

It Is Not Well With My Soul
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Today's Treasure

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.

Hebrews 10:36

Have you ever listened to the words of the song you are singing? Do you ever stop singing because you realize that you cannot truthfully sing something you do don't mean? Or perhaps something you don't feel at the moment? One Sunday, not too long ago, I automatically joined the congregation and sang, "It is well with my soul" as I have many times over in my life, but then I realized, "It is NOT well with my soul!" Attending church was hard enough for me to do. This Sunday, like so many others, anxiety pulsed through my veins as I sat there trying to act normal on the outside. I am not a stranger to this internal dispute. Church is one of the many things affected by the wrecking ball of death. At times, words refused to form on my lips, sometimes only my heart could sing, other times anger boiled within me as I could hardly bear to witness people singing words so true, so real. If only they knew how serious those words are, maybe they wouldn't sing them. Do they realize that the words they sing could come true? That if they sang, "I surrender all" that "all" includes their children and spouse, their jobs, and homes? I wrestled singing those words even before the biggest storms hit. I sang them anyway, knowing, yet not knowing. God knew. He allowed me to sing anyway then, and He helps me sing anyway now.

My soul was not well, but for some reason, I sang anyway. I knew God heard the wrestle inside my heart as my pastor prayed following the song. He addressed the very torment in my soul at that moment. His prayer encouraged me that those words are sometimes a confession and/or a proclamation. I wrote down these words:

A Confession or a Proclamation. God, I confess that it is not well with my soul. In this confession, I proclaim the desperate need for Jesus to heal me.

I was feeling so broken, so lost, so angry, so bland, so empty.

Thankful for this new approach to worship, I gave myself permission to be where I was. I wondered though, what made me sing anyway? In that moment, I sang because I didn't feel any connection to the words. I was just singing, partly because I knew I

should even if I didn't want to. For me, I learned from a very young age to pray, to sing, to listen, to read. I was taught to be consistent in weekly attendance to church, to be diligent in prayer each day, to fill my mind with hymns and songs of praise. Although those actions can be accused of being strict rules, they are really just a gentle training, a daily nourishment, a strengthening of roots. It is often from the constant repetitive practice, that we are driven to do it anyway, even when we don't feel like it. I had sung in obedience to God. In the moments after Ashley's death, singing hymns was an auto response to an unspeakable and unimaginable darkness. He heard the cries of my heart clashing with the words that I sang, and in the singing He provided a comfort for me.

Just as an athlete runs when the conditions are not right, or plays when he doesn't feel good, or persists when she feels like quitting, so I desire to persist in faith, to obey God's command to worship him, even when it is not well with my soul!

In Hebrews we read about perseverance in doing God's will so that we will receive His promises. This plodding along, the persisting and standing firm through the range of emotion and trial, is perseverance. One translation of perseverance is: "to continue in a course of action even in the face of difficulty." It was out of the lifelong daily practice of serving God that enabled me to continue to do so even when I could no longer sing. Even when my world fell apart and I could not stand. It is such joy (although a broken kind of joy) that I have in knowing that God intends to reward me with His promises.

PRAYER

Father, I confess that it is not always well with my soul. Thank you, God, that You know my inmost thoughts. Thank you that, in You and through You, my soul can rest when I am at peace and when I am anxious or afraid. Help me to keep singing, to keep trusting even when I don't feel like it. Thank you for the promises You set before me. Help me to strive for them each day as I continue on.