

# Voices: Hymns of the faith: 'Blessed Assurance'

October 5, 2021

## Verse 1

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.*

## Refrain

*This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.*

In 1820, the country was sharply divided along “pro” and “anti” slavery lines. That year highlighted the power struggle over who would determine if states were “free” or “slave.” The legislation resulted in the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

The compromise included the provision that slavery would be forbidden in the former Louisiana Territory north of the 36°30' parallel. It allowed Maine to join the Union as the 23rd and “free” state, while Missouri was admitted to the Union in the following year as a “slave state.” This allowed the Union to maintain an uneasy balance in the number of free and slave states.

As never before, the country stood on the edge of breaking in half over the

politics of states' rights and slavery.

The news of the signing of the Missouri Compromise had many Americans convinced the rancor and divisiveness exposed during the legislative process would destroy the country. It already had exposed the evil character of man. Many lamented the coming dark days and sad consequences of the actions of a few politicians.

## **Fanny Crosby**

Fanny Crosby was born into this backdrop on March 24, 1820, almost 20 days after the compromise was signed. Although she lost her sight during infancy, as an adult she worked in missions and also was a prolific poet, lyricist and composer of both secular and sacred music.

Living in New England her entire life, Crosby's dedication to city missions was the one thing for which she wanted to be remembered. It was her daily work in the poorest part of Brooklyn that inspired her to pen the lyrics to "Rescue the Perishing." Fanny's service in the prisons of New York inspired her to write the words to the song we now know as "Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior."

As a young girl, Crosby memorized Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and many of the psalms. At the New York Institution for the Blind, she learned to play the piano, organ, harp and guitar. As an adult, Crosby was an instructor at the school until she married fellow teacher Alexander Van Alstine in 1843.

# Blessed assurance of salvation

One of Crosby's most well-known hymns is "[Blessed Assurance](#)." Written in 1873, eight years after the end of the American Civil War and the death of Abraham Lincoln, the words to this hymn remind of the blessed assurance available to believers in Jesus.

Many Christians experience doubts concerning the salvation they have in Christ. However, the Bible is clear that a believer's salvation is secure in Christ. Some denominations teach a person never really can know if his or her salvation is secure, but the Scriptures paint a completely different picture.

The reality is everyone fails. Everyone falls short of the standard. The evil one uses these failures and shortcomings to push doubts into the hearts and minds of believers.

When John wrote of a believer's heart, he did not mean the physical heart muscle; he meant the conscience. John was referring to the self-evaluation of private thoughts and motives.

True Christians should not respond to moral failure by being plagued and paralyzed with feelings of guilt. Rather, a true believer seeks forgiveness and restoration. A true believer knows what God has declared is true, regardless of feelings. The truth is not concerned with feelings. It simply is the truth.

Feelings change. God's love never changes. God is greater than the conscience, and God's knowledge and compassion are greater than a personal sense of imperfection (1 John 3:19-20).

# Secure in Christ

When the conscience condemns for some failing, the believer can appeal to God, who knows all things, including our secret motives and deepest thoughts. He is more merciful to us than the conscience will be.

Believers in Jesus can have the blessed assurance they belong to Jesus. If a follower of Jesus does nothing to earn salvation, they can do nothing to lose it.

It is not that I am strong enough to hold onto God; it is that God is holding onto me (John 10:28-30). No one can take a follower of Jesus out of God's hand. This is a beautiful confidence.

There are five Greek words in our one word “never” (John 10:28)—“no no into the age.” This is the strongest way of saying a believer in Jesus will never, ever perish.

Some still struggle with this concept, because they think a believer somehow can remove him or herself from God's hand. The answer is an emphatic “no,” as demonstrated by the word “snatch.”

The word translated “snatch” has specific meanings, namely “seize, attack, plunder, gain control over”—in short, to take by force.

The message is clear. No one can take control of any believer, no matter how strong they are, because a believer belongs to Jesus.

Who is stronger than God? No one, and that's the point. Our blessed assurance is not based on human effort. It is based in the mercy, knowledge and strength of God.

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