



WEEK 1 - *The Hymns That Shape Us*

OPENING PRAYER

God of all creation, of the music that moves us and the hymns that shape us, thank you for the gift of worship. Thank you for the ways you have met us in spaces of praise and lament. We ask now that your Holy Spirit would be at work in our hearts as we continue to meditate on your goodness to us. For it is in the name of Jesus Christ, our coming King, we pray. Amen.

CHECK-IN

- Invite every member to check in by answering this question:
What is your favorite hymn and why?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HYMNODY

For almost 2000 years, Christians have used music as a way to worship. The word “hymn” comes from the Greek word “hymnos” which means “a song of praise”. Originally these would have been written in honor of the gods. Hymnody (the singing or composition of hymns) has evolved and changed over the centuries and been affected by new thinking and developing religious beliefs: throughout the history of the church, whenever there has been renewal, revival or restoration, new songs of worship have appeared.

During the Middle Ages hymnody developed in the form of Gregorian chant or ‘plainsong’. It was sung in Latin and most often by monastic choirs (example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fi5CZ3ITXP8>). But in the 16th century, churchgoers were given much greater access to hymns as a result of the invention of the printing press and the influential German theologian, Martin Luther, who began encouraging people to sing together in congregations.

In England the non-conformist minister Isaac Watts (1674-1748) began a transformation of congregational singing. Watts believed strongly that hymns should express the religious feelings of the people and he became a prolific writer, creating hundreds of new hymns. Watts has been described as “the liberator of English hymnody” as his hymns moved people away from simply singing Old Testament psalms, inspiring people to sing from the heart, with great faith and understanding.

In the same period, another significant movement affected the hymns of the church: the Methodist movement, led by John Wesley. Wesley and especially his brother Charles used simple rhythms and sing-able melodies to help congregational singing. They wrote many of our most well-known hymns that are still very popular today.

In the late 19th Century, a new style of hymnody known as “gospel” emerged. These songs were usually characterized by a strong lead vocal and exciting harmonies and were a great influence on later contemporary worship worldwide.

The twentieth and twenty first centuries have seen an explosion of new hymn writers and approaches. Old texts have been refreshed by new tunes and lots more contemporary hymns have sprung up. In the non-traditional church movement there has been a move away from the previous style of congregational singing to worship led by one singer or a worship band. Instrumentation has become more popular and musical styles have become much freer. The church today is richer than ever in musical resources and continues to bring congregations together through song. ¹

¹ Lole, Simon. A Brief History of Hymns.
www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4vMxs6kctQgkwkvqQbJTXDk/a-brief-history-of-hymns

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

During the Kick-Off Pastor Panel last week, Ryan pointed out that there is a difference between “theology THROUGH hymns” and “theology OF hymns.” The first is akin to what Josh spoke about with his son, Jameson, absorbing theology through songs sung at church and those songs inspiring questions (“why are we happy Jesus died?” That’s a big one!). But a “theology OF hymns” is more about the question of “why” – why would we deem it appropriate and even necessary to sing the faith?

- **Take a moment to ponder that question as a group. What do you think about the role of singing hymns in worship? Can you think of a time when singing a hymn affected you in worship?**

A viewer shared in the comments section of the pastor panel video that a friend had once said that the newer hymns had helped her to sing TO God rather than just ABOUT God.

- **Does that resonate with you? Can you name some that fit into each category? Is there one you prefer (singing TO God or singing ABOUT God) and is there a call for us to do one or both?**

Sandra shared about the way the community of faith singing hymns around us even when we cannot is a way for us to encourage and uphold one another.

- **Have you experienced this before or something like it?**

Ryan mentioned the resurgence of old hymns set to new tunes. Have you heard any examples of this? Do you like this trend or is it difficult to identify with songs you’ve heard sung a particular way for so long?

- **Was there a hymn that one of the pastors shared or a story or Scripture that you found meaningful?**
- **Stuart** “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”
 - He loves the way this hymn speaks about Christian hope
 - Sung at his mother’s funeral, but not to the “right” tune
- **Sandra** “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”
 - Reflection on Lamentations 3:23
 - Reminder of God’s faithfulness in times of difficulty – both past and future promise
- **Ryan** “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”
 - “No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home” is one of Ryan’s favorite lines of this hymn
 - They sang this hymn at Ryan and Heather’s wedding. Are there hymns you associate with particular occasions in your life of faith?
- **Adam** “Blessed Assurance”
 - This hymn was sung at the funeral services of Adam’s faithful family members over the years
 - Reminds him of the faithfulness of God to his family specifically and his shared story with them in Christ
- **John** “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”
 - Written for Pentecost
 - Penned by Wesley with a more personal, emotional connection to God
- **Josh** “In Christ Alone”
 - Did not grow up with hymn singing, but really loved this one because it was more personal
 - “from life’s first cry” is a line that sticks with him because he heard this song right after his son, Jameson, was born and he literally heard life’s first cry

- Sarah "How Firm a Foundation"

- Based on a favorite scripture, Isaiah 43
- Associated with a memory of worship in the wake of tragedy and affirmation of God's sovereignty and faithfulness

** See sheet music attached for each of these hymns

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul writes: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart." (Ephesians 5:19)

- How might this study and Paul's exhortation to sing and "make melody" transform your worship of the Living God this Lenten season?

CLOSING PRAYER

If you can, take time to offer prayer requests before closing together in prayer.

If a line from one of the hymns below stood out to you or your group, feel free to read that as your closing prayer as well.

THE ASSEMBLY AT WORSHIP

PRAYER

146 Love Divine, All Love Excelling

1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of
2. Come, al - might - y to de - liv - er, Let us
3. Fin - ish then Your new cre - a - tion, Pure and

heav'n to earth come down! Fix in us Your
all Your life re - ceive; Sud - den - ly re -
spot - less, gra - cious Lord, Let us see Your

Je - sus, source of all com - pas - sion, Love un -
Lord, we would be al - ways bless - ing, Serve You
Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, Till in

REVELATION AND ADORATION

61 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

FAITHFULNESS

1. Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fath - er; there is no
2. Sum - mer and win - ter, and spring - time and har - vest, sun, moon, and
3. Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, Thine own dear

shad - ow of turn - ing with Thee; Thou chang - est not, Thy com -
stars in their cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in
pres - ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright

pas - sions, they fail not; as Thou hast been, Thou for - ev - er wilt be.
man - i - fold wit - ness to Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
hope for to - mor - row: bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

Great is Thy faith - ful - ness! Great is Thy faith - ful - ness!

Morn - ing by morn - ing new mer - cies I see; all I have need - ed Thy

WORDS: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

11.10.11.10.Ref

MUSIC: William M. Runyan, 1923

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COMFORT, DEATH, AND GLORY

320 My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

RESIGNATION

Psalm 23

1. My Shep-herd will sup-ply my need, Je - ho - vah is His Name;
2. When I walk thro' the shades of death, Thy pres-ence is my stay;
3. The sure pro - vi - sions of my God at - tend me all my days;

in pas - tures fresh He makes me feed, be - side the liv - ing stream.
a word of Thy sup-port - ing breath drives all my fears a - way.
O may Thy house be mine a - bode, and all my work be praise!

He brings my wand-'ring spir - it back when I for - sake His ways;
Thy hand, in sight of all my foes, doth still my ta - ble spread,
There would I find a set - tled rest, while oth - ers go and come;

and leads me, for His mer-cy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.
my cup with bless-ings o - ver - flows, Thine oil a - noints my head.
no more a stran-ger or a guest, but like a child at home.

WORDS: Psalm 23; Isaac Watts, 1719

CMD

MUSIC: *Southern Harmony*, 1835

Blessed Assurance

C C F C

1 Bless - ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a
 2 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, per - fect de - light, vi - sions of
 3 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, all is at rest, I in my

G D7 G C F

fore - taste of glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion, pur - chase of
 rap - ture now burst on my sight; an - gels de - scend - ing, bring from a -
 Sav - ior am hap - py and blest, watch - ing and wait - ing, look - ing a -

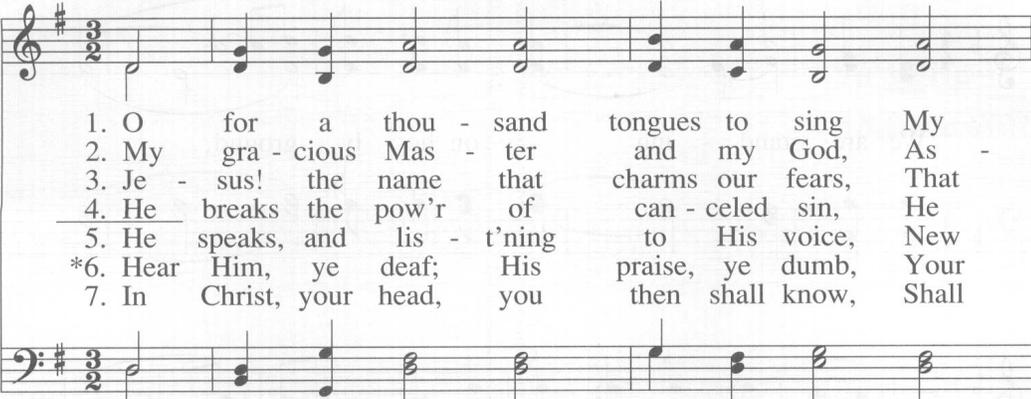
C F C G C

God, born of his Spir - it, washed in his blood.
 bove, ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.
 bove, filled with his good - ness, lost in his love.

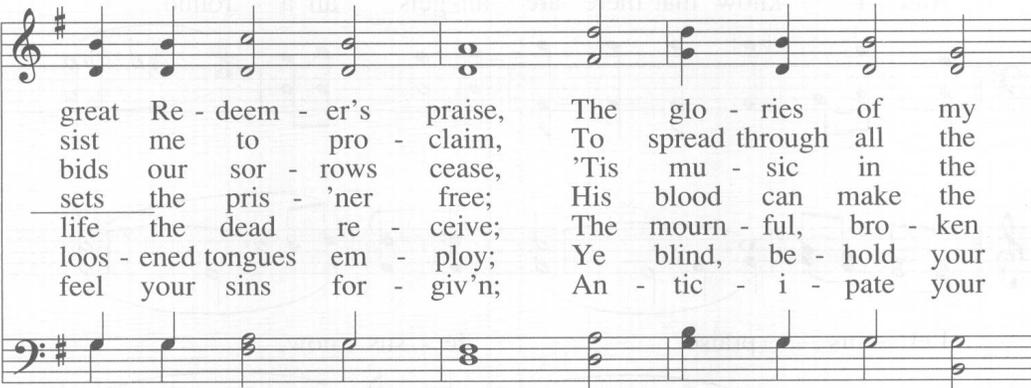
Refrain F C F C G D G

This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior, all the day long;

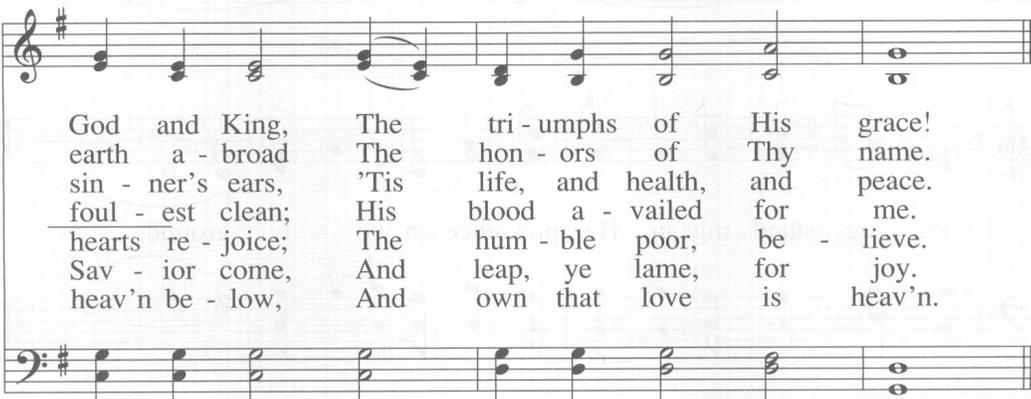
34 O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing



1. O for a thou - sand tongues to sing My
 2. My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, As -
 3. Je - sus! the name that charms our fears, That
 4. He breaks the pow'r of can - celed sin, He
 5. He speaks, and lis - t'ning to His voice, New
 *6. Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb, Your
 7. In Christ, your head, you then shall know, Shall



great Re - deem - er's praise, The glo - ries of my
 sist me to pro - claim, To spread through all the
 bids our sor - rows cease, 'Tis mu - sic in the
 sets the pris - 'ner free; His blood can make the
 life the dead re - ceive; The mourn - ful, bro - ken
 loos - ened tongues em - ploy; Ye blind, be - hold your
 feel your sins for - giv'n; An - tic - i - pate your



God and King, The tri - umphs of His grace!
 earth a - broad The hon - ors of Thy name.
 sin - ner's ears, 'Tis life, and health, and peace.
 foul - est clean; His blood a - vailed for me.
 hearts re - joice; The hum - ble poor, be - lieve.
 Sav - ior come, And leap, ye lame, for joy.
 heav'n be - low, And own that love is heav'n.

*May be omitted.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788
 Tune: AZMON, CM; Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829; arr. by Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

In Christ Alone

Words and Music by
Keith Getty & Stuart Townend

Maestoso (♩ = 72)

Am G D G/D D G D G

mf

1. In Christ a - lone my hope is
2. In Christ a - lone! - Who took on
3. There in the ground His bo - dy
4. No guilt in life, no fear in

A D/F# G D/F# Em7 A7 D G D G

found, He is my Light; my Strength, my Song; This Cor - ner - stone, this Sol - id
flesh; Full-ness of God in help - less babe! This gift of love and right-eous-
lay, Light of the world by dark - ness slain; Then burst - ing forth in glo - rious
death - This is the power of Christ in me; From life's first cry to fin - al

A D/F# G D/F# Em7 A7 D D/F# G D/F#

Ground, firm through the fierc - est drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of
ness, scorned by the ones He came to save: Till on that cross as Je - sus
day, up from the grave He rose a - gain! And as He stands in vic - to -
breath, Je - sus com - mands my des - ti - ny. No pow'r of hell, no scheme of

Asus A D/F# G Bm7 Asus A G D G

peace, when fears are stilled, when striv - ings cease! My Com - fort - er, my All in
 died, the wrath of God was sat - is - fied; for ev - ery sin on Him was
 ry, sin's curse has lost its grip on me; For I am His and He is
 man, can e - ver pluck me from His hand; Till He re - turns or calls me

A D/F# G Em A D

all, here in the love of Christ I stand. *f*
 laid; Here in the death of Christ I live.
 mine - bought with the pre - cious blood of Christ.
 home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

Am G D G/D D G D

1.2.3. 4.

2. In Christ a -
 3. There in the
 4. No guilt in

How Firm a Foundation

50

1 How firm a foun - da - tion, you saints of the Lord,
 2 "Fear not, I am with you, O be not dis - mayed,
 3 "When through the deep wa - ters I call you to go,
 4 "When through fier - y tri - als your path - way shall lie,
 5 "The soul that on Je - sus still leans for re - pose,

is laid for your faith in his ex - cel - lent Word!
 for I am your God, and will still give you aid;
 the riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow;
 my grace, all suf - fi - cient, shall be your sup - ply;
 I will not, I will not de - sert to its foes;

What more can he say than to you he has said,
 I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,
 for I will be with you in trou - ble to bless,
 the flame shall not hurt you, I on - ly de - sign
 that soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,

to you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?
 up - held by my right - eous, om - nip - o - tent hand.
 and sanc - ti - fy to you your deep - est dis - tress.
 your dross to con - sume, and your gold to re - fine.
 I'll nev - er, no, nev - er, no, nev - er for - sake!"