

HYMNS & SONGS

Heartwarming Favorites

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

by Nan Allen

“REJOICE AND SING MEDLEY”

“Rejoice” is a verb that implies exuberance, as in the excitement of a sports fan. It also means “to boast,” which would also follow the sports fan comparison.

Read Psalm 16:8-9. How and why was David rejoicing?

Read Luke 15:3-10. In these two parables that use the word “rejoice,” how does the meaning change from David’s use?

Now read Philippians 2:17-18. Though Paul was in tough circumstances, he was still rejoicing. Why?

Read Romans 5:1-2. Why should we rejoice?

“AT THE CROSS MEDLEY”

In order for us to grasp the significance of the cross, we have to look back in biblical history and understand a little about the importance of a *living* sacrifice. A few passages from the Old Testament give us a glimpse of why God chose this method to commute His righteousness to His people.

Read Numbers 28:1-6 and Leviticus 16:14-19. These are just two references about the importance of blood sacrifice. There are many more in the Old Testament.

Now read Hebrews 9:6-15. The method of execution and even the pain that Jesus suffered on the cross was prophesied, but why was it important for Him to die in this way?

As you sing these great hymns about the cross, ask God to reveal to you the answer to this question.

“PRAISE AND GLORY MEDLEY”

The word that we translate as “glory” came from different roots and changed meanings depending on the situation. One of the Hebrew words from which we get “glory” literally means “heavy in weight.” It referred to something that was of great or weighty importance.

But it also means “to give credit or praise.”

Read John 14:13, and then read the lyrics of Fanny Crosby’s hymn, “To God Be the Glory,” included in this medley.

Do the other songs in this medley follow a similar theme? Which of these two definitions fits which song? What do these three songs say to you about praising God?

Read the biographical information on Fanny Crosby in the Hymn Writer Bios, which is available online. Thank God for her faith and her faithfulness to His calling on her life.

“IN CHRIST ALONE MEDLEY”

Before reading the Scripture suggested for this medley, review the lyrics to all of these songs. They are all so rich in theology and deep devotion. Stop now and give praise to God for modern hymn writers such as these, who have given us wonderful worship songs.

Now, look for names attributed to Jesus in the opening song “In Christ Alone (My Hope Is Found).” Make a list of what you find.

Next, look at the lyrics in “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” and find a similar theme in the chorus of “In Christ Alone (My Hope Is Found).” What do both songs say about God’s love? Write it down.

Now look at “Before the Throne of God Above” and find those same themes. Add your findings to the lists you’ve already made.

Read Hebrews 4:1-16. Do these words give you comfort or boldness or peace or hope?

“MY TRIBUTE MEDLEY”

The song “Through It All” speaks of trusting God through the hard times in life.

Read I Peter 1:6-7 and take comfort in these words, even as you sing this great Andraé Crouch song.

Read Psalm 103:1 and note where the second song in the medley comes from. Can you sing this with more fervor now?

Read Psalm 116:12, and like the composer of the song “My Tribute,” realize that you can never truly repay God for what He did through Christ. However, we can give a sacrifice to Him in our thankfulness, praise, and honor to His name.

“HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION MEDLEY”

A few years ago I wrote a book called *The Words We Sing: Bringing Meaning to Worship* (Beacon Hill Press). In that book I wrote a chapter on the meaning of the word “Ebenezer,” which is found in the opening song of this medley, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”

Here is an excerpt from that chapter:

“The term ‘Ebenezer’ had its roots in the Old Testament. Samuel, the priest, during the transitional time between the Judges and the Kings of Israel, named a place Ebenezer. Samuel was offering a burnt sacrifice to God as a cry for help against the Philistines.”¹

Read this fascinating story of how this all happened in I Samuel 7:1-14. Now look at the lyrics in the song again. Can you now raise your own stone of help?

Read Psalm 119:89 and realize where our foundation comes from. Then read the first verse of the lyrics to “How Firm a Foundation.”

Read John 14:1-3. These are Jesus’ words of comfort to His disciples. These same words are echoed in the second verse of this hymn.

Commit to building your foundation on the Lord.

“IN REMEMBRANCE MEDLEY”

The first song lyric that I ever had published was one on which I collaborated with the late Buryl Red. It was called “Your Hand.” His melody was wonderful, and I enjoyed the experience very much.

The two songs included in this medley are not only timeless, but also full of truth and beauty. When teamed with lyricist Ragan Courtney, Buryl wrote some masterpieces! Both of them were written for musicals: “In Remembrance” is from *Celebrate Life!* and “It Was His Love” is from *Acts*. Both musicals affected me greatly because of the weight of their messages and the beautiful songs they contained.

Read Luke 22:1-19 and be reminded of how Jesus used the Passover meal to remind His disciples of His impending death.

Read I John 4:9. From one disciple (John), who was at the Passover meal with Jesus, come these words many years later as he is reflecting on Jesus’ love.

Thank God for these two songs, these two composers, and for Christ’s love for you.

“HYMNS OF INVITATION MEDLEY”

Although B. B. McKinney died before I was born, I was the beneficiary of his wonderful legacy of hymns. The Scriptures attached to these hymns in *Baptist Hymnal 2008* are worth remembering now.

Read I Samuel 3:9, Matthew 16:24, and John 16:25.

“Speak to My Heart” and “Breathe on Me” are songs to God, the Three-in-One. Sing these songs lifted up to Him. “Wherever He Leads I’ll Go” is a song of declaration to the world that you will follow Christ always. Sing it as your proclamation of discipleship to Him.

¹Nan Corbitt Allen, *The Words We Sing: Bringing Meaning to Worship* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2010), 75.