

Oh happy day

SOUL-STIRRING INSPIRATIONS
WITH A GOSPEL MUSIC TWIST



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WITH A GOSPEL MUSIC TWIST

KEN PETERSEN



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Oh Happy Day: Soul-Stirring Inspirations with a Gospel Music Twist

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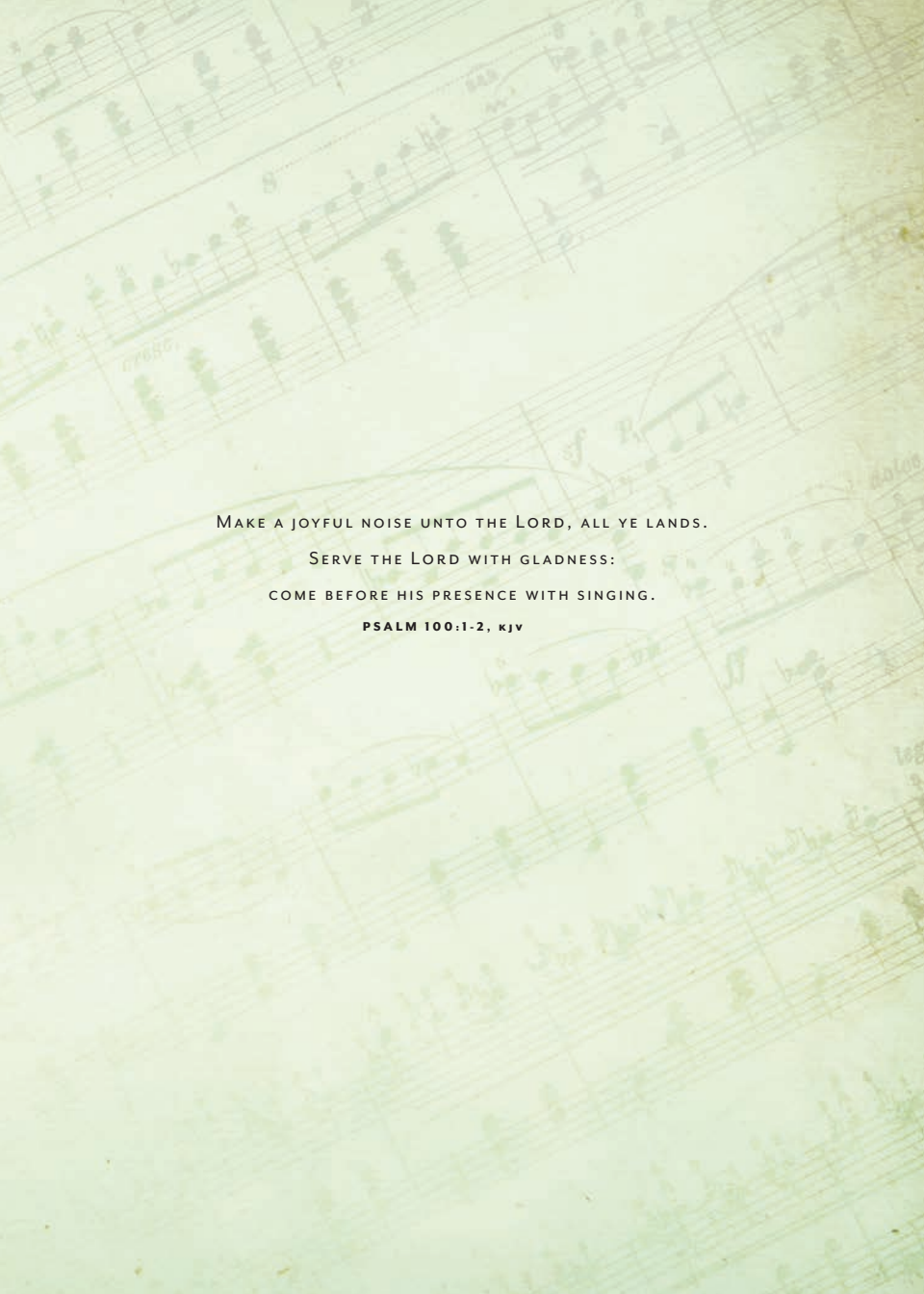
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Contents

Amazing Grace	3
Boundless Love	4
What a Savior	7
Alabama Mud	8
'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus	11
How Great Thou Art	12
He Set Me Free	15
What a Lovely Name	16
Sweet, Sweet Spirit	19
He Touched Me	20
Oh Happy Day	23
Jesus Is Coming Soon	24
The Church in the Wildwood	27
I Love to Tell the Story	28
Count Your Blessings	31
Pass Me Not	32
When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder	35
No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus	36
The Old Rugged Cross	39
Just As I Am	40
He's a Personal Savior	43
Send the Light	44
The Lord's Prayer	47
What a Day That Will Be	48

I Need Thee Every Hour	51
Moment by Moment	52
Give the World a Smile	55
Love Lifted Me	56
The Old White Flag	59
And Can It Be That I Should Gain?	60
I'll Fly Away	63
In the Garden	64
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	67
Soon and Very Soon	68
Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus	71
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms	72
Please Forgive Me	75
Because He Lives	76
How Big Is God	79
Hide Thou Me	80
I'd Rather Have Jesus	83
The Healer Hasn't Lost His Touch	84
Great Is Thy Faithfulness	87
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	88
Turn Your Radio On	91
I Surrender All	92
Softly and Tenderly	95
The Love of God	96
Holy, Holy, Holy	99
He Hideth My Soul	100
We Shall See Jesus	103
Victory in Jesus	104
I Sing the Mighty Power of God	107

Just a Little Talk with Jesus	108
It Is Well with My Soul	111
The Lighthouse	112
Blessed Assurance	115
There Is a Fountain	116
I'll Meet You in the Morning	119
'Til the Storm Passes By	120
Jesus Paid It All	123
Beyond the Sunset	124
I Know Who Holds Tomorrow	127
Goodbye, World, Goodbye	128
I Will Sing of My Redeemer	131
Through It All	132
Standing on the Promises	135
His Eye Is on the Sparrow	136
Sweet Beulah Land	139
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say	140
The Old Country Church	143
Mansion over the Hilltop	144
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God	147
Tell Me the Story of Jesus	148
Gentle Shepherd	151

The background of the page is a faded, light green musical score on aged, yellowish paper. The score consists of multiple staves with various musical notes, rests, and clefs, though the details are soft and difficult to discern. The text is centered over this background.

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD, ALL YE LANDS.

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS:

COME BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH SINGING.

PSALM 100:1-2, KJV

How
sweet
the
sound



Amazing Grace

We've sung this beloved hymn at events ranging from festivals to funerals. The lyrics encapsulate John Newton's life story. Forced into service on a British merchant ship when he was eighteen, Newton eventually found himself in West Africa, sick with malaria and suffering mistreatment from others. On the trip home, the ship nearly sank during a violent storm, but miraculously, the crew survived. Newton realized God had intervened, and his life was changed forever. The Lord's "rich mercy . . . preserved, restored, [and] pardoned" him, words inscribed on his gravestone. How about you? Take a moment to let God know how precious his grace is to you.

Father God, I have not forgotten that you rescued me from a life of despair and self-destruction. Thank you for loving me unconditionally and being merciful to me.

BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES:
IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD: NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST.

EPHESIANS 2:8-9, KJV

John Newton's spiritual growth was gradual; he continued to be a slave trader for six years after his life-changing experience. In 1764, he was ordained by the Church of England. In 1788, Newton wrote a graphic account of the slave trade to support the antislavery movement. Newton lived to see the slave trade abolished in Britain.

Boundless Love

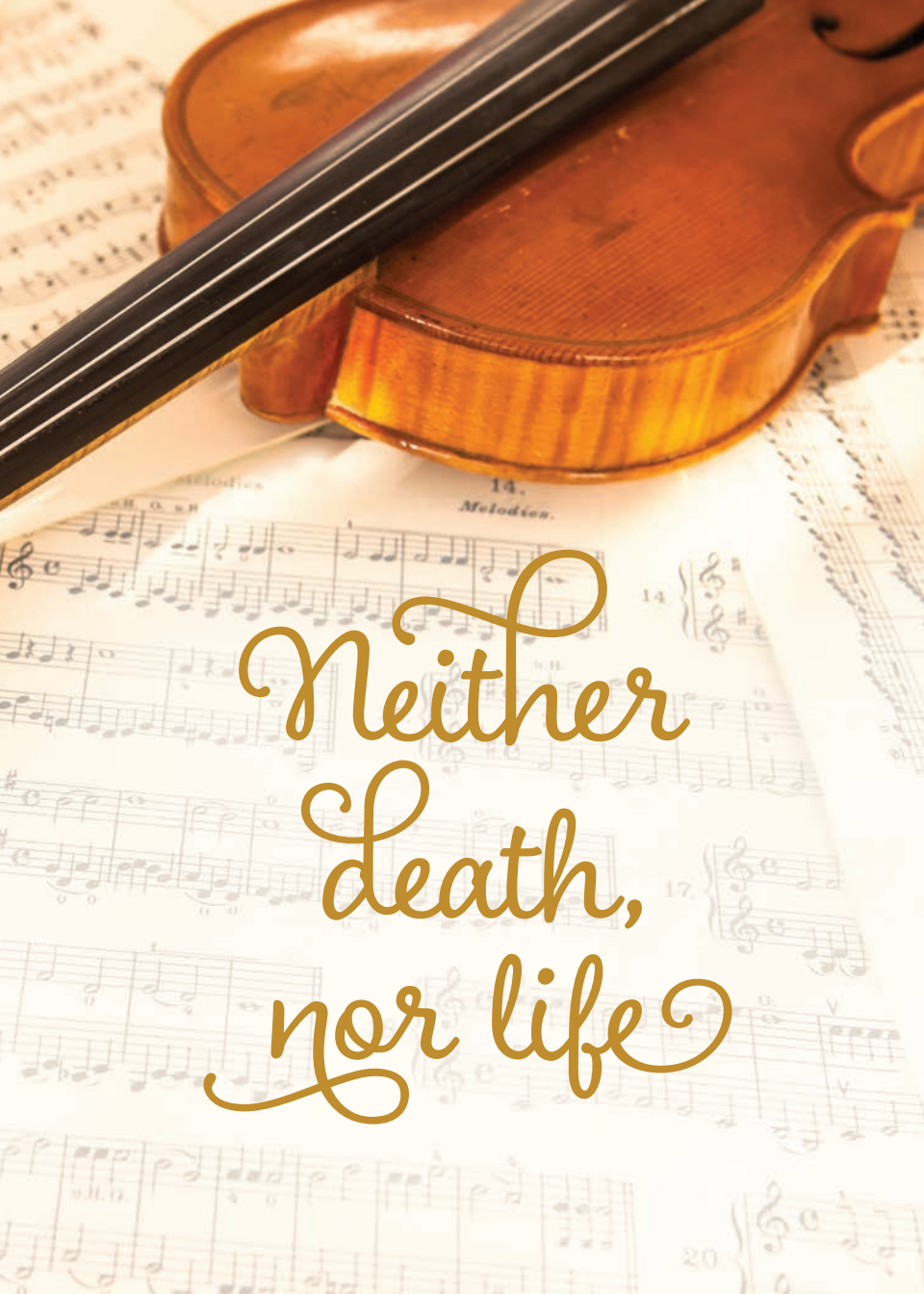
One line in this catchy gospel song describes how Jesus wants to love us because we are precious to him. We are treasured by the Son of God, and he longs to lavish his love upon us. That's pretty mind-boggling, isn't it? And yet sometimes we block that intimate relationship. Why would we resist the love of God? It could be that we have been hurt before. Possibly we're afraid of what responding to the love of Jesus might require. Maybe we have idols and sins in our lives that we aren't willing to let go of. What is keeping you from receiving God's boundless love?

Jesus, I know you want to love me, but I have been pushing you away. Help me to let your love pour in by breaking down the walls I've built in my heart.

I AM PERSUADED, THAT NEITHER DEATH, NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS, NOR PRINCIPALITIES, NOR POWERS, NOR THINGS PRESENT, NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR HEIGHT, NOR DEPTH, NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE, SHALL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD, WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

ROMANS 8:38-39, KJV

Dianne Wilkinson has written more than a thousand gospel songs and has had many number one hits between the Southern Gospel and Bluegrass Gospel charts. For two decades she worked closely with The Cathedrals, the legendary quartet whose knee-slapping version of "Boundless Love" at a reunion concert is Southern Gospel at its best.



Neither
Death,
nor life

The
offering
for our
sin





What a Savior

Southern Gospel music is filled with deep awe and gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, which saves us from eternal separation from God. When Ernie Haase and Signature Sound sing this favorite, their joy is undeniable. It's evident they cannot wait to sing for their Savior when they see him face-to-face. And yet it's easy to hear the salvation message so many times that we start to take it for granted. Revisit Calvary and meditate on the extraordinary act of redemption that changed the world forever. Jesus died because he loves you. Let his love flood your heart.

Lord God, I need a personal revival. Help me reclaim my original passion for you. Jesus, I can't thank you enough for saving me from my sins.

GOD MADE CHRIST, WHO NEVER SINNED, TO BE THE OFFERING FOR OUR SIN,
SO THAT WE COULD BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

Marvin P. Dalton's songs were often included at camp meetings in the 1940s and 50s. One of his other popular tunes was "Looking for a City." For a time, Dalton was a member of the famed Hartford Quartet, which in its history featured a number of Southern Gospel artists and songwriters.

Alabama Mud

Through the lyrics of this song, Belinda Smith transports us to a muddy riverbank at an old-fashioned baptism. The power of the moment comes alive in her description. Your own baptism may not have taken place in a river; people are immersed in oceans, swimming pools, and even bathtubs, all with witnesses standing by. Since Jesus was surrounded by others when John the Baptist performed his baptism, we follow that example. Baptism symbolizes that when you died to sin, you were given “a new heart . . . a new spirit” (Ezekiel 36:26). May these precious gifts continually reflect God’s presence in your life.

Jesus, when you saved me, I wanted to be baptized. I died to my old self and was raised to new life in you. I am not ashamed to be your follower.

WE DIED AND WERE BURIED WITH CHRIST BY BAPTISM. AND JUST AS CHRIST
WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORIOUS POWER OF THE FATHER,
NOW WE ALSO MAY LIVE NEW LIVES.

ROMANS 6:4

Belinda Smith is a performer and songwriter who shares her gifts by mentoring up-and-coming musical talent. She has been a featured artist at Nashville’s Bluebird Cafe. Her collaborative song with Cindi Ballard and Wayne Haun, “So Many Years, So Many Blessings,” performed by The Lewis Family, won the 2004 Dove Award for Bluegrass Song of the Year.

Live
new
lives



With me
to the
end



'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Susan and Austin Whisnant and Jim Brady gave a heartfelt performance of this hymn during a Gospel Music Hymn Sing. God is in control, but are you okay with that? It's easy to say we trust God when things are going well. But when life becomes difficult, we may question, worry, and begin to doubt God's love. Remember, he never promised us a carefree life, but he did promise to never abandon those who search for him (Psalm 9:10). Welcome each day with complete confidence in God. Trust him so deeply that you can sing his praises, no matter what happens.

*God, I come to you confessing my lack of faith. Bolster my reliance on you.
Help me to trust you fully and completely, no matter what life brings me.*

THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SHIELD; MY HEART
TRUSTS IN HIM, AND HE HELPS ME. MY HEART LEAPS FOR JOY,
AND WITH MY SONG I PRAISE HIM.

PSALM 28:7, NIV

Louisa M. R. Stead was enjoying the beach with her family when cries for help changed their lives. Louisa's husband rushed into the water to save a drowning boy, and both perished after he was pulled under. Shortly following that traumatic incident, Jesus' sweet presence consoled Louisa as she wrote this song from her heart.

How Great Thou Art

Originating in Sweden in 1885 as a poem by Carl Boberg, “How Great Thou Art” has become one of the most recorded gospel songs ever. The lyrics describe the mightiness of God, and the circuitous journey to its present form also testifies of God’s mighty hand. If not for George Beverly Shea’s sense of its enduring message, leading him to sing it at a 1955 Billy Graham Crusade, the song might not have been heard around the world. In 1957, Shea sang it ninety-nine times during an extended New York Crusade. Right now, let your voice soar in praise as you, too, sing this great hymn.

God and Father of all, I humbly come to you. I can't fully grasp how mighty you are. But I am thankful for your presence in my life.

EVER SINCE THE WORLD WAS CREATED, PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THE EARTH AND SKY. THROUGH EVERYTHING GOD MADE, THEY CAN CLEARLY SEE HIS INVISIBLE QUALITIES—HIS ETERNAL POWER AND DIVINE NATURE.

ROMANS 1:20

Missionary and linguist Stuart Hine learned of the Russian version of Boberg’s poem and in 1949 translated it into English and added new verses. According to Manna Music, there are more than 1,700 documented recordings of this song, from George Beverly Shea to Elvis Presley to Carrie Underwood, and hundreds in between.



His
eternal
power
and divine
nature

Who
will
free
me?



He Set Me Free

There's a popular T-shirt with a familiar Southernism: "Raised on Sweet Tea and Liberty." Does that describe your life right now? Or do you feel shackled by sin? Maybe you don't even recognize how imprisoned you are. But God knows. He "spread[s] out our sins . . . our secret sins" (Psalm 90:8). And yet, he wants to set us free from the "power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13, KJV). God is more powerful than Satan. Won't you confess your sins and allow his loving mercy to set you on a light-filled path? Then you can replace that T-shirt with another one: "Raised on Sweet Tea and *Jesus*."

*Lord Jesus, I am trapped in a cage of my own making,
weighed down by my sins. I know you hold the key to release me.
Thank you for your mercy and grace.*

WHO WILL FREE ME FROM THIS LIFE THAT IS DOMINATED BY SIN AND DEATH?
THANK GOD! THE ANSWER IS IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

ROMANS 7:24-25

Albert Brumley learned his songwriting skills from E. M. Bartlett at the Hartford Music Institute. After graduating, Brumley worked for Bartlett making songbooks and teaching in the traveling Singing School. Song ideas kept coming. "He Set Me Free" was published in 1939.