

RETURN UNTO  
THY  
*Rest*

Coming into the loving  
embrace of our heavenly Father  
through the gift of poetry

*Sabrina Reedy*



# Return Unto Thy Rest

By Sabrina Reedy

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*"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."*

**Psalm 116:7-8**

*the  
hope  
of  
glory*

Photographs taken by Malcolm &  
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# 1. Inspiration

Understanding the channel of blessing that God has designed to flow from Himself to His Son, His Son to man, and man to woman (1 Cor. 11:3), I cannot neglect to acknowledge and offer deep gratitude for how my husband was used to reignite the love of poetry that has existed in my heart since childhood, but that I had forgotten for some time.

These first two poems were written by my husband, Malcolm Reedy—the first as a gift to his step-father and mother at their wedding, and the second as a gift to me at ours, just a few months later.

## Love is a Person (September 27, 2020)

Love is a person,  
The person of Christ;  
In whom is no envy,  
Neither malice or strife;  
  
At the door knocking,  
A small tender voice,  
"I'd like to come in,  
But it's every man's choice;  
  
The door is your heart,  
The knock is My Spirit;  
I want to live in you,  
Free will is My limit;  
  
A new heart I'll give you,  
And joy, and then peace;  
I shall be your Comfort,  
From your burdens released;  
  
What I receive of My Father,  
I give unto you;

The trials of fire  
Impart strength and virtue;  
  
Walk in My Spirit,  
Where true freedom reigns;  
Pure love sacrifices,  
And endures in much pain;  
  
A life full of love,  
Is a life full of Me;  
Behold, how I love you  
And remember the tree;  
  
I've called you My bride,  
I've redeemed you from sin;  
Put on a white robe,  
To My kingdom come in."  
  
If it was required,  
He'd again pay the price;  
Love is a people,  
The body of Christ.

## Seek Him Together (November 14, 2020)

Your love is not shallow,  
It's plenteous deep;  
Your life bears a fruit  
I will cheerfully reap!

I behold in your eyes  
Such genuine care,  
A character trait  
That today is so rare;

You're different than others,  
So humble, so kind;  
It's obvious that in you  
The true Light does shine;

Your faith is amazing,  
It's proof that God's Son  
Is continually working  
Til His work is all done;

You're God's daughter, a princess,  
And princesses become queens;

If I marry a princess,  
Then that makes me a king!

But God's kingdom is different,  
It serves and it gives,  
Revealing the glory of One  
Who eternally lives;

Let us seek Him together  
Wherever He calls,  
Let us answer regardless  
Of whatever befalls;

If I say I will love you  
My promise is empty,  
Unless Christ Jesus Himself  
Performs it all in me;

I give you myself  
And all that I own;  
Although it's not much,  
I know that you'd take me alone.

I praise God for inspiring my husband with such beautiful and comforting words. I believe that these words planted a seed within my heart that has, of late, sprung forth with precious fruit—the partaking of which has blessed my walk with the Lord more profoundly than I can express.

I pray now that as my husband's blessing was bestowed upon me through his poems, it can be magnified and bestowed upon you through my own (which I do not truly feel are mine at all, but gifts to me from my Savior). I invite you to come apart and rest in the beauty of our heavenly Father's character, as beheld in the face of His dear Son.

## 2. Though the Whole World Forget

April 2022

My husband and I had recently begun celebrating our heavenly Father's yearly festivals, and experiencing tremendous blessings in doing so. In 2022, as the first feast of the year—Passover—was rapidly approaching, I went out for a walk. Pausing in awe under a redbud tree with vibrant little magenta flowers blooming all along its branches, I was struck with curiosity as to how most of the world no longer understood that this was the true beginning of the new year. I began to meditate upon how the yearly festivals preach the entire plan of salvation, and realized that nature testified in perfect harmony. It was all so beautifully intertwined. I sat down beneath the tree, as the verses began to come...



Though the whole world forget, the flowers cannot  
But bear record of the wonders their Creator has wrought;

Bringing light out of darkness as the earth was first born,  
Though the family of heaven had been tragically torn;

Our Father spoke life, with pure love in His eyes,  
As He decorated the earth from the sea to the skies;

Brought such beauty from nothing, and all for the ones  
Who He knew could reject Him; who He'd save by His Son;

Set great lights in the heavens for days, years, and seasons,  
And the first cycle began, His love the sole reason.

Each year His great calendar tells the whole story  
Of our salvation, redemption, and transport to glory;

How He frees us from bondage, and saves us from sin;  
Pours His Spirit from on high to transform us within;

Puts a fire in our hearts to share the news from above,  
And walking as Christ did, become one in His love;

How He'll come to receive us, bring us to a new home,  
That our Saviour has promised He'd prepare as our own;

The precious petals declare a new year has begun;  
Another cycle of the story of God's victory won;

They proclaim that our redemption grants the gift of new life;  
Out of cold, stony ground; out of sadness and strife,

Burst such beautiful colours: Joyful, loving, serene,  
As could never have been imagined in the place we'd once been;

And these bright, lovely blooms promise soon-coming fruit,  
If we don't faint in the work God has called us to do;

And that work is quite simply to believe on His Son;  
To let His faith live through us, til' our journey is done.

Is it a wonder that the enemy bids us forget,  
What God longs to teach us through these special times set?

But we'll overcome by the testimony of such love, joy and peace,  
As His ways fill our minds, and our burdens release;

As He calls "Come apart here, and rest for awhile.  
As I cleanse you, and heal you, and remind you, My child,

That it is My power alone, which does all this work in you;  
That what My Son has accomplished, none can ever undo;

That no matter what chaos rears its head in this world,  
Let Me be your Defender, let clenched fists be unfurled.

I've got you. You're safe. I will never let go.  
This one thing, beloved, I most need you to know."

Will we let creation teach us of the One who loves most?  
Who poured out all of heaven to bring us so close?

Let us delight in His statutes, and rejoice in His Word,  
And proclaim His great goodness, til' the whole world has heard.



### 3. Too Good to Be True

March 15, 2024

As Malcolm left for 6-weeks in Africa (by far the longest we'd been apart since being married), I deeply desired that my time alone with God would be especially healing. For awhile I had recognized that something was not quite right in my experience. I sensed an underlying unrest draining my vital force. I had noticed tension building in certain relationships, and could not put my finger on the cause. Of course, my flesh wanted to cast the blame on others, but something in my spirit convicted me otherwise. Thus, I prayed earnestly that God would perform much needed open-heart surgery on me, and expose the reality of what was going on.

It was Malcolm's final week away, and it had been a roller coaster for me so far. I could feel God drawing me closer and closer to the answers I was seeking. Like the pressure building in the atmosphere before the clouds release their burden, I felt a breakthrough coming.

It was early morning as I sat with the two angelic neighbours God had sent to stay the nights with me after discovering I was not sleeping so well in our country home alone. We had been having many enlightening discussions, as I sought to work through my perplexities. That morning our thoughts came to the war between Satan's works-based value system and our Father's kingdom—where our value is based solely on our identity as His children—and the struggle we all have in leaving behind the former to embrace the latter. Nearing the end of the discussion, one of these friends shared that at some point she'd had the revelation, "All my life has been a performance." Something about these words struck me deeply, but my friends had to leave shortly after.

I made my breakfast and sat down at the table. Suddenly that line echoed profoundly through my mind. God had been prepping me for surgery, and now the scalpel made its first incision. That line was followed by another, and then another... My heart pounded as I sensed the arrival of the revelation I needed, and I began to write.

All my life has been a performance.  
If I can only be perfect, I'll make them proud.  
I'll finally hear the words, "I love you."  
I finally won't feel lost in the crowd.

But the message comes to me, "It isn't true.  
That's not where your value lies.  
You are beautifully, wonderfully, uniquely you,  
And priceless in your heavenly Father's eyes.

There's nothing you can do, good or bad,  
To change His love for you."  
But my heart resists, and pushes back—  
It's just too good to be true.

So my head accepts, but tucks away  
The rebellion within my heart;  
And I try to live out what's too good to be true,  
But it secretly feels like a farce.

"You're addicted to rejection," the preacher says,  
And my heart skips a beat in my chest;  
But no, that cannot apply to me,  
So I bury this denial with the rest.

But my experience proves these words to be true,  
As true rest evades my soul;  
I try to find peace in my value with God,  
But something else is still wielding control.

My subconscious says, "Let's disappoint them,  
And see if the message holds true.  
Let's purposefully try not to be perfect,  
And see what my loved ones will do."

Will they still call me if I never call them?  
Will my husband put up with my moods?  
What if I'm late for important events?  
Or "forget" to contribute any food?

What if this war that is raging inside  
Leaves me so terribly exhausted,  
That I cannot make time for anyone,  
And perhaps they will think that I've lost it?

"Surely then," my deceitful heart sneers,  
"My value will decrease in their eyes.  
Then I will prove the true wishful thinking  
Of this message they lovingly prize.

Then all those years of toil to perfection  
Will not be a waste after all.  
I can pick right back up, earning my way to heaven,  
And restoring myself from the fall."

And that somehow feels safer, as insane as that seems,  
Because then I'm the one in control;  
But the grip of these lies on my heart starts to slip,  
As the still, small Voice reaches my soul.

"My daughter, My dear, My sincerely beloved,  
Why are you looking to others?  
They are also in the process of escaping these lies;  
In this journey, your sisters and brothers.

They may not always react in the perfect way  
To affirm your value to you;  
But that is no reason for your heart to say,  
'This message is too good to be true.'

You know it is not their message, it's Mine.  
And child, have I not proved this to you?  
Sent My Son to save you, in the depths of your sin,  
And you say it's too good to be true?"

I cry out in anguish, as I see it again—  
His cross right before my eyes;  
"Help me receive it!" I woefully plead,  
"I'm so sick and tired of these lies."

"It's okay, My child. There is no condemnation.  
I know just how deep your wounds go.  
But I'm your Physician, My hands lack no skill,  
And it's time that we reap what I've sown.

You know it's the truth—Your value is infinite.  
I have shown you this, time and again.  
I'll help you release them from the pressure to prove it.  
Let's set free your family and friends.

Your life was not wasted in your fight for perfection,  
Though it was never My desire for you.  
It was a needful experience called the Old Covenant,  
To prepare you to be thus made new.

My work of refinement brings dross to the surface,  
And it can be painful, I know;  
But it's a pain that brings healing, and freedom from sin,  
That My blessings more freely may flow.

It's time to let go. Will you trust Me, My love?  
I promise, I won't let you fall.  
Let's burst the balloon, let the pressure explode,  
Release you, and your loved ones, and all."

So I close my eyes tight, as the tears keep on streaming,  
And envision myself letting go;  
A moment of fear, but then weightless, and freeing,  
And the truth in my head, my heart knows.

It is somehow, amazingly, perfectly true  
That my worth in His eyes has no limit;  
Nothing I've done, or ever could do,  
Has one iota of power to change it.

All pressure, expectations, and stresses are gone.  
In His arms I can simply just be;  
Coming and going, and living and loving,  
Uniquely and perfectly me.

I don't want to open, don't want to go back,  
And He assures—In His arms I can stay;  
"Keep your eyes on My Son, and He'll safeguard your heart.  
He's the Life, and the Truth, and the Way."

Could this really be it? The peace that He's promised?  
My smile tells my heart what to do;  
It's time to accept, it's time to believe it—  
It isn't too good to be true.



## 4. That's Not Who You Are

April 12, 2024



As I completed and finally shared a project that had been so special to me, and such a blessing to my own marriage and walk with the Lord (the *Growing in Grace* couples' devotional), I felt an increasing intensity of attacks from the enemy. As Passover was also approaching, I was not surprised by this. Those who have become familiar with God's calendar can attest to the uncanny pattern of spiritual warfare in the days and weeks leading up to these appointed times, followed by spiritual breakthroughs during them. Thus, I clung to God's promises and the ways He had been healing my mind, as the enemy sought to pummel me with destructive thoughts from his performance-kingdom, and paint a picture of my heavenly Father as one whom I could never do enough to please. After one particularly difficult night, unaware that we had entered the New Moon season, I awoke early in the morning with a desperate desire to spend time with God. I knew that the image Satan was trying to impress upon my mind was a horribly false one, and one which I must reject immediately, and could only do so in my Father's strength.

That's not who You are, God; that's not who You are.

No matter how deep exists this scar,  
No matter what the enemy says in the dark,  
I know in my heart, Lord, that's not who You are.

You're not one to force, or pressure, or prod;  
You're not a controlling, domineering God.  
You never neglect a loving embrace;  
The scowl of disdain never shadows Your face.

Any good thing done through us, You rejoice for its sake.  
But the devil's there prowling; He's wide awake,  
To say, "Now, what's next? What more can you do?  
You think that's enough to make God pleased with you?"

Your every decision, moment by moment,  
Has the potential to trigger His sure disappointment.  
Look at all the other tasks you've failed to complete,  
And you think you have time to just sit at His feet?

You know time is short; there's so much to be done!  
You think God approves your desire to "have fun"?  
If you reject His instructions, His Spirit will leave;  
A breach in the wall you will surely achieve.

Then you'll be in my hands, and I'll do as I please;  
I'll tempt and harass, and confuse and deceive.  
What a "loving" thing for your Father to do...  
You'd better not neglect all He's asking of you!

You can't do it all, Sabrina. Face it, you're done.  
You cannot be all things to everyone.  
How unfair of your God to expect that of you!  
What you've believed of His love clearly just isn't true..."

But I shout, "Get behind me, in Christ's precious name.

I will not let you speak of my Father this way.

That's not who He is; you're a liar, a fake.

At the cross every one of your chains He did break.

You're the one who enslaved us all here in this game,

Of running and striving and reaching for fame.

I'm a citizen no more of your kingdom, cruel one.

You're exposed and defeated; my Saviour has won!

Any good thing that's done is from Him, never me;

So I will rest in His arms—ever loved, ever free.

And I'll never stop fighting to help my loved ones to see,

That He'll gladly do for them what He's done for me."

I know who You are, God; I know who You are.

Your love is unfailing; it heals every scar.

I'll cling to Your beauty when the moments get dark.

In the face of Your Son, Lord, I know who You are.



## 5. Come and Rest

May 4, 2024



It was a Sabbath afternoon after a few busy weeks. I had been struggling with my attitude since morning, needing plenty of grace from both God and my husband. As we finished lunch and the group prepared to go for a walk, I must admit I had no desire to go, and was feeling guilty about that. But then a memory came from several months prior, of my step-father-in-law staying back from the walk after his own hectic week, expressing that he just needed some time to “be still.” In that moment I knew that was what I needed too, and as I sensed God’s loving approval of this decision, the guilt was taken away.

As an elder brother asked if I would be joining them, I was able to respond with a smile that I believed God wanted me to rest. He nodded and responded in his cheeky way, “Maybe He’ll give you another poem!” As silence descended upon the home, I went out to our friends’ porch to enjoy the funny egg-shaped chairs and the warm breeze, and listened for my Jesus’ still, small voice...

Come apart and rest awhile;  
You're weary now, beloved child.  
I don't condemn you for the things you're saying;  
In self-sufficiency, your strength is swaying.

Would you rest in My arms, and seek My face?  
Will you let Me fill your heart with grace?  
I have the remedy you need;  
I sow every good and fruitful seed.

Without Me there's nothing you can do;  
You'll come to this breaking point, through and through.  
The enemy wants you to think it's enough  
To receive once from Me, and then try to be tough;

To try to keep pushing through the day's trials and troubles,  
Without sensing My presence in the midst of your struggles;  
Without asking immediately for the help that you need,  
That upon heaven's Bread your soul freely may feed.

You've been taught there's inherent goodness in you—  
That you could speak from yourself, and the words could be true;  
But the father of lies lost the privilege of rest,  
And thus seeks to pry this sweet gift from your chest.

But hold tight My dear, please don't let it go.  
You have nothing to prove; no merits to show.  
I am strong in your weakness—it's My joy to be!  
That at rest in My care you can truly be free.

I entreat you, My child, to be lowly and meek;  
Only then can you find what you desperately seek.  
Do you remember how often I retired away,  
To a desolate place in the mountains to pray?

Of Myself I could surely do nothing at all;  
Without My Father's strength I would certainly fall.

I was tired, I was weary, as even you are;  
With multitudes coming from near and from far.

My humanity had nothing to give them, it's true;  
But filled with grace from My Father, His works I could do.

I was keenly aware of My need, don't you see?  
And this is the secret, to truly be free.

So come apart and rest awhile,  
I miss your laughter and your smile.  
The world can wait—untie the tether;  
Let's go and be revived together.



## 6. In the Stream

May 8, 2024

As my Father knew I needed some time to rest, little did I know that He had orchestrated an opportunity. My husband felt impressed that we should visit a camp meeting being held several hours away, to reconnect with many friends who would be attending. In my own judgment I wanted nothing but to stay home for awhile; sometimes it felt like we were just going, going, going. Several days before the camp meeting, as I fought against the urge to tell my husband that I did not want to go, God worked a miracle to change my mindset. In prayer He gently suggested—*What if you look at it like a vacation?* All the meals would be provided, and we had no responsibilities in the program—a rare occurrence in our lives of full-time ministry. We could truly just go to enjoy time with friends and be spiritually fed, without needing to think about much else. We were planning to tent-camp as a more affordable option, and had to bring our cat, Simon, along, so it was tempting to feel like even just managing those factors would be a “burden” with my energy levels struggling. But my Father had a plan to take care of even these worries.

Lo and behold, a storm was approaching on the day we arrived, and our dear friends insisted that we stay in one of the cabins, at least for the first night. The next day, Malcolm went with the group on a pontoon ride, and I stayed back to rest and be with Simon, who wouldn't have been too keen to be out on the water in full sun. To my surprise, a dear sister on the management team came by the cabin to assure me that they were happy for us to stay put and not worry about the cost. This almost brought me to tears as I recognized the care and fulfilled promise of my heavenly Father—that I could truly just relax here. I went for a walk in the woods out behind the row of cabins, and came to a small creek with some rocks where I sat down. As I gazed at the cool, clear water flowing softly along, I noticed a small pool beside the stream which seemed to be cut off from the source, and barely filled halfway with murky water. The contrast impressed heavily upon my mind, as I began to meditate upon the true rest that can only be found within God's channel of blessing.

Resting in the stream, He's all I'll ever need.  
How could I have been so blind, and had such unbelief?

Setting up my little puddle just beside the creek;  
Carrying buckets to and fro' until my arms grow weak;

Wondering why that stagnant feeling comes,  
And life looks bleak...

Like the woman at the well drawing water day by day,  
Not knowing right beside her was the Life, the Truth, the Way;

Like Peter with such faith to set his feet upon the waves,  
But failing in his strength because he lost his Savior's gaze;

Like Martha in the kitchen, losing the will to keep on serving,  
Forgetting the importance of receiving, and of learning;

But not the kind of learning this world prizes,  
Not at all...

The kind that picks you up and dusts you off when'er you fall;  
The kind that says "I love you" even when you drop the ball;

The kind that redefines your worth in the sacrifice He made;  
The kind that wants you to know His love and forget about the grade;

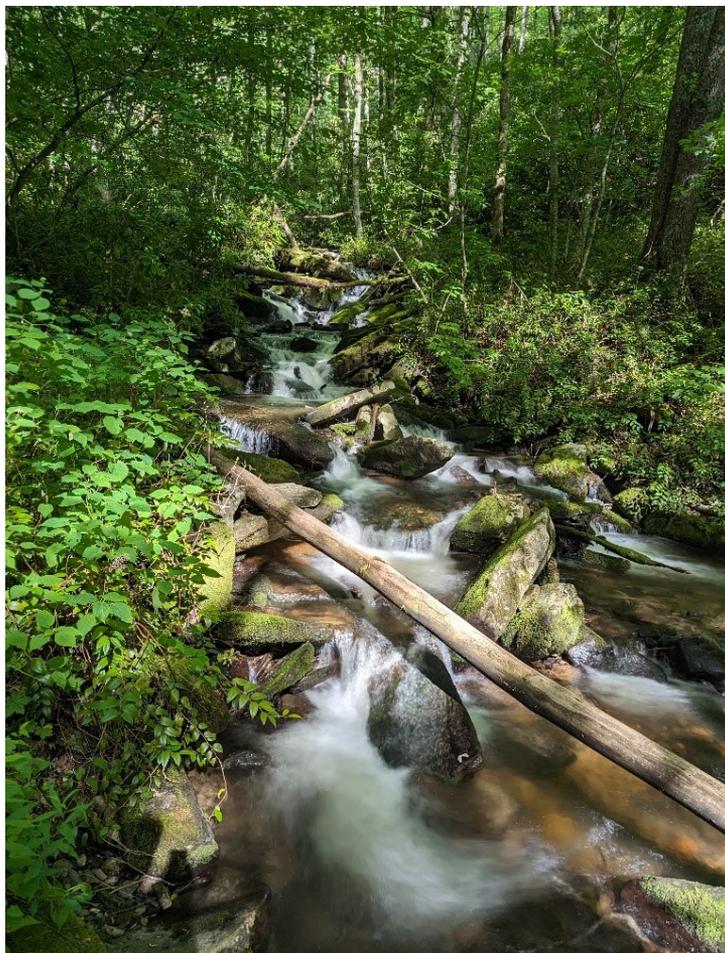
The kind where the Teacher has everything that you could ever need,  
And is there to carry you through each test when but for help you plead.

Is it surprising that Satan has tried to convince us  
We can't lie in the stream?

But laying our life down in Christ is where true freedom reigns;  
Allowing the current of perfect love to wash away our pain;

Allowing Him to live His life through our weak hands and feet;  
That through just five small barley loaves a multitude may eat;

And all we had to do was just lay down,  
And just believe.



# 7. Our Unknown Desire

June 14, 2024

God often brings gifts into our lives that we had no idea we needed. This was the case for our opportunity to be mentored under our dear friends Ben and Marie. We were blessed and excited as Malcolm was invited to learn under Ben as his assistant pastor. This effectively placed both Malcolm and me within Ben and Marie's "channel of blessing," and it was not a small trial for us over those three years to learn what this meant, and be open to receiving those blessings. Some are easy to receive—like appreciation, encouragement, and love—and they were certainly not slack in extending these to us. Yet other blessings are more difficult to receive, such as advice or correction which goes against one's own perception of things. But this is the great test—as children, in our marriages, with other authority figures, and most critically, in our relationship with God. Are we willing to lay down our own pride of opinion and receive the judgment of another, choosing to believe that God is giving them the wisdom to lead and care for us, and that they have our best interest at heart? It is a humbling experience, but one which brings immeasurable healing when we fully surrender to it. As Jesus said, *"Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* (Matt. 11:29)

Approaching unto the glory of God must lay the glory of man in the dust. As we were privileged to behold Christ in our mentors, sometimes it was too bright, and we were tempted to rebel or murmur against their leading. These situations served to reveal to us the true posture of our hearts towards God Himself, and the pride still dwelling there, and thus brought a humbling of our souls which we are eternally grateful for. And the love, care, and patience they have shown not only to us, but to all members of the flock, even amid false accusations and grievous misunderstandings, has painted a picture of our heavenly Father that we can only pray to emulate to any souls He sees fit to place within our own channel in the years to come. We love you dearly, Ben and Marie!

Through the flood and the fire, through the clay and the mire,  
Father has blessed in our unknown desire;

To have friends go before us through breathtaking trials,  
Even as Christ went before His disciples;

To love us, advise us, and carefully lead,  
Implanting within us the most precious seed;

To be unto us what no others have been,  
That through God's great mercy, more souls we may win;

Chastening with love, even when it's been hard,  
That our hearts could be healed from the enemy's scars;

Extending such grace, when we oft' didn't know,  
How to rest in submission, that more blessings could flow;

Appealing with patience, when zeal ran ahead,  
And we sometimes forgot what it meant to be led;

Father's been faithful, in our times of doubt,  
To soften our hearts, and to bring the dross out;

To remind of the blessings that true Headship brings,  
That in resting and trusting the weary soul sings;

That when humbled as Peter, we'd be fitted to lead;  
And you'd entrust with the calling, "These sheep you shall feed."

Words cannot express what it's meant to us both:  
Bundu-bashing, and mangoes, and Cletus-filled jokes;

Special dinners, and gardens, and tipping canoes...  
It's hard to imagine us filling your shoes.

But we know that these years have been just the beginning,  
Of an eternity of friendship, of laughter and singing;

That this time of expansion is our next great adventure,  
That the work may be multiplied, and more young ones mentored,

We rejoice to know Father is leading the way,  
And that within your channel of blessing we'll stay;

We here will all miss you, much more than you know,  
But we can't wait to see how God's kingdom will grow.



## 8. A Blessed Assurance

June 16, 2024

This year I (as many others, I'm sure) arrived at our Pentecost gathering with a deep need for spiritual strengthening and reassurance of my Father's tender watch-care. With so much going on in the world, the enemy tempts God's children daily to lose sight of the fact that our Father is intimately involved in every detail of our lives, and only permits those trials to come upon us that will work for our eternal good and the blessing of those around us. But God has ordained His precious appointed times for us to come apart and have our minds refreshed and recentered upon His goodness—fortified against doubt or fear, imbued with His peace, and empowered for the work that lies before us.

This particular event contained the bittersweet element that it would be our final feast with our dear pastor Ben and his wife Marie, before they would move to another state, embracing the opportunity God had opened before them. We would still enjoy coming together for future gatherings, but would cease to labor as one ministry team under the name *Father of Love*, as Malcolm and I were encouraged to proceed forward with our own family ministry, *The Hope of Glory*, to care for our church family and continue the work in our area. Having been under their mentorship for three years, we felt much like fledglings being lovingly nudged from the safety and familiarity of the nest, to test out their wings and embark on their own unique adventure.

Anticipating this transition brought heightened emotions as we all looked ahead into the unknown, and seemed to bring a special unity among our church family, as we beseeched our Father for the promised outpouring of His Spirit. We were one in feeling our desperate need of this latter rain, that we may each do our part in bringing the message of His amazing love to a dying world. On our first evening together, voices resounded in one accord as we sang the fitting hymn, "Fill Me Now," and the experience that followed for us that weekend was so precious, that I could not help but preserve and cherish the memory.

From His throne our Saviour hears us,  
    "Jesus, come and fill me now!"  
He smiles with plans to lift and cheer us,  
    We don't doubt *if*, but wait for *how*;  
Through messages from His dear servants,  
    Heavenly songs to soothe our souls,  
Hearts knit as one in sweet communion—  
    Sparks ignite the waiting coals;

Plunged beneath the watery grave,  
Our sisters raised to newfound life;  
Praising God for His great mercy  
Through pasts of trauma, pain and strife;

Our hearts enraptured in praises for  
    How Father has led us each along,  
And brought us to this precious place  
Where in our weakness He'll prove strong;

    The blessed day of Pentecost,  
    Where time is set aside for prayer;  
Praises mixed with deep heart burdens  
    Fill the hot and humid air;

    Every heart now beats together,  
    Hoping salvation for hurting souls;  
For spiritual, mental, and physical healing,  
Warmth brought to hearts now growing cold;

    Confession of sins and corporate failings,  
    Pleas of deliverance from great strongholds;  
Nothing but love fills our hearts for our brethren,  
    All of those scattered in Christ's precious fold;

An hour now passed, it's time to pray,  
Forms bow beneath pavilion tall;  
One by one prayers raised to heaven,  
As on His mighty name we call;

Another hour passed, and then one more,  
As eternity's freedom makes chronos flee;  
Open hands and glistening brows,  
And suddenly, a soft and gentle breeze...

As elder Christian calls down blessings,  
The wind starts picking up its pace;  
As pastor's concluding thoughts ascend,  
Strong gusts are felt on every face;

Eyes open to see the tablecloths whipping,  
Smiles and wonder all around;  
A verse of "Be Thou My Vision," is called for,  
And voices all lift with a heavenly sound;

*"Be Thou my vision, Oh Lord of my heart,  
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art!  
Thou my great Father and I Thy true son,  
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one!"*

As the final note sounds, the first *tink* is heard,  
Upon metal rooftop, a second, then third;  
The sky opens up and a great rain pours down,  
Torrents around us—a deafening sound!

Shouts of elation as nature declares,  
A Saviour so near us, a Father who cares;  
A blessed assurance of His latter rain,  
That we His dear children aren't seeking in vain;

The showers of blessing—His loving embrace,  
Our minds all imagine the smile on His face;  
We notice a precious friend just arrived,  
One for whom in our prayers in the Spirit we'd strived!

Oh what love is this?! Our hearts now are strengthened,  
To face whatever trials lie ahead;  
To go forth as His hands and feet in this world,  
And believe every word He has said;

As the evening draws on, we don't want to let go,  
Of this foretaste of heaven we've had;  
We wish friends could linger, we wish time would slow,  
Though our hearts He has surely made glad;

Empowered to return now to each of our homes,  
Knowing in Him we can conquer,  
The vilest temptations from our wily foe,  
Because He who's within us is stronger;

Farewells bittersweet as a new page begins,  
But this isn't the end of our story;  
As our Father of love imparts to us  
His Son—the hope of glory.



## 9. The King's Choice

July 24, 2024

This one is for the children, both young and old. One day as I reflected on my gratitude for God's leading throughout my life, from my earliest memories until now, an image came to my mind of an illustrated children's book. It had a little girl on the cover in a beautiful dress. My mind flashed back to the poem my husband shared in his wedding vows—"You're God's daughter, a princess..." I knew it was the truth, but oh, how easy it was to lose sight of my identity. As my mind gazed upon the image of this preciously adorned little girl—striving to believe that this was how God had always seen me—the pages of the book began to turn, and I could not help but smile as the story unfolded...

There once was a princess, from The Great White North,  
Who loved making snow angels, forts, and so forth;  
Adored maple syrup on top of French toast,  
And speaking to her Father as each day would close;

For He was the King, not of that land alone,  
But over all creation He reigned on His throne;  
She'd tell Him her joys, her confusions, and fears,  
Knowing that each word would reach Daddy's ears.

Sometimes she felt scared, her emotions would sway,  
But she believed that her Father was not far away;  
If she had a bad dream, or a big storm arose,  
Her heart would lift upward as her eyes would close;

She'd speak to her Daddy with whispering lips,  
Knowing that He loved to give her good gifts;  
She'd trust His protection, that He'd save the day,  
And no powers of darkness could touch her this way.

One day a new type of gift crossed her mind—  
She imagined a prince, who was gentle and kind;  
One who would care for her, just like the King!  
One who'd play guitar, and perhaps even sing...

But her Father replied that it wasn't quite time,  
There were more things to learn, more mountains to climb;  
But He showed her the picture of a Prince she did know,  
With the kindest of eyes, and a garment like snow;

He was her Elder Brother, the King's firstborn Son,  
Who for every child a great victory had won!  
He'd helped teach them all that the King was their Father,  
That to bring every need to Him wasn't a bother;

"It's time now," the King said, "to study His life,  
His patience and meekness, how He dealt with strife;  
As you know Him more clearly, you'll also know Me,  
And one day, your own prince, in His likeness you'll see."

So He helped her to wait, keep her eyes on His Son,  
Even when it seemed others were having more fun;  
He taught her of the dragon, who prowled about,  
Creating distractions to shut the King out;

Several princes *he* brought, but they were not the one,  
She could tell that they did not resemble the Son.  
Her heart was deceptive, but she trusted the King,  
And when lonely and tearful, His praises she'd sing.

One day an experience with the King and His Prince,  
Caused her to never be the same princess since;  
She saw the great price They'd paid for her adoption,  
That to leave her unwanted was never an option;

She saw all that They'd faced, so that she could be Theirs,  
And from then, strangely dim became all of her cares;  
Wanting nothing in life but Their loving embrace,  
She declared, "To stay single, I'll joyfully face!"

The King and His Son both rejoiced in this moment;  
It was important for her heart, that They would first own it.  
It was the only way she would truly be safe,  
And kept from exalting her prince in Their place.

The King smiled in His heart, as He knew it was time,  
To send for the suitor that He had in mind—  
Sir Malcolm, a knight, from The Belt of the Bible!  
It wouldn't be too long before his arrival...

On the Mountain of Roan was where their paths crossed,  
And discovered like-passion for saving the lost;  
Both wanting to labor within the King's vineyard,  
The spark in their hearts was at first only inward;

But after some time, they could see it was true,  
That the wise King desired to make one out of two;  
To unite their lives and bring forth much more glory—  
Showcase Him and His dear Son in their marriage story.

No doubts or fears did the princess now have,  
For in trusting her Father, her heart was made glad;  
In this prince she saw mirrored the face of His Son,  
And she knew in their union, God's will would be done.

So with hearts full of faith for the King's road ahead,  
She gave him her hand, to be lovingly led;  
Hearing in his words her dear Savior's voice,  
Ever-grateful she'd waited upon the King's choice ❤️

# 10. Heaven's Door

September 13, 2024

God had lately impressed me to read again the book *Identity Wars* (freely available at [thehopeofglory.org](http://thehopeofglory.org)). It had been the source of my understanding of the battle between the enemy's performance-based kingdom and God's relationally-based kingdom, as revealed in Scripture. I had previously listened through the audiobook, and studied the PDF with friends, but had never read the physical book slowly and intentionally for my own personal healing. I even stumbled upon an old, spiral-bound, letter-sized copy with massive margins in our book collection. This seemed to me a special confirmation of my Father's leading, and I delighted in the freedom to highlight impactful statements and scribble down my thoughts.

On this particular day, I was weary from a long week of fretting about my to-do lists and witnessing the negative effects of stress upon my health. As I incredulously wondered why I was still having this anxiety-riddled experience, with all that I knew about God's love for me, I came to chapter 13, entitled "Stairway to Heaven." As I read, I encountered a statement from the author's testimony that arrested my thoughts. He shared, "God was drawing me to search for something better. I began to feel that there had to be a better way. The enemy of my soul also realised this and tried to drive me deeper into trying to prove myself, like a smoker who senses that his time to quit has come and begins smoking twice as many cigarettes." (p. 86)

Was *this* what was happening? With God calling me to leave behind the idol of my performance, was the pressure mounting within me to accomplish *just a few more things* that I could find value in, before quitting cold-turkey? As this new layer was exposed, I realized that I was scared. After 30 years of measuring my value by my works, could I really believe God's Word—that my value was infinite *despite* my works?—that while I was yet an enemy of God, Christ died to save me?

Pressure pressing down, I cannot feel the ground;  
Tottering, unstable, and grasping all around;

What is this? I thought I'd won? I thought I'd found the answer,  
But everything feels like too much, the spreading of a cancer;

Just two more goals, or maybe three, completed, then I'll rest;  
A wave of fear sweeps through my mind and tightens in my chest;

What if I can't meet these expectations in my head?  
If I keep pushing on like this, I might just end up dead;

The way of life had seemed so clear, how is it I have fallen?  
The door of heaven streams ajar, but something has me stalling...

Am I really ready to let go, of all that I've "accomplished"?  
To cast it all aside as dung, to grasp the gift of promise?

What if I lose everything I thought that made me, "me"?  
But is that "me" worth saving if she isn't even free?

This daughter that the world has raised, needs more than just a heart-turn,  
But a daily crucifixion—the refiner's fire that burns;

Satan warns that in these flames she will be swallowed up,  
But this is where true freedom reigns—the drinking of Christ's cup;

The only way to keep self dead is looking at His cross;  
Oh, the wonders of such love, Who counted all as loss!

Who risked eternal bliss because it wasn't bliss without me;  
Oh, brightness of this truth that is so hard for me to see!

Father please, pry open my hands, and help me let these go;  
I have no strength to do it, Lord, my weaknesses You know!

And isn't that ironic, that I know I cannot do this,  
Yet I think I can "do" other things, so that my faith is proven?

This faith I think I have must be exchanged for that of Jesus,  
Who never worried to plan His day, but never failed to seize it;

Trusting in His Father's plans—God knows this is my heart!  
But daily from this idol of my works I must depart;

For two can't walk together, no, unless they be agreed,  
Beseeched to stay under His yoke, Christ's loving eyes do plead;

He promises, "My daughter, you will not cease to exist,  
Life with your eyes off of self is the only life there is!

All else brings forth the fruits of death—in body, mind, and spirit,  
But as you heed the Word of Life, each cell will surely hear it!

You'll be revived, you'll be restored, while resting in My love;  
And find your true identity, bestowed from up above;

I cannot pry your hands, but keep your eyes on Me, you'll see,  
They will let go, and through heav'n's door, I'll bring My child to Me."



# 11. Days Like Today

September 23, 2024

It was one of those mornings where you wish you could rewind and start the day over. The country landscapes swept by as we drove to my appointment, and I could feel the stress hormones slowly decreasing in my body as I humbly acknowledged that we would be on time after all. Then came regret and guilt for my worrisome attitude, but also thankfulness for God's grace extended through my husband. Why was he so patient with me? I knew it was only Christ in him. But where was Christ in *me* in these moments where I became so anxious and accusatory? As I fought back tears of shame God reminded me that my sorrow for sin *was* the evidence of Christ in me, and that I had no need to fear, for He is faithful to finish the work He has begun.

You can imagine how I was even further humbled to arrive right on time to my appointment, but not be called in for another 20 minutes due to the staff getting resituated after their lunch break. Of course, God had known this would be the case, and had allowed our morning to unfold accordingly. When would I finally learn to rest in His control? As I looked at my husband's peaceful face, flipping through a missionary magazine in the waiting room, I was filled with gratitude that he was the one God had appointed to lead me on this journey of becoming more like Jesus (Eph. 5:24-29). The humiliation in my heart was deep, but when the glory of man (or woman) is laid in the dust, it opens opportunities for God's glory to shine out in its splendor. I was in awe of how His Spirit moved throughout the rest of our day to orchestrate so many precious interactions and unexpected blessings. As we drove home late that evening, my heart could not help but respond with a few simple verses of thankfulness.

After fretting, complaining, neglecting to pray,  
God still blesses with a day like today...

An unbroken series of divine appointments,  
Uplifting my spirit like sweet healing ointment;

And suddenly my worries seem nothing at all,  
I know that my Father will not let me fall;

He is so strong, when I feel so weak,  
And His blessings are sure when His kingdom we seek;

Reminding me what here is truly important,  
And when looking to Jesus, my heart—He restores it;

Days like today are just one reason why,  
That I'm His beloved daughter, I cannot deny.



## 12. Baby Steps

September 24, 2024



I was inspired by the experience of a dear friend, whom God brought to us physically, mentally, and spiritually broken. He was keenly aware of his need and desirous to receive healing from the Lord. But coming from a very difficult upbringing, he was having a hard time accepting the love that God was extending to him through us. He felt so unworthy, and that he must pay us back somehow. He told us that he had never been treated so kindly before, and it was overwhelming—even panic-inducing; that the light was too bright and his eyes needed time to adjust. And so he pleaded with us not to give up on him, and not to be disappointed, but to be willing to take baby steps with him.

His reaction and his words impressed me deeply—Is this not a reflection of each of us in our walk with our heavenly Father? Such a thick veil has been held over His face by the years of well-developed lies and distortions imprinted upon our fragile minds. We all come so broken, and incapable of at once beholding His unconditional love in its full glory. Yet He is so patient, so gracious with us, and so willing to accommodate the pace at which each of us can adjust to His brightness, and take one more step toward Him...

Baby steps towards the Light,  
Our God will help us fight this fight;  
He knows at first the flickering candle,  
Is all our weary eyes can handle;  
He bids us now to take His hand,  
Trusting His heart understands;  
The darkness to which we've been subjected,  
And how each wound now must be mended;  
The oil and salt at first may sting,  
As He draws us close beneath His wing;  
Like the poor soul beaten and left for dead,  
Whom several passed by without turning their head;  
But the Good Shepherd stoops to lift His sheep,  
Upon broad shoulders, His prize to keep;  
He carries us safely to the inn,  
That our journey of healing can now begin;  
He's covered the cost, for as long as it takes,  
That tired eyes may be strengthened to see His face;  
There is no rushing here, no worry or pressure,  
One by one, by His love, He will sever each tether;  
That now keep us bound to the things we have known,  
Mis-shaping our hearts and our minds as we've grown;  
In the hands of the Potter, He smooths out the clay,  
Little by little He works every day;  
Our part is now simply to rest on His wheel,  
Believing that His hands are mighty to heal;

Every curse, every trauma, bestowed by our past,  
In the presence of His love, will surely not last;  
His hands are outstretched, His young child to steady,  
Never pulling, but guiding our steps as we're ready;  
As the sun slowly rises, adjusting our eyes,  
Ever clearer becomes now the sight of our Prize;  
And one day we'll be there, to leap in His arms,  
Basking in the full glory of His matchless charms;  
Nothing left in between, every evil has fled,  
As against His broad chest He now cradles our head;  
He has brought His child home, priceless gift in His sight,  
Out from darkness and into His marvelous Light.







I don't often find myself at a loss for words, but words fail to express the depth of gratitude I have for the healing God has wrought in my personal experience through the poems recorded in this book. My hope and prayer is simply that these words would find a resounding chord in the hearts of readers, that we may be reminded that "no temptation has overtaken [us] except such as is common to man" (I Cor. 10:13), and that you may likewise begin to see a clearer and more beautiful picture of our heavenly Father's face, and experience the deep rest of soul that He desires for you.

I turn to the inspired words of the psalmist David to express my thankfulness,

"I love the LORD, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications.

Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.

(...) Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

(...) What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?"

Psalm 116:1-12