**

- a. ***Near the cross I’ll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever –*** within the cross we find hope. Why do we live as we do, because Jesus lived as He did.
 - i. 2 Timothy 2:11 – a faithful saying, If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.
 - ii. Colossians 1:27-29 describes Paul making known Christ in you, the hope of glory.
 - iii. 1 Peter 1:3-5 -we have been begotten again to a living hope through His resurrection (which happened BECAUSE he died).
 - iv. We must understand that we need to remain faithful. 1 Corinthians 15:58, Hebrews 10:38-39
- b. ***Till I reach the golden strand, just beyond the river –***

- i. Faithfulness must last as long as we live - Revelation 2:10.
- ii. The river – is a reference to salvation in heaven. While the language is not found in scripture, Israel crossing the Jordan River to receive their promised reward is related to when we die we too will receive our promised land. This comes AFTER our wilderness wandering and being faithful to the end.

V. **Chorus – As long as we have breath, let us glory in the cross.**

- a. ***In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever*** – Galatians 6:14 – *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.* In our books this song is keyed to this verse. It is how Paul begins to bring his letter to the Galatians to its conclusion. Understand that Paul is NOT rejoicing in wooden cross that Jesus was nailed to. BUT as he considered what it stood for and what that sacrifice had accomplished in his life – He rejoiced that Jesus “*for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God.*” (Hebrews 12:2) THAT cross means we have a greater reward waiting for us, on the other side of this life. And as Paul could confidently say – whatever he (and we) endure in this life, it will be but a “light affliction” (Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).
- b. ***Till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.*** –
 - i. The word “rapture” is a word that means to be *caught up*. It is a Latin word (rapio) associated with the Greek word, ἀρπάζω (harpazō) (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4) and means to be caught up or snatched.
 - ii. When this life is over, we will be “caught up in the air to always be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4: 17.
 - iii. Then and ONLY then, can we finally rest from our labors. Revelation 14:13.

And thus we examine the message of another song. It is a call to continued faithfulness as we hope for something better than the troubles and sorrows of this life. May we never forget what happened on that fateful day nearly 2000 years ago. What does His cross mean to you? Think about it!