

Awake, My Soul



Hymn Readings for Daily Devotion

Edited by Dan Kreider

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INTRODUCTION

Hymns are first and foremost devotional poetry, meticulously written with care and skill to awaken the soul and, in the words of Isaac Watts, “turn a divine meditation.” Though the church regularly sings hymns paired with the beauty of music, good hymn texts can stand on their own, and I have sought to reflect that in this book. Whether these hymns are familiar or new to you, the intention is for you to meditate on the truth and beauty of the lyrics. To that end, you may sing the hymns or simply read them. Stanzas are numbered, and refrains are marked with an **R**.

For readers who are new to the historical hymnody of the Christian faith, I hope this book will be a means of instruction for you. I have included a poetic meter for each hymn, followed by a suggested tune. Complete recordings are available online at hymnworks.com. Also included in the back is an index of common tunes, grouped by poetic meter, with common text pairings to aid in the recall of tune names. This index will help you to sing some of the hymns to more familiar tunes.

Though all good hymns are rich in scriptural allusions, I have limited Scripture indexing to psalm settings that follow the original biblical text.

The included daily devotionals are meant to direct the reader to the Scriptures and compel him or her to thoughtful meditation. They are certainly not all that could be said about each hymn, but they mirror what I might say to introduce a particular hymn before we sang it in our time of corporate worship.

I have made no attempt to avoid referencing the same passages of Scripture across multiple hymns or repeating common themes. In music ministry, I have made it my aim to equip our congregation to sing with their spirit and their minds (1 Cor. 14:15), and these devotionals seek to serve the same purpose for the reader.

The hymns themselves need little explanation. I chose texts from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century, seeking to mingle common hymns with obscure ones. The selection of these texts was neither comprehensive nor homogeneous. Some are noble and lofty; others are humble and plain.

The book is laid out to follow the 2027 calendar and may be read daily, and Passion Week is marked in the contents so it can be adjusted to any calendar year. A title index is included in the back, allowing this book to be used as a conventional hymnal.

I pray this book aids you in the worship of our great God and gives you a renewed love for our treasured heritage of hymnody in the English language.

Dan Kreider



Awake, My Soul

1 Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun

Jan 1 LM | TALLIS CANON

- 1 Awake, my soul, and with the sun
thy daily stage of duty run;
shake off dull sloth, and early rise
to pay thy morning sacrifice.
- 2 Lord, I my vows to thee renew.
Disperse my sins as morning dew;
guard my first springs of thought and will;
and with thyself my spirit fill.
- 3 Direct, control, suggest, this day,
all I design or do or say,
that all my pow'rs, with all their might,
in thy sole glory may unite.
- 4 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Thomas Ken, 1692, rev. 1709

The unit of time by which we measure our Christian life is a day. The Lord's mercies are new every morning (Lam. 3:23). Don't worry about tomorrow, Jesus tells the multitudes (Matt. 6:34), but instead ask your Father for each day's supply (v. 11). The children of Israel were commanded to gather only enough manna for each day, trusting that God would supply their needs for the future (Ex. 16).

But full of mercies as each day is, it must always begin with humble prayer. Weariness and sin are ever present. The writer here exhorts his soul to cheerful labor, to vigilant holiness, and

to humble dependence on the Spirit. As we do the same, only then are we able to join the chorus of creation and give God the glory he deserves by the sacrifice of our lives.

2 Join All the Glorious Names

Jan 2 66 66 88 | DARWALL

- 1 Join all the glorious names
of wisdom, love, and pow'r,
that ever mortals knew,
that angels ever bore;
all are too poor to speak his worth,
too poor to set my Savior forth.
- 2 Great Prophet of my God,
my tongue would bless thy name;
by thee the joyful news
of our salvation came—
the joyful news of sins forgiv'n,
of hell subdued, and peace with heav'n.
- 3 Jesus, my great High Priest,
offered his blood and died;
my guilty conscience seeks
no sacrifice beside:
his pow'rful blood did once atone,
and now it pleads before the throne.
- 4 My Savior and my Lord,
my Captain and my King,
thy scepter and thy sword,
thy conquering grace I sing;
thine is the pow'r; behold I sit
in willing bonds beneath thy feet.

5 Now let my soul arise,
and tread the tempter down;
my Captain leads me forth
to conquest and a crown.
A feeble saint shall win the day,
though death and hell obstruct the way.

Isaac Watts, 1709

Every hymn, every sacrifice of praise, every act of devotion: The most elaborate and skillful of human efforts are utterly inadequate for the praises of an infinite God. God reminds his creatures that he fills heaven and earth (Jer. 23:23–24). He has no need of anything (Acts 17:25), because he owns the earth and everything in it (Ps. 50:10–12). Even the voices of angels cannot describe the greatness of God.

But having confessed the limits of his praises, the author is still resolved to bring to God the fruit of lips that acknowledge God’s name (Heb. 13:15). He is overwhelmed with thankfulness for his salvation and the constant ministry of Jesus on his behalf before the Father’s throne. His praise then turns to humble submission, and he triumphantly proclaims with Paul, “In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37).

3 Wisdom Ascribe, and Might and Praise

Jan 3 88 88 88 | ST. CATHERINE

1 Wisdom ascribe, and might and praise
to God, who lengthens out our days,
who spares us yet another year,
and lets us see his goodness here;
happy, and wise, the time redeem,
and live, my friends, and die to him.

- 2 How often when his arm was bared,
hath he our sinful Israel spared!
Let them alone, his mercy cried,
and turned the vengeful stroke aside.
He granted us a kind reprieve
and strangely suffered us to live.
- 3 Still in the doubtful balance weighed,
we trembled, while the remnant prayed:
the Father heard his Spirit groan,
and answered back, It is my Son!
He let the prayer of faith prevail,
and mercy turned the hovering scale.
- 4 Merciful God, how shall we raise
our hearts to pay thee all thy praise!
Our hearts shall beat for thee alone,
our lives shall make thy goodness known.
Our souls and bodies shall be thine,
a living sacrifice Divine.

Charles Wesley, 1749

How often the Lord's people have sinned against him, and yet still he forgives them! As he was merciful to Israel, so he is merciful to us. The author describes God's mercy here as a "kind reprieve," echoing Paul's words: "to the praise of the glory of his grace" (Eph. 1:6). This divine mercy is not grudging and stern but warm and abundant. God loves to show mercy to sinners. "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious" (Ex. 34:6 KJV).

The Godhead works together for our salvation: The Son intercedes (Heb. 7:25), the Spirit cries out (Rom. 8:26), and the Father answers (v. 27). Salvation is God's work, from beginning to end! God grants the gift of saving faith and then receives

its humble request. The only right response is wholehearted devotion, the giving of our bodies as a living sacrifice to our Savior (Rom. 12:1).

4 O All Who Seek with Christ to Rise

Jan 4 LM | TRURO

- 1 O all who seek with Christ to rise,
to Tabor's mount lift up your eyes;
and see how Christ in glorious rays
the majesty of God displays.
- 2 Behold a Sun that pierces night,
a blaze of uncreated light,
so high, so deep and vast of space,
it knows no bounds of time or place.
- 3 'Tis he, the King, whose sovereign sway
the Jews and Gentiles both obey,
the promised ruler heaven decreed
for Abraham and all his seed.
- 4 In him the law and prophets join;
his truths they both attest and sign;
and God, from his eternal throne,
commands the world to hear his Son.
- 5 Glory to Christ, whose light displays
to little ones his saving ways;
while hymns of praise on every tongue
unto the triune God are sung.

*Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-410;
tr. composite, 1706, alt.*

It was on Mount Tabor that Peter, James, and John saw a glimpse of the heavenly glory of Christ, his face shining like the sun (Matt. 17). Beside him appeared Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets. In their midst, the uncreated Christ shone forth as the fulfillment of the law and the One of whom the prophets testified. The Father's thundering command rang out across the sky: "This is my beloved Son: hear him!"

How then are we to lift up our eyes and behold him whom we have not seen (1 Peter 1:8)? Through the eyes of faith. Peter was an eyewitness of Christ's majesty, but he calls us to hear and obey "the prophetic word made more sure," which shines as a light in the darkness (2 Peter 1:19).

5 Before the Throne of God Above

Jan 5 LMD | BEFORE THE THRONE

- 1** Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea,
a great High Priest whose name is Love,
who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on his hands;
my name is written on his heart;
I know that while in heav'n he stands,
no tongue can bid me thence depart.

- 2** When Satan tempts me to despair,
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look and see him there
who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died,
my sinful soul is counted free;
for God the Just is satisfied
to look on him and pardon me.

- 3 Behold him there, the risen Lamb!
My perfect, spotless Righteousness;
the great unchangeable I AM,
the King of glory and of grace!
One with himself I cannot die;
my soul is purchased with his blood;
my life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ my Savior and my God!

Charitie Lees Smith, 1863

The Christian life is a life of constant, hope-filled repentance. The work is finished, Christ has sat down at the right hand of the Father, the unalterable legal declaration has been made: “Righteous!” (Rom. 8:33). The Spirit testifies to the blood of Jesus, and the Father is satisfied. This is why our repentance is full of hope: Forgiveness is already granted.

This hope originates not within but from above: When Satan tells me of the guilt within, I look upward, not inward. When accused by Satan, we may say with John Bunyan’s Christian, “All this is true; and much more . . . but the Prince whom I serve and honor is merciful and ready to forgive.” We have died to sin, our lives are hidden with Christ (Col. 3:3), and we are kept by the promise of God, who cannot lie (Heb. 6:18).

6 When Morning Gilds the Skies

Jan 6 66 6 66 6 | LAUDES DOMINI

- 1 When morning gilds the skies,
my heart awaking cries,
may Jesus Christ be praised!
Alike at work and prayer,
to Jesus I repair,
may Jesus Christ be praised!

- 2 Does sadness fill my mind?
A solace here I find:
 may Jesus Christ be praised!
Or fades my earthly bliss?
My comfort still is this,
 may Jesus Christ be praised!
- 3 The night becomes as day
when from the heart we say,
 may Jesus Christ be praised!
The pow'rs of darkness fear
when this sweet song they hear,
 may Jesus Christ be praised!
- 4 Let earth's wide circle round
in joyful notes resound,
 may Jesus Christ be praised!
Let air and sea and sky
from depth to height reply,
 may Jesus Christ be praised!
- 5 Be this, while life is mine,
my canticle divine,
 may Jesus Christ be praised!
Be this th'eternal song
through all the ages long,
 may Jesus Christ be praised!

*German hymn, 1828;
tr. Edward Caswall, 1853, rev. 1858*

May Jesus Christ be praised! This is the cry of the believing heart, in joys or in sorrows. The declaration should be resolute and unyielding. "Consider it all joy, my brothers

and sisters,” says James, “when you encounter various trials” (James 1:2). The circumstance does not change the command. “Though he slay me, I will hope in him” (Job 13:15).

The praise of Jesus Christ is a precious consolation in sadness, our weapon against the powers of darkness. “Let us sing,” said Luther, “and scorn the devil.” What a thought, that the powers of darkness tremble at the sound of the Lord’s people singing! He has put a new song in your mouth, a song of public praise (Ps. 40:3). So if you are sad, sing!

7 Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

Jan 7 87 87 D | O MEIN JESU, ICH MUSS STERBEN

- 1 Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
see him dying on a tree!
He, the Christ, by man rejected,
O my soul, my soul, 'tis he!
He, the long-expected prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
see the Author of creation,
he, the true and faithful Word.
- 2 Tell me, you who hear his groaning,
was there ever grief like his?
Dearest friends his cause disowning,
soldiers mocking his distress.
Many hands were raised to wound him,
none would interpose to save;
but the deepest stroke that pierced him
was the stroke that Justice gave.
- 3 Ye who think of sin but lightly,
nor suppose your evil great,

here may view its nature rightly,
here your guilt may estimate.
See the sacrifice appointed,
see who bears the awful load!
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
Son of Man and Son of God.

- 4 Here we have a firm foundation,
here the refuge of the lost.
Christ the Rock of our salvation,
Christ the Name of which we boast.
Lamb of God for sinners wounded!
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
who on him their hope have built.

Thomas Kelly, 1804, rev. 1809

We too often console ourselves by thinking our sin is not as great as our neighbor's (Luke 18:11). Rather than face the divine standard, we prefer to measure ourselves against one another (2 Cor. 10:12). When we do, the wrongs of others against us seem far more grievous than our sins against God.

But the meditation of the cross brings our sin sharply into focus. It is cold water thrown upon the stupor of self-righteousness. For we can never rightly consider the cross without rightly considering our wretched state: It was for my sin that Christ was crucified. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5 KJV). The hymn ends with this declaration: "None of those who wait for you will be ashamed" (Ps. 25:3)!

8 Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned

Jan 8 CM WITH REPEATS | ORTONVILLE

- 1 Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
upon the Savior's brow;
his head with radiant glories crowned,
his lips with grace o'erflow,
his lips with grace o'erflow.

- 2 No mortal can with him compare,
among the sons of men;
fairer is he than all the fair
who fill the heav'nly train,
who fill the heav'nly train.

- 3 He saw me plunged in deep distress,
and flew to my relief;
for me he bore the shameful cross,
and carried all my grief,
and carried all my grief.

- 4 To him I owe my life and breath,
and all the joys I have;
he makes me triumph over death,
and saves me from the grave,
and saves me from the grave.

Samuel Stennett, 1782

The author echoes the psalmist's praise in Psalm 45: The King is fair above all others, and grace is poured out upon his lips (vv. 2-3). The Savior speaks life-giving words, a better word than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24). He alone has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). By his word the heavens were created (Ps. 33:6), and by it they are sustained (Heb. 1:3).

His surpassing greatness over all creation makes his grace more astounding. Why should the fairest of all creation bear the cross for sinners? The heart can only resound in praise and worship: "To him I owe my life and breath."

9 One There Is, Above All Others

Jan 9 87 87 77 | IRBY

- 1 One there is, above all others,
well deserves the name of Friend;
his is love beyond a brother's,
costly, free, and knows no end;
they who once his kindness prove,
find it everlasting love!
- 2 Which of all our friends to save us,
could or would have shed their blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
reconciled in him to God;
this was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a Friend in need.
- 3 Men, when raised to lofty stations,
often know their friends no more;
slight and scorn their poor relations
though they valued them before.
But our Savior always owns
those whom he redeemed with groans.
- 4 When he lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was his name;
now, above all glory raised,
he rejoices in the same;

still he calls them brethren, friends,
and to all their wants attends.

5 Could we bear from one another,
what he daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
loves us though we treat him thus;
though for good we render ill,
he accounts us brethren still.

6 O for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
we, alas! forget too often
what a Friend we have above;
but when home our souls are brought,
we will love thee as we ought.

John Newton, 1779

God is the source of all human virtue; our virtues flow from his. We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). We forgive because he forgave (Matt. 6:12). We strive to be holy as he is holy (1 Peter 1:16). Our unity as Christians reflects the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit (John 17:11).

How could we seek power when our King willingly gave it up, or rush to vindicate ourselves when he would not speak a word in his own defense! Jesus challenged his disciples with this command: If our Lord and Master condescended to serve, should we not serve one another (John 13:14)? We who have been forgiven by God, should we keep back forgiveness from our brothers and sisters? Only by looking to Jesus can we be granted divine power to love, and serve, and forgive.

10 Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King

Jan 10 LM | CANONBURY

- 1 Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
to praise thy name, give thanks and sing;
to show thy love by morning light,
and talk of all thy truth at night.
- 2 Sweet is the day of sacred rest,
no mortal cares disturb my breast,
O may my heart in tune be found,
like David's harp of solemn sound!
- 3 My heart shall triumph in the Lord,
and bless his works and bless his Word:
thy works of grace, how bright they shine!
how deep thy counsels, how divine!
- 4 And I shall share a glorious part,
when grace has well refined my heart,
and fresh supplies of joy are shed,
like holy oil, to cheer my head.
- 5 Then shall I see, and hear, and know,
all I desired or wished below;
and every pow'r find sweet employ
in that eternal world of joy.

Isaac Watts, 1719

Sweet is the work of divine praise, and sweet is the rest that follows. The one who labors well rests well (Eccl. 5:12). Martha was chided not for her work but for her worry (Luke 10:41). So our fault is not in our labor but in the faithless,

unsettled heart that often accompanies it. The proud heart is unsettled; the humble heart is at rest (Ps. 131). May God grant us grace to labor in lowliness, to spend and be spent (2 Cor. 12:15), and to rest in the joy of the Lord!

11 Rejoice, the Lord Is King

Jan 11 66 66 88 | DARWALL

- 1 Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore.
Rejoice, give thanks and sing
and triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice;
rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

- 2 Jesus, the Savior, reigns,
the God of truth and love;
when he had purged our stains,
he took his seat above:
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice;
rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

- 3 His Kingdom cannot fail,
he rules o'er earth and heav'n;
the keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus giv'n:
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice;
rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

- 4 Rejoice in glorious hope,
for Christ the Judge shall come
to gather all his saints
to their eternal home: