

The image features a vibrant, abstract background with a mix of colors including teal, yellow, pink, and white. A horizontal teal band runs across the middle of the page, containing the main title and subtitle. The overall design is clean and modern.

# *Hallelujah!*

What A Savior!

**2020 Easter Devotional Guide**



**NASHVILLE**  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



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“The songs we sing have a powerful way of shaping our soul and becoming grafted into our being. This is why my grandfather continued to remember and sing hymns until he died in his 90s.”  
— *Keith Getty, Christian singer and songwriter*

And it begins early! Catherine Price, age 4, sits with her family in our sanctuary service on Sundays. When asked what she likes best about the service, she answered, “Singing songs.”

Followers of Christ are known for their singing, aren't they? Ours is a singing faith.  
When we mourn together, we sing.  
When we celebrate together, we sing.  
When we worship together, we sing.  
Singing is a symbol of our unity. A symbol of our harmonious fellowship.

—*Jim Ailor, guest worship leader 2/23/2020*

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Note: Printed Scripture passages are taken from the English Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.



## Introduction

When I was a child in the old First Baptist Church Nashville sanctuary, I loved the singing! I listened to the harmony of people singing different voice parts. I saw people sing words without looking at the hymnal. (Very impressive to me at the time.) We sang certain hymns regularly – the Doxology ended every morning service. Joyful worship! After the Lord’s Supper, we sang “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.” Looking back, I think that congregational singing is, indeed, a tie that binds.

These days, I realize that while singing hymns brings joy, they also embed biblical truths deeply in my mind and heart. Pronouns, verb forms, poetic word order, and musical style may create superficial differences between old and new hymns, but powerful, Scripture-based hymns last.

We have chosen eight hymns with texts written over the course of several centuries, hoping these will evoke a fresh response to God this Holy Week. Envision God’s people singing (hundreds of years ago) some of the same hymns we sing. Timeless worship to our Risen Lord!

Each devotional centers on a hymn in our *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* (CGH). An online version of these devotionals is available at [nashvillefirst.org/easter](http://nashvillefirst.org/easter) along with links to hymns with which you can sing along.

*Helen Owens*

“I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with  
my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit,  
but I will sing with my mind also.”

(1 Corinthians 14:15)

# Palm Sunday, April 5

by Sam Sanders

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## All Glory, Laud, and Honor

(Theodulph of Orleans, 820 / Trans. John Mason Neale, 1854 - CGH #175)

Palm Sunday, one week before Easter, celebrates the wonderful time of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus' followers were expecting the Messiah – a political king who would overthrow the Romans. They waved palm branches – a symbol of victory or triumph. They spread cloaks and palm branches to make a path in front of the donkey on which Jesus rode. They praised God for all the mighty works that they had seen (Luke 19:37). The joyous parade was complete with feasting and music.

Christian churches still celebrate in similar fashion: great music, children carrying palms, and frequently a church feast. We usually skip the donkey. The major ingredient of our celebrations is the congregation and choir singing hymns about the Messiah who takes away the sins of the world.

One of the greatest hymns we sing is *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*. All of the text is uplifting, but I don't have to get past the first line to be inspired. "*All glory, laud, and honor to Thee, Redeemer, King*" conveys a stirring message.

**Glory:** an enthusiastic expression of worship and praise

**Laud:** extreme high praise used for a person of unmatched achievement in a public context

**Honor:** high respect and esteem

The people at this festive occasion were not aware that the following days would be difficult for Jesus. But we are abundantly aware of the price Jesus gladly paid for our sins and thankfully offer Him "glory, laud, and honor," accepting Him as our Redeemer and King.

Over 1,000 years ago, Theodulph (750-821), named Bishop of Orléans by Charlemagne, wrote *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*, commonly used as a Palm Sunday processional hymn...

The music was written in 1615, 400 years ago. In 1854, John Mason Neale translated it. And we still sing it.

"As he was drawing near ... the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice ... saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" (Luke 19:37-38)

Monday, April 6

by Jason Cox

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# How Deep the Father's Love for Us

(Stuart Townend, 1995 - CGH #178)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

There is something special about a Father's love.

When I think of my father, I think of his patience sitting at the kitchen table for hours trying his best to explain to me, a hard-headed ninth grader, the fundamentals of algebra. Or the way he sacrificed countless afternoons and weekends carrying my brother and me to music lessons, soccer practice, baseball games, and other gas-guzzling, time-consuming commitments.

On several occasions in Scripture we see the evidence of a father's love. A prodigal son is welcomed home with open arms by his father. And Jairus, a desperate father, pleads with Jesus to come heal his 12-year-old daughter. Jairus' love for his little girl compelled him to go and seek out the Healer.

And how about Jesus Himself? The Son of God sent on a mission of mercy by His own Father to come and dwell with us. What kind of love is this?

From Crosswalk.com:  
“The uniqueness of Townend's writing lies partly in its lyrical content. There is both a theological depth and poetic expression that some say is rare in today's worship writing.”

John Piper puts it this way: “God's love is His willingness to do whatever is necessary – even suffering unimaginable pain – to bring us undeserving rebels the all-satisfying and everlasting joy of knowing Him.”

*How deep the Father's love for us, How vast beyond all measure,  
That He should give His only Son, To make a wretch His treasure.*

This Easter, we remember that our freedom and salvation have come at a cost. A Father gave His one and only Son to pay the price that only He could pay.

*Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer;  
But this I know with all my heart – His wounds have paid my ransom.*

Tuesday, April 7

by Sandy Fields

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# And Can It Be

(Charles Wesley, 1739 - CGH #605)

Listening to my first Easter cantata as a 28-year-old recently converted Christian, Charles Wesley's hymn, *And Can It Be*, spoke everything I was feeling.

*"Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"*

Overcome with the extravagant grace that was evident in my own salvation, I grieved that I caused His death. I was responsible for His pain. The One whose death I caused through my sins offered His life for me! That first Easter, I heard the same amazement in Wesley's words. It was personal – my God freely died in my place.

*"He left His Father's throne above (so free, so intimate His grace),  
emptied Himself of all but love ..."*

Wesley's words speak to the Greek underlying Philippians 2:7. The phrase "made himself of no reputation" (KJV) literally means "he emptied himself." The never-ending mercy of God, and His willingness to empty Himself, is the source of this Amazing Love.

The hymn continues to remind me of the result of Christ's loving, merciful work. My sins are not minor, but there is no condemnation for me. I am alive in Christ and clothed in His righteousness! I can approach the throne with boldness!

I remember this hymn when I start to take for granted that I have been "bought at a price." *"Amazing love! That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!"*

Thank you, my Lord and my God. May I never trivialize Your sacrifice as I will be eternally grateful for Your suffering and death on the cross to reconcile me with You!

"Who, being in the form of God, ... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant ..." (Philippians 2:6-7)

Before the first settlers to Nashville built Fort Nashborough (1780), Charles Wesley wrote this hymn. It has been said of him: "The early Methodists were taught and led as much through [his] hymns as through sermons and [John] Wesley's pamphlets."

Wednesday, April 8

by Glenn Fitzpatrick

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# *In Christ Alone*

(Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, 2001 - CGH #569)

*What heights of love, what depths of peace  
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease."*

*Striving* is a word that we don't use much anymore; though, if we're honest, it is something we spend our lives doing. Striving is defined as exerting much effort or energy, struggling or fighting vigorously, often in opposition. As scheduled people, we hustle from one thing to another, striving to get through our days and get it all done. It's a pride issue, you know. We think they can't do it without us. We even brag about having more to do than others. When did busyness become a virtue?

"Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

I need to constantly remind myself that the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, is in control. Instead of running to take the lead, I need to be thankful that I am not the one in charge. He is greater, I need to become less. (John 3:30) Our hearts yearn to experience the heights of His love and depths of His peace (Romans 11:33). His divine power has given us everything we need (2 Peter 1:3).

*"In Christ alone my hope is found;  
He is my light, my strength, my song."*

We have to let go of our fears and our sense of self-importance, taking the time to be still and listen at His Feet.

*"Here in the death of Christ, I live!"*

From [www.christianpost.com](http://www.christianpost.com):

*"In Christ Alone has resonated with both the traditional and contemporary worship camps due, in part, to its richness in Christian doctrine." (Don Carson)*

*"When we sing great hymns of the faith, we are learning great doctrine and we don't even know it." (Joni Eareckson Tada)*

Maundy Thursday, April 9

by John Wilkinson

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# In Remembrance of Me

(Ragan Courtney, 1972 - CGH #462)

"He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it.

Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying,

'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

(Luke 22:19 New Living Translation)

This beautiful hymn, written by Ragan Courtney and Buryl Red, amplifies the words of Jesus during the Last Supper with His disciples in a way that instantly brings me into a mood of reflection and introspection. These lines encapsulate the underlying message that resonates within me.

*In remembrance of Me, search for truth.*

*In remembrance of Me, always love.*

*In remembrance of Me, don't look above,*

*but in your heart, look in your heart for God.*

When I remember the incredible ways in which Jesus showed love and compassion to people and the ultimate example of sacrificial love He demonstrated on the cross, I am compelled to look into my heart and examine how much it resembles the heart of God. Am I loving people like Christ did when he healed the sick and fed the poor? Am I open to sharing the love of Christ with everyone, regardless of who they are or what they believe?

I also remember that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one can come to God the Father except through him (John 14:6). As I "search for truth," I know it is found in the person of Jesus Christ, in His Word, and guided by the Holy Spirit. Do I hold firmly to the truth in a culture that often rejects it and sometimes even perceives it to be unloving (Romans 12:2)? Or do I conform my thinking to the culture? I pray Jesus will help me to share the truth in love (Ephesians 4:14-15) in all situations and do it in remembrance of him.

The hymn "In Remembrance of Me" was first published in 1972 as part of the musical, *Celebrate Life*, by Ragan Courtney and Buryl Red. It retells Jesus' life through the witness of authors Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Good Friday, April 10

by Bob & Joyce Byrd

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# Low in the Grave He Lay (Christ Arose)

(Robert Lowry, 1874 - CGH #207)

Credited as the composer of more than 500 hymn tunes and the words for a number of them, Robert Lowry considered preaching his primary calling and hymn writing as more an aside. In his pastorates he gained renown as a powerful preacher; however, it was as a composer of hymns that his reputation and recognition expanded into the larger arena.

One of his gifts was recognizing the necessity of a meaningful relationship of the melody to the words of the hymn. This impact is nowhere clearer than in his 1874 composition, *Low in the Grave He Lay (Christ Arose)*.

In each stanza ...

- The first line conveys both the harsh reality of Jesus' cross and an affirmation of hope in words and music. The impact for the singer of such words as "grave," "bed," and "death" in the opening phrases are stark reminders that Jesus died!
- The middle phrase *Jesus, My Savior* articulates the claim sustaining the community of faith.
- The third phrase of stanzas 1 and 2 acknowledges the challenge of opposition and waiting, both for Jesus and the believer. This phrase in stanza 3 announces the basis for victory, *He tore the bars away*, like the first glow of the sun on a dark morning sky.
- Then there is confession, *Jesus, my Lord!*

With the beginning of the chorus, the tone of the lyrics and music shifts to celebration for the victory of Jesus and His church: *Up from the grave He arose ... Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

Sharron Lyon, FBC organist for 40 years, believes that two hymns have been sung on Easter Sunday for more than 75 years! They are "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" and "Low in the Grave He Lay" ("Christ Arose"). Both hymns have appeared in all our hymnals since 1940.

"But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.'" (Matthew 28:5-6)

Saturday, April 11

by Lara Fisher

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# Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

(Charles Wesley, 1739 - CGH #194)

Every year we sing the traditional Easter hymn *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today*, written by Charles Wesley. An interesting line in the hymn to me is “*Sing ye heav’ns and earth, reply, Alleluia.*” Luke 19:40 says: “I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out.” (CSB) That is astounding! Isn’t it incredible that we worship a God who is worthy of all praise, a God who if we don’t praise Him, the rocks will?

My Nana (Martha Kirkland) has one of the best rock collections the world has ever seen. Hundreds of rocks are displayed on her porch and in her backyard. Her rocks come from all across the country, reminders of travels she enjoyed with people she loves. I can’t help but think what it would be like if the rocks in her backyard erupted in praise.

What’s even more incredible is that our Savior was dead but now He is alive! If we were to keep silent, the very stone that covered Jesus’ grave but could not hold Him there would cry out to Him. If we were to keep silent, the creatures of the earth and the ground that they roam on would cry out to Him.

Nothing can stop God from being praised! As we celebrate our risen Savior, take time to consider that if everything on earth praises God, so shall we.

**Matt Redman** (“10,000 Reasons”) has said: “I think all true meaningful and pure worship is a response to a revelation. ... When we see Him, it commands a response to his holiness. ... If you base lyrics on the Word of God, they’ll endure.”

And he tweeted: (@matt\_redman - Twitter - 2/7/2020) We can appreciate without wonder. We can admire without wonder. We can even adore without wonder. But we cannot worship without wonder. #lettherebewonder

“Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
let the field exult, and everything in it!”  
(Psalm 96:11-12)

# Easter Sunday, April 12

by Philip Owens

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## Crown Him with Many Crowns

(Matthew Bridges, 1851, and Godfrey Thring, 1874 – CGH #223)

During a children’s music rehearsal, the director held up a hymnal and asked the group if they knew this book. One child raised her hand and said, “That’s a Music Bible!” Could there be a more apropos name for a hymnal? How keen the mind of a child to capture so literally the nature of this wonderful gift of our faith! Its rich, carefully crafted words convey thoroughly vetted theology. With Scripture leading the way, it comforts, challenges, empowers, and encourages us at so many moments in our Christian walk.

Its rich, carefully crafted words conveying thoroughly vetted theology, which with Scripture leading the way, comforts, challenges, empowers, and encourages us at so many moments in our Christian walk.

We see those carefully crafted words in the hymn, *Crown Him with Many Crowns*. Revelation 19:12 provides the reference that, “...on his head were many crowns.”

In the hymn, Jesus is crowned with the monikers of matchless King, Lord of Life, Lord of Peace, and Lord of Love. And we see different elements of the Easter story in each stanza. But the recurring theme throughout each verse is that the work of Easter is eternal.

God is the Great Potentate and Architect of Time. There has never been a time when God was not God, nor will there ever be. From everlasting to everlasting, unending, unchanging, The Eternal One loved us so greatly that He sent His one and only Son, Jesus. And it is His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high, who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:9)

As the stanzas of this hymn were coming together in England (1874), Nashville First Baptist Church started a Building Fund and in 1883 bought land at the corner of 7th and Broad for \$14,500.

## “Man of Sorrows!” What a Name

1. “Man of sor - rows!” what a name for the Son of God, who came  
2. Bear - ing shame and scoff - ing rude, in my place con - demned He stood,  
3. Lift - ed up was He to die, “It is fin - ished,” was His cry;  
4. When He comes, our glo - rious King, all His ran - somed home to bring,

ru - ined sin - ners to re - claim! Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!  
sealed my par - don with His blood: Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!  
now in heaven ex - alt - ed high: Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!  
then a - new this song we'll sing: Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!

WORDS: Philip P. Bliss, 1875 (Isa. 53:3)  
MUSIC: Philip P. Bliss, 1875

HALLELUJAH, WHAT A SAVIOR!  
7.7.7.8

“Man of Sorrows” was the favorite hymn of  
Dr. H. Franklin Paschall, pastor, 1956–1983.

The Easter devotionals in this book can also be found on the church website at [NashvilleFirst.org/Easter](http://NashvilleFirst.org/Easter) along with links to the hymns which you can listen to and sing along with.