**WHAT DO YOU HUM, WHISTLE OR SING?**

***O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing***

Humming. Whistling. Singing. I suppose we all do it when a catchy tune gets stuck in our head and we subconsciously vibrate the melody all day long. It might be a song you heard that morning on the radio driving to work, or on your earbuds while walking, or on your favorite streaming app like Pandora, Spotify or Shazam. If you’re my age it might be a golden blast from the past (you know, like “Jeremiah was a bullfrog” in Three-Dog Night’s *Joy To The World* hit… okay you gray-heads, now you’re hooked humming this the rest of the day! But please, spare your family. Don’t sing it out loud in the shower or they’ll pray Jeremiah croaks).

Since you are possibly reading this on Monday I’m hoping you have a favorite gospel hymn running through your brain from yesterday’s worship. Or maybe a spiritual song from your childhood you still love and cherish. While going about your day you might automatically start humming (or, if you are like me, you follow the Seven Dwarfs recommendation and *Whistle While You Work*). Since I am often alone here at the building studying or writing, I find myself almost all day long whistling a hymn that I’ve recently heard. (NOTE: Please, I know we are to only “*sing*” in our assembly, not hum or whistle. What I’m talking about is our private life’s God-given instinctive inclination toward music He created within us that reveals our various moods).

I don’t know about you but I have a default hymn that I whistle or sing. My automatic go-to song is *O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing*. For at least a year now I’ve probably sung, hummed or whistled this tune every day (whew, I’m glad this is the one I can’t get out of my head, instead of Jeremiah the bullfrog). Can I tell you why I love this hymn?

I’ve made it a practice to study the history behind our hymns. This one got my undivided attention. The lyrics were written in 1757 by Robert Robinson when he was just 22 years old. You would think because he was so young he must have been raised in a God-fearing family. Hardly. His dad died when he was only 8 years old and his grandfather, who never approved of his son marrying his mom, disinherited him.

So at a young age he was forced to help provide for his mother by working as a barber apprentice. But during his teen years he became unruly and mischievous, often getting into trouble. He fell into drinking, gambling and carousing. His rowdy gang once got a gypsy drunk so she would tell their fortunes for free. She told Robert, “You will live to see your children and grandchildren.” That struck him deeply. So he talked his buddies into going to hear the famous Great Awakening evangelist George Whitfield, claiming they would just go to heckle him. He preached on the text Matthew 3:7 “*O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come*?” He boomed to the crowd “The wrath to come! The wrath to come!” It shook Robert to his soul, feeling he was talking straight at him. He soon turned his life toward spiritual things. He wrote this hymn two years later.

Originally titled “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” our third verse says “Never let me wander from Thee, never leave the God I love.” But his original lyrics were, *“Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love.”* They proved to be prophetic. Late in life, having drifted from Baptist, to Methodist, to other denominations and finally into Unitarianism (which denies the deity of Christ) the story is told of his riding in a stagecoach with a young lady who, to pass the time, quietly sang this now famous hymn. When finished she asked Mr. Robinson, “What do you think of that song?” He replied, “Madam, I’m the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago and I would give a thousand worlds if I could again enjoy the feelings I had then.” He soon died at age 55, prone to wander, having the left the God he loved.

What were those words he wrote and drifted from? Will you now sing them with me? But I forewarn you, you might have them stuck in your head (and heart) the rest of the day (or in my case, the year). They might just keep you from wandering from God.

O Thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me ever to adore Thee, May I still Thy goodness prove,  
While the hope of endless glory, Fills my heart with joy and love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I’ve come;  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God;  
He to rescue me from danger, Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor, Daily I’m constrained to be!  
Let Thy goodness like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Never let me wander from Thee, Never leave the God I love;  
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above.

A verse left out of our hymnals ought to be put back in, for it is a fitting climax to this song that lifts our spirits and makes us “*think on things above*” (Col. 3:1-2).

O that day when freed from sinning, I shall see Thy lovely face;  
Clothed then in blood-washed linen, How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;  
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry, Take my ransomed soul away;  
Send thine angels now to carry, Me to realms of endless day.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, unlike other creatures He made, God fearfully and wonderfully created us to “*make melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Eph. 5:19), and to “*sing with grace in your heart to the Lord*” Col. 3:16). While it’s good at times to hum, whistle or sing a catchy rock, jazz, country, classical, pop, R&B or other genre of modern music to put you in a certain mood, let me encourage you this week to pick out a favorite hymn to lock into your heart to “whistle while you work.” It will change your day.

Out of curiosity, would some of you mind telling me your favorite hymn? I’d like to perhaps write about its history and meaning. Until then… “…tune my heart to sing Thy praise.” I love you. Rick