

Week 1

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

Devotion by Dr. Lee Strawhun



CELEBRATING

Charles Wesley

300 YEARS

1707-2007

J E S U S , L O V E R O F M Y S O U L

Words: Charles Wesley, 1740 (Wis. 11:26), Music: Joseph Parry, 1879

1.

Jesus, lover of my soul,
let me to thy bosom fly,
while the nearer waters roll,
while the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
till the storm of life is past;
safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last.

2.

Other refuge have I none,
hangs my helpless soul on thee;
leave, ah! leave me not alone,
still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
all my help from thee I bring;
cover my defenseless head
with the shadow of thy wing.

3.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
more than all in thee I find;
raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
false and full of sin I am;
thou art full of truth and grace.

4.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
grace to cover all my sin;
let the healing streams abound,
make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
freely let me take of thee;
spring thou up within my heart;
rise to all eternity.

Week 1, Day One: In His Tender Care

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It is a wonderful and delightful feeling to know that someone loves you; loves you for who you are today and who you were and will be. Whose love isn't swayed by the tempests of life nor the fickleness of the beloved. When Jesus loves you how does he do it? Why does he do it? Those are deep questions and we get some light in that blessed Corinthian passage of agape, love.

Jesus' love for you isn't a yelling match, but a manner of communicating to your soul that speaks to the inner the child in all of us. His love for you isn't overpowering though he is far more wise and powerful. Instead his love for you is sacrificial and at his expense forgiving, patient and kind. Oh to his bosom let us fly to enjoy his love, his presence, his laughter over us.

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Prayer

Lover of my soul, take notice of the trials of my life. As the water rolls and the depths abound fill me with hope that will take me through to thy haven's rest. Amen.

*Jesus, lover of my soul,
let me to thy bosom fly,
while the nearer waters roll,
while the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
till the storm of life is past;
safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last.*

Week 1, Day Two: Finding Refuge

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What refuge does this world offer? If one watches the game shows so prevalent today one could guess which briefcase holds \$1,000,000. Would that be your refuge? Or would the grandest refuge be to work with the “Donald?” Or perhaps have a new house and know that your community pitched in to help? All these are good, they would help, no one can deny that but have we, have you the knowledge that no other refuge will suffice? What refuge do you hold onto in the midst of the storms of life right now? Is it the doctor’s advice, the attorney’s papers, the accountant’s addition, your spouses’ love? Oh that they would comfort us to the end but they won’t because they can’t. It isn’t that they won’t try; oh they will and try hard if you have insurance or money to pay the fees. But Charles Wesley reminds us that though these are available the only sure refuge we have is Jesus, the lover of our soul.

*Other refuge have I none,
hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah! Leave me not alone,
still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
all my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
with the shadow of thy wing.*

Read Hebrews 6:9-20

Prayer

Lover of my soul I have many life vests on right now. They are (name them) and though they are helpful they won’t take me to the end. I want to do more than survive this time, this life of mine, I want to live it when the sea’s roll hanging on to You. Leave me not alone, still support me and comfort me as you intend to do. Amen.

Week 1, Day Three: Vested Love

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Yesterday we looked at the possible life vests we might wear when faced with the rolling ocean tempest but today “all my trust on thee is stayed.” It takes courage to turn from all those other life vests; vests with good names, wonderful intentions, capable resources. And all those are good resources unless, you desire to go deeper with God into this call of holy, loving living. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians that the reputation that preceded the church was “a report of how they turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God ...” (NRSV) Living and true. Pause for a moment and let that sink into your heart and mind. Pause, be still, hush.

This One who loves your soul is the living and true God. He is not one that we guess will help us and so we sorta trust. He is not one we just say “all my help from thee I bring.” No, you hang on the true nature of God who desires to protect and guard your soul, your life. I decide to cling to one vest – the vest of His love for me.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1; Matthew 23:37

Prayer

Lover of my soul I confess you as my vest in this tempest of life. I cannot protect myself from the logs that might come in the next wave nor can I prevent what may already be in play. But I can lift my heart to sing your truth and raise my voice to declare your living presence with me! So I can, so I will, so I do. Thank you for loving me in the cover of thy wing. Amen.

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hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah! Leave me not alone,
still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
all my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
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Week 1, Day Four: The Slow Grind

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The tempests of life seem to grind and wear us out. It may be that major crisis that occurs but more often than not we see and feel the grind in the day to day. Slowly the once risen find themselves floored. Slowly the joyful are faint. Slowly the healthy in spirit, mind and body are sickened and weakened. Slowly those who once saw clearly the truth of God are blinded and in the dark. It is hard to discern where we are with God's goodness and love until you examine your heart. So have you slowly discovered a slide downward? Do you sense within your spirit a grind that is taking its toll upon you? Were you once cheerful and in a healthy relationship with God and others? Are you today?

Thou, O Christ, art all I want! That is the cure for the soured soul, the fallen, the faint, the sick and blind. What cure there is for the soul is found all in Jesus. Today is your opportunity to rise again. To be joyful, whole of mind and spirit and to see once again if only you will come to confess the true state of your soul. He is all that you will need for Jesus is the lover of your soul.

Read Galatians 5:22-6:3

Prayer

Jesus I come humbly to you today and confess that I am fallen in my spirit. I have slowly become disillusioned with you and my life and feel faint, ill of heart and at times I must confess I do not understand your truth. Thank you for the truth that you are all I really need for you can restore my heart, mind and strength this very moment and so I surrender to you. Raise me up to praise you, cheer my sad heart, heal me from thoughts and actions that take their toll and lead me on to your path through your Word. Amen.

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
more than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am;
thou art full of truth and grace.*

Week 1, Day Five: The Grand Artist

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The first grader's attempt at art isn't the grand artist's museum piece no matter what parents may feel. There is an ultimate, a prize, a standard, a skill that is greater and achievable. God is that grand artist and shows us the ultimate lifestyle but like first graders learning art we fall so short in the art of justice and holiness. Like first graders we can stomp out and complain or like first graders we can admit we have a long way to go! It is our choice. No matter the choice God still remains the same – just and holy, truth and grace. Now what sort of grand artist do you know helping you paint the pictures of your life?

Grand artist God is just: He will never do you wrong.

Grand artist God is holy: holiness defines who God really is and while it means that God is set apart from all else it also means that God is without any character flaws so what He does and says is what He does.

Grand artist God is truth: God will never lie to you or let you continue down a wrong path. He will guide you into truth of living with yourself, others and with Him.

Grand artist God is grace: His love towards you is endless and very much undeserved. It never wavers and never ends too short. He steadfastly loves you and what concerns you because after all he is the lover of your soul.

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
more than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am;
thou art full of truth and grace.*

Read Romans 8:1 - 11

Prayer

God you paint a beautiful picture of what life can be and yet when I see it I fall short. My drawing is not colorful nor artistic enough. Come then take the brush of my life and paint the picture you want. Use all that I am and am not and create your museum piece. You are indeed all I want! Amen.

Week 1, Day Six: It Will Be Done

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When Jesus taught us to pray he said, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” Powerful words when one believes them aren’t they? When one has faith in the One who is truth, grace, holiness and whose intent is to be the lover of your soul you know then that as you pray according to his will it shall be done “just as it is in Heaven.” The wonder of sanctifying grace is that the joy of Heaven is yours today found in the grace of God who

knows how to raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick and lead the blind. The God whose artistic flare is to produce within you a pure life of joy and peace, love and holiness. Life, real life is found not in any other refuge but in the Fountain of Life, our great redeemer’s love. You can do nothing but freely drink today from the Fountain and let the Spirit capture you for all eternity!

Prayer

With joy I come to you today to ask that I may drink of thy water. Freely you offer and with cup in hand, I bow to receive your gift of life. Your grace is sufficient to rid me of sin. The old is gone, behold the new has begun! Spring up within my heart so that no matter the tempest, the storm or tempting refuge I rest in Thee. Amen.

*Plenteous grace with thee is found,
grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart;
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