

5th July 2020

Let's start off with a joke this morning shall we.

A bored young man decided life would be more fun if he had a pet.

So he went to the pet store and told the owner that he wanted to buy an unusual pet. After some discussion, he finally bought a talking centipede, (100-legged bug), which came in a little white box to use for his house.

He took the box back home, found a good spot for the box, and decided he would start off by taking his new pet to church with him. So he asked the centipede in the box, "Would you like to go to church with me today? We will have a good time." But there was no answer from his new pet. This bothered him a bit, but he waited a few minutes and then asked again, "How about going to church with me and receive blessings?" But again, there was no answer from his new friend and pet. So he waited a few minutes more, thinking about the situation.

The guy decided to invite the centipede one last time. This time he put his face up against the centipede's house and shouted, "Hey, in there! Would you like to go to church with me and learn about God?" This time, a little voice came out of the box, "I heard you the first time! I'm putting on my shoes!"



"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." — Nelson Mandela (Long Walk to Freedom)

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all

And also with you



A minute's silence in memory of all who have died and for all who work on the front line, and for those whom we can name who need our prayers.

Call to worship

Lord Jesus, call us, wanderer of seashores and country roads, city streets and places of the unknown, invite us to sail out of our wee harbours into the uncharted waters of faith to wander off from our predictable paths to follow You into the unpredictable footsteps of the kingdom; to leave the comfort of our homes and accompany You in where you are going. As we wait in our simple, sometimes crazy, constantly uncertain lives, speak to us, Spirit of God, of that which our anchor, of that peace which is our rock, of that grace which is our refuge. Amen.

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine



Fanny Crosby

Ira Sankey, good friend of hymn author Fanny Crosby, once related this story about the comfort "Blessed Assurance" provides: "During the recent war in the

Transvaal,' said a gentleman at my meeting in Exeter Hall, London, in 1900, 'when the soldiers going to the front were passing another company whom they recognized, their greetings used to be, "Four-nine-four, boys; four-nine-four;" and the salute would invariably be answered with "Six further on, boys; six further on." The significance of this was that, in 'Sacred Songs and Solos,' a number of copies of the small edition of which had been sent to the front, number 494 was 'God be with you till we meet again'; and six further on than 494, or number 500, was 'Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine'" (*My Life and Sacred Songs*, 69).

Youtube: Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine! •23 Jan 2019 First-Plymouth Church
Lincoln Nebraska-Videos

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

o *Refrain:*

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

2. Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels, descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love

When asked how he could persevere through 27 years of imprisonment, Mr.



Mandela answered, "It was my test from God. The only way, I navigated such extreme experiences, was to keep a little hope for the future and a small light of love in my heart. I prayed to God every day for the people who were victims of the racist white rule."

Prayer

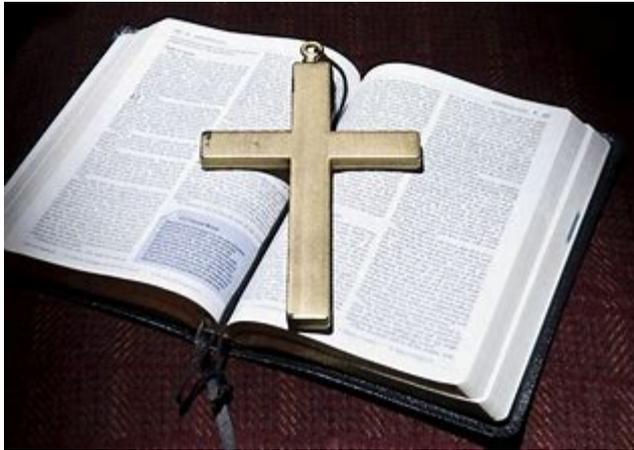
"I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying." —



Nelson Mandela

Dear God, throughout life You remain with us. How blessed we are to be with You, for You accompany us throughout life. We cannot imagine our existence without You, waking up in the morning and saying good day to You, beginning a new day with prayer, believing that minute by minute You shall be near...when times of trouble surround us, we can instantly turn to You for strength and comfort, in times of celebration You laugh and sing and during the period when we need to be quiet and alone, you remain there giving us the space we may need. Lord, for You are God over all of creation, You know each animal, mammal, bird and reptile that walk, crawl Your earth. Creation is your home, and You have more right to be here than we do, and yet You allow us to share in the beauty of what You have created. No person can do what you are able to do, and so we give thanks and bow before You. Forgive our foolish ways, Lord for we can be self-centred and believe we do not need help. There are the times when we think I am strong, and able and my inner strength is so that I am not in need of God...how often we turn back to You saying forgive me for I tried to walk alone and I am unable to. Forgive us when we are not interested to pray or read your Holy Book, when we only wish to be close to you on a Sunday then go back to our old ways, forgive us when we do not have You at the centre of all that we do, instead keep You for the times when we need You**silence** (we ask God to forgive us for what we may have done).....Forgive us, remain with us and grant us thy blessing on our daily bread, and over all our lives, thy radiance shed. We join with voices from all over the World, young and old, past and present in saying,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen



Ephesians 1:16-19

I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

Two stories taken from Francis Gay, the friendship book. 2000.

In the 19th century Queen Victoria once wrote in her diary about the sermon she had heard in Crathie Church, near Balmoral. "The minister explained "she wrote, "in the most beautiful and simple manner, what real religion is, how it ought to pervade every action of our lives, not a thing only for Sundays, or for our closet, not a thing to drive us from the world.....but being and doing good, letting everything be done in a Christian Spirit."(Friday-March 17th)

During the last few years, church members in the New Forrest area have been sending out containers of clothing and useful items to one of the African countries with which they are linked. The project has been based on the Bible story of Tabatha in the Acts of Apostles, (9:36-43), who showed love for God by making clothes for her neighbours. During Lent one year, the 16 parishes worked together to fill more than 700 boxes and raised over £5000 to pay for

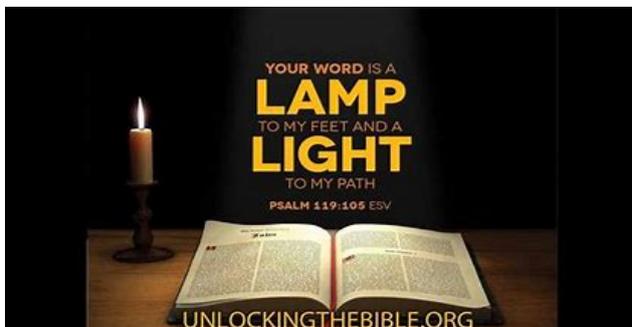
transport. Eight weeks later the consignment was in Africa. The project was named "Containers of Hope" for that is what it symbolised to those far away, not just the material contents, valuable as they were, but for the fact that people they may never know have been concerned for their welfare. (Thursday-March 16th)

Dorcas (or Tabitha in Aramaic -- both names mean "gazelle") is mentioned in Acts 9:36-42. She was a member of the early Christian community in Joppa, a seacoast town of Israel, and noted for her acts of charity, in particular for



making garments and giving them to needy widows.

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead." — Nelson Mandela



Scripture

Here is a short film for you to watch please do....6.48 minutes.

Youtube: I am the Bread of Life - Jesus Christ •2 May 2013 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Jesus teaches He is the Bread of Life. Peter testifies that Jesus is the anointed Son of God.

John 6:25-40.

Jesus the Bread of Life

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." ²⁸ Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." ³⁰ So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'^[a]" ³² Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ "Sir," they said, "always give us this bread." ³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."



S. Baring-Gould

Onward Christian Soldiers

"Onward, Christian Soldiers" is a hymn from the 19th century that remains popular today. The hymn's theme is taken from references in the New Testament to the Christian being a soldier for Christ, for example, 2 Timothy 2:3 (KJV): "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." It was written to encourage Christians in their ongoing battles with temptations within themselves and the evil forces throughout the world.

Youtube: The Scottish Festival Singers - Onward Christian Soldiers •9 Nov 2016 WeAreWorship Lyrics & Chords



1 Onward, Christian soldier,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before!
Christ, the royal Master,
leads against the foes;

Forward into battle,
See his banner go!

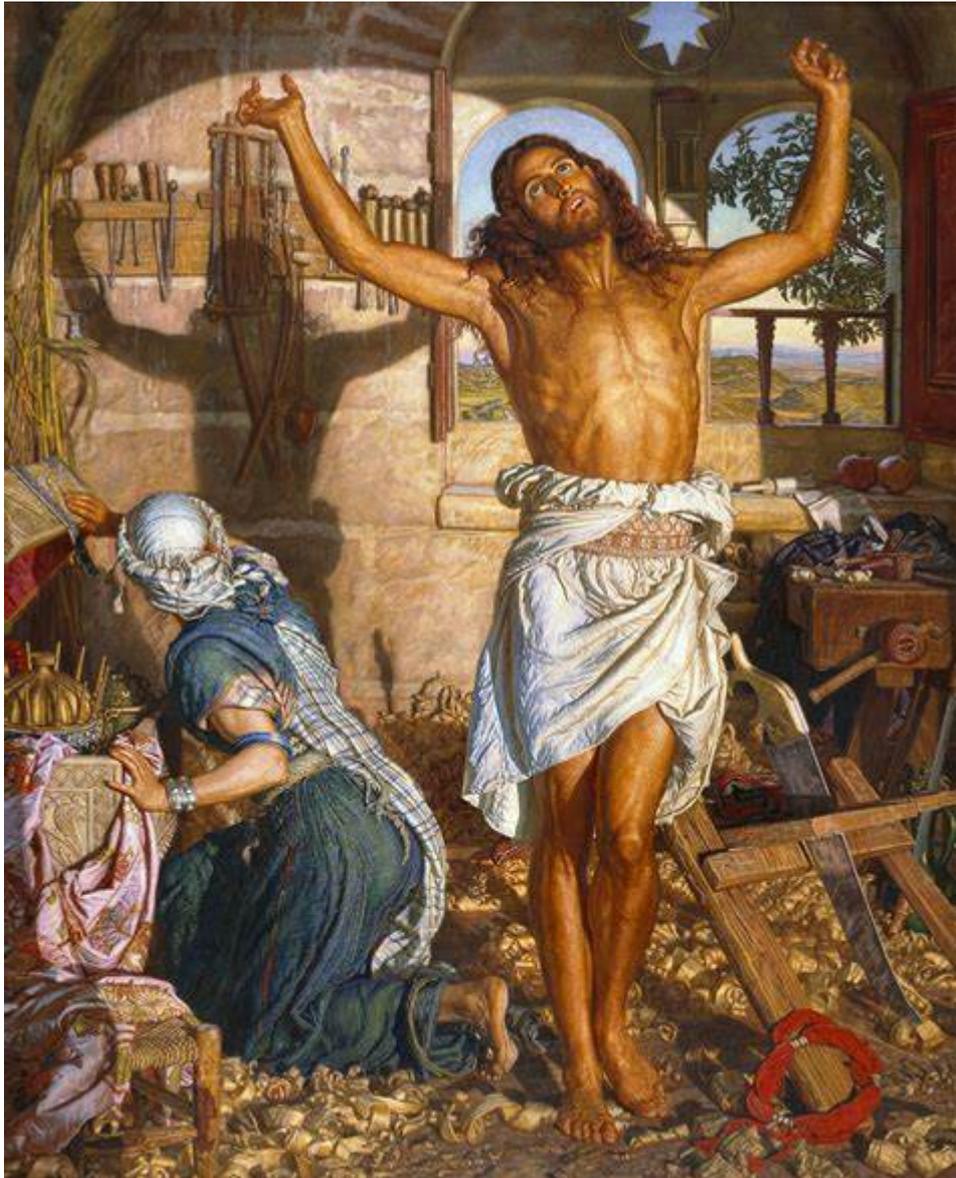
Refrain:

Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before!

2 At the sign of triumph
Satan's host doth flee;
On, then, Christian soldiers,
on to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver
at the shout of praise;
Brothers, lift your voices,
loud your anthems raise! [Refrain]

3 Like a mighty army
moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
where the saints have trod;
We are not divided;
all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
one in charity. [Refrain]

4 Onward, then, ye people,
join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices
in the triumph song;
Glory, laud, and honor,
unto Christ the King;
This thro' countless ages
men and angels sing. [Refrain]



Reflection

Jock:

Young David had been asking his mother for a baby brother for a long time and had always been told, "Perhaps one day when we can afford one." So, it was with great excitement that he rushed home one day. "Put your coat on quickly Mum," he said. "There's a Summer fete at the Church this afternoon and it says 'Children Free!'"

While reading the Bible, praying, listening to music, all these can be ways which can help us to feel Gods presence within our lives, He can also speak to us through paintings. And it was so, at one of my local church fetes years ago, a picture of Jesus caught my eye. The copy of a painting by William Holman Hunt called the Shadow of Death is what I discovered in a fete sale. This is a master piece which was created from 1870-73...during Hunts trip to the Holy Land. It

depicts Jesus as a young man prior to his ministry, working as a carpenter. He is shown stretching his arms after sawing wood. The shadow of his outstretched arms falls on a wooden spar on which carpentry tools hang, creating a "shadow of death" prefiguring the crucifixion. His mother Mary is depicted from behind, gazing up at the shadow, having been looking into a box in which she has kept the gifts given by the Magi. If you are able too, please look at the picture for a moment. As you will see, there is a strong sense of realism and the detail is so exact.

One commentator writes - Throughout the picture, there is a noticeable attention to detail — in Jesus's body, in the trees outside, in the saw and sawhorse — which all give the impression of realistic representation. However, the placement of figures and objects is not at all natural, which leads a viewer to uncover what becomes rather obvious symbolism: Jesus's shadow covers a cross-shaped tool-bench; the archway is a halo over Jesus's head; even Jesus's shadow (by means of his right arm) looks like he has been locked in some circular tool on the wall. Overall, the shadow of Jesus in the position of crucifixion, while in the middle of carpentry work, suggests the inevitability of his death, as well as the method of his death.

For me as I look, I can be transported, to be sitting in Jesus presence, watching a crafts man busy at work, as he stretches with tired arms, he has the world weighing heavily on his shoulders, he is surrounded by folk he loves, his mother at his side... the future is in evidence because of the shadow that is created as he stretches his arms . Do you feel that you are invading his space or are you part of the family, sitting watching your brother at work? Maybe you are walking past along a dust road and you see him, you don't know who he is, does he seem familiar...? Do you feel the love that coming from him? What is it you see?

"I am the bread of life," says Jesus. He's not only the giver of this bread - He is the bread! We are led to believe that the true bread that has come down from heaven is Jesus himself. And, as he has just pointed out, this bread gives life to the world. This is one of the great passages of the Fourth Gospel. I am the bread of life. Well, my stomach is rumbling for I love bread, especially when it is not long out of the oven, many people also like bread, and see it as part of the essential items they must have in their shopping trolley. Bread Is the essential of life, of course I am not talking merely of the physical sense of the word but also the spiritual essence. The Bread of life is the relationship we have with God through Jesus Christ. While you maybe thinking of newly cooked bread with melting butter on it, is the thought making you hungry? Maybe also we can become hungry thinking about the life we have with God, the intimate and loving relationship, the one which comes because of Jesus Christ. As Christians we

would say that life is merely an existence if we do not have our faith and belief in Jesus. As Willie Barclay puts it, *"Therefore, if Jesus gives life, if He is the essential of life, He can be described as the Bread of life, He is the essential without which real life can neither begin nor go on."* Once our relationship with Jesus begins the hunger and thirst for the earthly world can be overcome, for the soul is at rest, the hungry heart is satisfied...for we start on the trail of getting to know God and accepting Him.

The Painting of the Shadow of death, and this week's scriptural passage may give you an insight to Jesus through the eyes of the artist or author. If we can see something which may reflect Jesus, we are beginning to open up to getting to know Him, to having a feeling He's touching our lives... He is not simply a figure in a painting, in a book, in our imaginations, He can become real. By going to Him, we can have an intimate relationship, we can be at home with Him. The door is open, not simply for ourselves, its for all to come to Him. By taking the steps needed we shall go through Jesus to reach the final goal, God.

As for God, his way is perfect: All the Lord's promises prove true. He is a shield for all who look to Him for protection. For who is God except the Lord? Who but our God is a solid rock? God arms me with strength, he has made my way safe. He makes me as surefooted as a deer; leading me safely along the mountain heights. (Psalm 18:30-33)

Jesus has come from God; the Father has sent him into this world to be a means of life for all men and women. Almighty God is the final goal, He is the one who can move our heart into a place where we melt and need Him always...its God who can awaken us from a deep sleep to desire Him and follow Him. None of this will happen unless we accept and go forth, God is not going anywhere, it's up to us to take up or refuse his relationship.

As families and friends are beginning to meet with each other now, the joy of seeing people who mean so much to us, people whom we love and need in our lives...So nice to see pictures on the news of families reunited again. When I have spoken to people about the lockdown, and how they are getting on, the common words are, "I'm missing my family and friends..." Have you ever been to an airport and watched folk arrive from international destinations...so lovely to see them come through customs, after collecting their luggage and as they walk into the arrival lounge, the tiredness of a long journey disappears as they see family and friends and hear them shouting , "we are over here"....as they run forth giving their loved ones a hugs and kisses , the joy and love of being reunited again...tears of happiness. If you are ever feeling depressed or had a rubbish day, go and watch other people being reunited with each other...the

wave of happiness can overcome you. Its so great to see. On the other side of the blanket, the departure gate when you have to say goodbye and you are not sure when you shall see the person your waving farewell to again. This can be a difficult for many, where tears of joy turn to tears of sadness.

I am the bread of life, the offer from Jesus is to be with us at all times, from today as we walk through creation into eternity there is no departure gate to say goodbye ill see you in a few years' time...through Jesus, God remains with us and travels alongside us wherever we go... the joy of the arrival of Christ in our lives and God is one worth shouting about.....Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you (James 4:8)

"Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." The life that Jesus promises is a life of deep fulfilment and lasting satisfaction. He's been sent from heaven to open up this life. It is, as John 6:40 makes clear, a life that stretches way outside the here and now. It is "eternal life" and those who have eaten of this bread, who have responded to Jesus, will be "raised up on the last day".

Love and friendship are rich gold threads which run through the tapestry of life making it sparkle and glow with their warmth. May we all sparkle as we are reunited with family and friends...and the glow of Christ shine through the footprints we make each day as we go about our business.

In the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit Amen.



Joseph M Scriven

What a friend we have in Jesus.

Joseph M. Scriven (b. Seapatrick, County Down, Ireland, 1819; d. Bewdley, Rice Lake, ON, Canada, 1886), an Irish immigrant to Canada, he wrote this text near Port Hope, Ontario, in 1855. Because his life was filled with grief and trials, he often needed the solace of the Lord as described in his famous hymn. "What a Friend we have in Jesus, "was written to comfort his sick mother in Dublin,

possibly right after the death of his second fiancée. When asked by a neighbour about his writing of the text, Joseph Scriven modestly commented, "The Lord and I did it between us." Following the drowning of his fiancée on the eve of their wedding, he seldom had a regular income, and he was forced to live in the homes of others. He also experienced mistrust from neighbours who did not appreciate his eccentricities or his work with the underprivileged. A member of the Plymouth Brethren, he tried to live according to the Sermon on the Mount as literally as possible, giving and sharing all he had and often doing menial tasks for the poor and physically disabled. Sadly, Joseph suffered from deep depression and it is not known if his drowning was an accident or suicide.

Youtube: What a Friend We Have in Jesus •19 Jan 2018 Acapeldridge Sung by Jeremy, Tabitha Lewis, Lisa, Ralph and Michael Elderige

1 What a Friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 Everything to God in prayer!
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry
 Everything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?
 Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged,
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Can we find a friend so faithful
 Who will all our sorrows share?
 Jesus knows our every weakness,
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.

3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,
 Cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Savior, still our refuge—
 Take it to the Lord in prayer;
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
 Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
 Thou wilt find a solace there.



If after church you wait awhile, someone may greet you with a smile. But, if you quickly rise and flee, we'll all seem cold and stiff, maybe. The one beside you in the pew is perhaps a stranger too. All here, like you, have fears and cares, all of us need each other's prayers, in fellowship we bid you meet, with us around God's mercy seat. (Anonymous)

May we pass to our friends and family, neighbours and the stranger the Peace. We can say aloud or silently from deep within, "**Peace be with you**" and in doing so, believe in a world where there can be deep Peace upon the Earth, a world of sharing, loving uniting as equals. A world where we sleep soundly and live in peace. Amen



"There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death." — Nelson Mandela (Long Walk to Freedom: Autobiography of Nelson Mandela)

Intercession Prayer

Please if you can listen to this before you pray...Nearer, my God to thee.

Youtube: Nearer, My God, to Thee - André Rieu (live in Amsterdam) 30 Jul 2013 [André Rieu](#)

(Andre Rieu over 500 brass players and the Johann Strauss Orchestra



performing Nearer, my God to thee live in Amsterdam) .

Let us pray,

God of love truth and understanding, we come to you and say here our prayer. Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee. As we sit at home reading this service we give thanks for our church family near and far, for those whom we do not know to those who are closest...we pray for all who worship you in so many different tongues...all coming together in Christ, giving thanks that in Him, we can be near to thee... We give thanks and pray for those who are helping to make other people's lives special, for the ones who leave a footprint in the sand and for those who follow behind, who recognise the marks as godly. We pray for the food banks, for all who help preparing boxes, to those who donate, to all who need and cannot do without the help of food donations...We pray for our carers who work within the NHS to all who work privately. For those who work who are noticed to those who are not seen, yet whose roles are important to keeping the hospitals running smoothly. We pray for our children who are finding being at home difficult and are missing their friends and school...for teachers who are busy trying to organise class rooms and class work as they prepare a return to school in August. We pray for all who are trying to organise their business's so that when they are able too, they can work in a safe environment. Lord in **silence** hear our own personal prayers... We finally pray for those who do not know You, who wish to and find it hard too, to those who have been hurt by the church and care not too, to people who simply do not believe...we thank you for being a God of all whether we have a faith or not, a God of acceptance, forgiveness and love... here our prayer. Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee. Amen.

Let's now sing this most heavenly hymn, Near my God to thee.



Nearer, My God, to Thee

Sarah Flower Adams was a British actress who received praise for her performance in an 1837 production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. After health problems disrupted her career as an actress, she found comfort in writing poems and hymns. "Nearer, My God, to Thee" retells the story of Jacob's dream. Genesis 28:11-12 can be translated as follows: "So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it..." It has been said, that this was the last tune the band played as the Titanic sank...This has not been confirmed or denied.

Youtube: Nearer, My God, to Thee •9 Apr 2013 [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#)

(A priesthood choir from YSA stakes in Salt Lake sings "Nearer, My God, to Thee.")

1. Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee.

Refrain:

Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!

2. Though like the wanderer, the sun gone down,
Darkness be over me, my rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be nearer, my God, to Thee.
3. There let the way appear, steps unto Heav'n;
All that Thou sendest me, in mercy giv'n;
Angels to beckon me nearer, my God, to Thee.

4. Then, with my waking thoughts bright with Thy praise,
 Out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise;
 So by my woes to be nearer, my God, to Thee.
5. Or, if on joyful wing cleaving the sky,
 Sun, moon, and stars forgot, upward I'll fly,
 Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee.
6. There in my Father's home, safe and at rest,
 There in my Savior's love, perfectly blest;
 Age after age to be nearer, my God, to Thee.



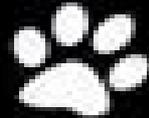
Blessing
 (A positive way to start a new day)

Be cheery, not dreary, be happy, not sad,
 be carefree, despair free
 Begin now-be glad Amen

A Human's Prayer To A Dog

1. Thank you for your bark
2. Thank you for welcoming me home with a smile and wagging tail
3. Thank you for kisses and paws without asking
4. Thank you for your silly antics
5. Thank you for lying next to me
6. Thank you for a cold wet nose
7. Thank you for accepting me
8. Thank you for adopting me
9. Thank you for your patience
10. Thank you for letting me be part of your life

Love FOREVER, Your Human



It was deep winter. The husband had just settled down in his snug office when he received a text message from his wife, "Windows frozen, can't open it." "That's easily fixed," he replied, "just pour warm water round the edges and tap it lightly with a hammer." A few minutes later he received another text message, "Done that, the computer has now crashed!"

The Pastor came to visit the other day. He said that at my advanced age I should be thinking of the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do it all the time." "No matter where I am - in the living room, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement, I am always asking myself: 'Now, what am I here after?'"

I may be in trouble with this one...The Pastor's wife walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a fly swatter. "What are you doing?" She asked. "Hunting flies" He responded. "Oh. Killing any?" She asked. "Yep, 3 males, 2 females," he replied. Intrigued, she asked. "How can you tell them apart?" He responded, "3 were on a beer can, 2 were on the phone."

A prayer for courage

Lord, give me courage tis I pray
to face each new awakening day,
without it I can only be
a phantom ship upon life's sea.
When sorrow arises, help me find
through courage, happy peace of mind.
If tears be shed, then let them be
foretaste of hearts tranquillity.

By Georgina Hall

