

Songs That SHAPED OUR FAITH

Timeless Truths Across Changing Voices



THROUGH
HISTORY



ROOTED IN
SCRIPTURE



SHAPED FOR
WORSHIP



SUNG BY
GENERATIONS



RELEVANT
TODAY

One message. Many voices. One unchanging God.



Wilbur Reid



Fellowship in Christ Class
Woodlawn Christian Church



Summer 2026





GOD'S
FAITHFULNESS
THROUGH ALL SEASONS





LESSON 2

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

Victorian & Gospel Hymns



AUTHOR

Horatio G. Spafford



YEAR

1873

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll...*




— — — — —

It is Well

— WITH MY SOUL —

Original text
of It Is Well
With My
Soul,
at American
Colony Hotel
in Jerusalem



BREVOORT HOUSE,
ON THE EUROPEAN PLAN,
Madison Street, between Clark and La Salle Streets,
Chicago, _____ 187

H. W. THOMPSON, Proprietor
W. H. GRAY, Chief Clerk
W. E. STEELE, Cashier

When foes like a raid, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea-bellows, roll -
Rebates may abate, - howe'er I might be vexed
The well, it is well with my soul -

Though Satan should buffet, - though trials should come, -
Let this steadfast anchor hold, -
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed his own blood for my soul -

My sin - oh the bliss of this glorious thought, -
My sin, - not in part, but the whole, -
Is nailed to the cross, and I hear it no more -
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Oh my soul -

My sin, -
And said, back to lay when the faith shall be sight -
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, -
The Lord himself shall descend, and the Lord shall descend,
- A song in the night, Oh my soul!

And when I watch, at the water, my soul

It Is Well with My Soul

Horatio G. Spafford, 1873 · Music: Philip P. Bliss

VERSE 1 *Peace*

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

VERSE 3 *Atonement*

My sin — oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! —
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

VERSE 2 *Trial*

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

VERSE 4 *Resurrection*

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
"Even so" — it is well with my soul.

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

It is Well
with My Soul

*Gaithers /
David Phelps*





LESSON 2

O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST

Classic English Hymnody



AUTHOR

Isaac Watts



YEAR

1719

*Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come...*

O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST



Isaac Watts
1674–1748



Written in 1719 during political uncertainty as Queen Anne died and England's future was unsure. A hymn about a God who is not bounded by any monarch's reign.



“A thousand ages in Thy sight
are like an evening gone.”

Time is God's servant, not His master.
His faithfulness precedes our
circumstances by eternity.



Sung at Winston Churchill's
state funeral in 1965.

Churchill chose it himself.



The faithfulness of God outlasts every human chapter.

*Whatever uncertainty hangs in the air of 2026,
Watts wrote this hymn for exactly that feeling.*



O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Isaac Watts, 1719 · Based on Psalm 90

VERSE 1

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

VERSE 2

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

VERSE 3

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

VERSE 4

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the
night
Before the rising sun.

VERSE 5

Time, like an ever-rolling
stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

VERSE 6

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guide while life shall
last,
And our eternal home!

O God, Our Help In Ages Past

The Tabernacle Choir





LESSON 2

LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

Victorian & Gospel Hymns



AUTHOR

Elisha A. Hoffman



YEAR

1887

*Leaning, leaning, safe and secure
from all alarms; Leaning, leaning,
leaning on the everlasting arms.*

LEARNING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS (1887)

◆ ANCHOR ◆



Born from
grief.

Written in 1887
for two men who
buried their wives
on the same day.



Deuteronomy 33:27
“The eternal God
is your refuge,
and underneath are
the everlasting arms.”

He wrote the chorus.
His friend wrote the verses.

“What a fellowship,
what a joy divine,
leaning on the
everlasting arms.”



Faithfulness
shows up in
the daily act
of leaning.

Not standing on
your own strength.

Not striding
forward.

Leaning.

Showalter didn't write this from his own grief.

He wrote it for two men in theirs.

*That act — using your faith to carry someone else's weight —
is itself a picture of what faithfulness looks like from the inside.*

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Elisha Hoffman / Anthony Showalter, 1887 · Based on Deuteronomy 33:27

VERSE 1

What a fellowship, what a joy
divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace
is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all
alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting
arms.*

VERSE 2

Oh, how sweet to walk in this
pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows
from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all
alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting
arms.*

VERSE 3

What have I to dread, what have I
to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord
so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all
alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting
arms.*

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Fountainview Academy





LESSON 2

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

Early 20th Century Gospel



AUTHOR

Thomas O. Chisholm



YEAR

1923

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided...*

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS (1923)



NOT A CRISIS HYMN. A MORNING HYMN.

Most hymns are born in crisis.

Thomas Chisholm wrote this one by looking back over the ordinary days of his life and found God faithful in them.



THE MAN

Thomas Chisholm, Methodist minister and journalist in Kentucky.

He lived an ordinary life and struggled with poor health and steady employment.



THE POEM

In 1923, he wrote a poem with no specific crisis in mind.

“Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun moon and stars in their courses above.”

Faithfulness in the ordinary rhythm of life.



THE MUSIC

He sent the poem to William Runyan.

After four attempts, the tune came. It felt exactly right.

The hymn was published in 1923 but was unknown to almost everyone for thirty years.



THE IMPACT

In 1954, Billy Graham's team used it in the London crusade.

Cliff Barrows introduced it.

It became the anthem of those meetings and spread across the world.



THE MAN AGAIN

Chisholm was still alive in his eighties, living quietly in a Methodist home in New Jersey.

He said simply he was glad the poem had been of service.



“Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23

The faithfulness of God is not only for catastrophe. It is the texture of everyday life.

The dramatic deliverance and the quiet daily sustaining. *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* is for the second kind. And the second kind may be the more common grace.

“Great is Thy faithfulness,” O God
my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with
Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy
compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever
wilt be.

“Great is Thy faithfulness!” “Great
is Thy faithfulness!”
Morning by morning new mercies I
see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath
provided—
“Great is Thy faithfulness,” Lord,
unto me!

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Thomas O. Chisolm

Summer and winter, and springtime and
harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses
above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to
guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand
beside!

Great Is Thy Faithfulness
Carrie Underwood and CeCe Winans





LESSON 2

BLESSED BE YOUR NAME

2000s Contemporary



AUTHOR

Matt Redman



YEAR

2002

*You give and take away,
my heart will choose to say...*

BLESSED BE YOUR NAME (2002)

◇ ANCHOR ◇



WRITTEN IN GRIEF.

Matt and Beth Redman wrote this in 2002 in response to friends who had experienced miscarriages.

“On the road marked with suffering” was not a metaphor—it was written from real grief in real time.

Then September 11 happened, and suddenly a song written for a handful of grieving couples became an anthem for a nation.



BOTH THE SUN AND THE SUFFERING.

The song moves between blessing God “when the sun’s shining down on me” and blessing God “on the road marked with suffering.”

Both. The song refuses to allow praise only in the good seasons.

That is the same refusal Spafford made in 1873—and the same refusal the psalmists make across the entire Psalter.



SAME THEOLOGY. NEW MELODY.

Contemporary worship is not avoiding suffering. It is carrying the same theology as Spafford’s hymn into a new musical form.

The road marked with suffering runs through every era of Christian hymnody. The melody changes. The road doesn’t.

“Blessed be Your name when I’m found in the desert place. Though I walk through the wilderness, blessed be Your name on the road marked with suffering.”



THE ROAD MARKED WITH SUFFERING RUNS THROUGH EVERY ERA OF CHRISTIAN HYMNODY.
- THE MELODY CHANGES. THE ROAD DOESN'T.



LESSON 2 · GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Blessed Be Your Name

Matt & Beth Redman, 2002

*"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;
blessed be the name of the Lord."*

JOB 1:21 · ESV

Written in response to friends' miscarriages — and sung by thousands after September 11, 2001.

The same theology as Spafford: worship does not wait for the suffering to end.

SONGS THAT SHAPED OUR FAITH · WOODLAWN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Blessed Be Your Name

Matt Redman

Blessed Be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed Be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed Be Your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be'
Blessed be Your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name

Every blessing You pour out
I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your name

You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord, blessed be Your name

Blessed Be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed Be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed Be Your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be'
Blessed be Your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name.

Every blessing You pour out
I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your name
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord, blessed be Your name

Blessed Be Your Name

Matt Redman



GEN Z AND MENTAL HEALTH: THE DATA

Recent national surveys paint a sobering picture.

ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

GALLUP, 2023

Nearly

47%

of Gen Zers often or always feel **anxious**.

More than

1 in 5

often or always feel **depressed**.

DIAGNOSED MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

42%

of Gen Zers have been diagnosed with a mental health condition.

MOST COMMON CONDITIONS:

- 1 Anxiety
- 2 Depression
- 3 ADHD
- 4 PTSD

PERSISTENT SADNESS OR HOPELESSNESS

CDC YRBS, 2021

42%

of Gen Z high schoolers reported persistent feelings of **sadness or hopelessness**.

Nearly

50%

higher than previous generations at the same age.

THE NUMBERS SHOW A GENERATION UNDER PRESSURE.

THE CHURCH CAN BE A PLACE OF HOPE, HEALING, AND HELP.



LESSON 2

IT IS WELL

by Kristene DiMarco



Current Contemporary




AUTHOR

Kristene DiMarco




YEAR

2014



*“Through it all, through it all
My eyes are on You...”*



IT IS WELL (2014)

— ANCHOR • THE PAIRING —

141 YEARS OF FAITHFULNESS.

1873 – SPAFFORD

“It is well
with my soul.”

Written on the
Atlantic in the
midst of tragedy.

*It is well
with my soul.*
— H. G. Spafford



Different melody.
Same declaration.



Peace not based on
circumstances.



Different people.
Different continents.
Same faith.



Resurrection truth:
It is well before
the storm ends.

2014 – DIMARCO

“Through it all,
through it all,
it is well.”

Written for a new
generation.

*Through it all,
through it all,
it is well.*
— Kristene DiMarco



GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE IS ALSO HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIS SONGS.

The truth Spafford wrote in 1873 is still alive in 2014.

Not reinvented. Sung again.

It is Well

Kristine DiMarco

Grander earth has quaked before
Moved by the sound of His voice
And seas that are shaken and stirred
Can be calmed and broken for my
regard

Far be it from me to not believe
Even when my eyes can't see
And this mountain that's in front of me
Will be thrown into the midst of the
sea

So let go my soul and trust in Him
The waves and wind still know His
name

And through it all, through it all
My eyes are on You
And through it all, through it all
It is well

141 Years Apart — One Conviction

<p>It Is Well with My Soul <i>Horatio G. Spafford · Philip Bliss · 1873</i></p>	<p>SHARED</p>	<p>It Is Well <i>Kristene DiMarco · Bethel Music · 2014</i></p>
<p>LYRICAL VOICE</p> <p>Formal, declarative Victorian diction — addresses God in third person; the singer reports what is already true</p>	<p><i>Present-tense trust in Christ</i></p>	<p>LYRICAL VOICE</p> <p>Intimate, conversational — speaks directly to God in second person; still reaching toward peace in real time</p>
<p>LYRICAL STRUCTURE</p> <p>Four metered verses + refrain; each verse advances a distinct theological argument — peace, trial, atonement, resurrection</p>	<p><i>"It is well" as anchor phrase</i></p>	<p>LYRICAL STRUCTURE</p> <p>Verse-chorus-bridge form; lyrics circle and repeat the central phrase — immersion over proposition</p>
<p>MUSICAL CHARACTER</p> <p>Strophic hymn; steady 3/4 time; Bliss's tune is march-like — confidence expressed through forward motion</p>	<p><i>Sparse opening; builds to full expression</i></p>	<p>MUSICAL CHARACTER</p> <p>Slow 4/4 ballad; piano-led, builds to full band; tempo and dynamics mirror the emotional journey</p>
<p>EMOTIONAL REGISTER</p> <p>Resolved — written as declaration after wrestling; grief is named but the posture is settled assurance</p>	<p><i>Worship does not wait for suffering to end</i></p>	<p>EMOTIONAL REGISTER</p> <p>Unresolved → resolved; begins in vulnerability, arrives at peace through the act of singing</p>

It is Well

Kristine DiMarco

Grander earth has quaked before
Moved by the sound of His voice
And seas that are shaken and
stirred
Can be calmed and broken for my
regard

Far be it from me to not believe
Even when my eyes can't see
And this mountain that's in front of
me
Will be thrown into the midst of
the sea
So let go my soul and trust in Him
The waves and wind still know His
name


And through it all, through it all
My eyes are on You
And through it all, through it all
It is well






GOD'S
FAITHFULNESS
THROUGH ALL SEASONS






FROM AD 280 TO TODAY

THE SAME GOSPEL DIFFERENT VOICES



THE THEOLOGY DOESN'T CHANGE.
THE MELODIES DO.



WEEK 2 CLOSING:
NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:
SONGS ILLUSTRATING
WHY THE CHURCH SINGS

Motivations & Meanings Behind the Song

Kristene DiMarco · Bethel Music · You Make Me Brave

THE KEY THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTION

SPAFFORD (1873)

Arrives at peace through theological argument
— atonement, resurrection, the coming
kingdom. Resolved before the song ends.



DIMARCO (2014)

Arrives at peace through surrender — letting
go, fixing her eyes. The journey is audible.
Peace is found in the act of singing.

Same destination. Profoundly different road.

WHY IT REACHES A SUFFERING AUDIENCE

Not a sunshine-and-rainbows anthem — you can hear the strain in her voice. Not the sound of someone who has mastered grief, but of someone holding onto the rigging while the deck is actively tilting. The gaze shifts before the storm does.

SCRIPTURE ANCHORS

Mark 4:35–41 · calming the storm

John 20:29 · blessed without seeing

Matthew 17:20 · mustard seed faith

Hebrews 12:2 · eyes on Jesus

1 Peter 5:7 · cast your anxiety