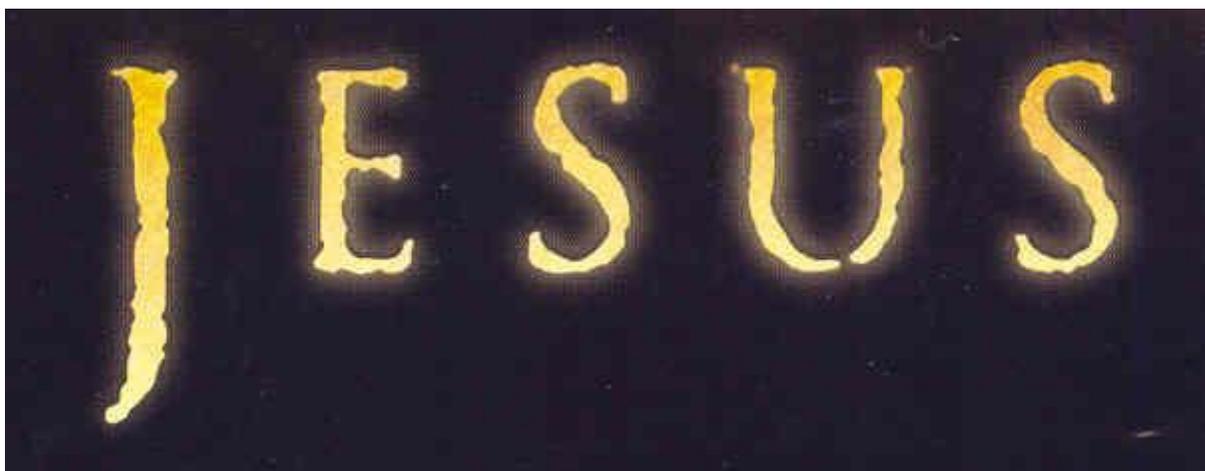


Devotion on Hymns of the Church (Hymn 455 - How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds)
– 28 June 2014, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:10-12)

This hymn is #455 in the 1940 Hymnal and was composed by the venerable John Newton of Olney (Amazing Grace) in 1779. The most commonly preferred tune is that of *St. Peter* by Alexander Robert Reinagle, (1799-1877)

How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Dear Name, the Rock on which I build,
My Shield and Hiding Place,
My never failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace!

By Thee my prayers acceptance gain,
Although with sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am owned a child.

Jesus! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
O Prophet, Priest and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,

Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath,
And may the music of Thy Name
Refresh my soul in death!

One verse was omitted by those who selected the hymns for the 1940 Hymnal for their 'unsophisticated' reference to the sinful nature of man and the unmerited grace of God is granting us salvation against every ploy of Satan: *"By thee my prayers acceptance gain, Although with sin defiled; Satan accuses me in vain, And I am owned a child."* (omitted 4th verse)

"How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear! It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear." Imagine, if you will, the scintillating charm of the name of the Lord Jesus to the Woman at the Well as she discovered the Water of Life; or the warm relief and joy of the woman Taken in Adultery when she came to know the Lord that interceded on her behalf; or the unmitigated joy of the Two on the road to Emmaus when their "eyes were opened" at the reception of bread from His nail-scarred hands.

Finally, consider the great surprise and irrepressible ecstasy of Mary Magdalene outside the Garden Tomb when she discovered a Risen Lord instead of a dead body! That Name bears benefits and joys that cannot be expressed in human language. Imagine the comfort afforded in that name during the 4th watch on a stormy Galilean Sea. The ship was about to break up owing to the stormy billows roaring and blasting so mercilessly upon it. Then comes One walking upon the troubled waters and says, ***"Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."*** (Matt 14:27) What a Name, and what a Savior is our Lord Jesus Christ!

"It makes the wounded spirit whole, and calms the troubled breast; 'tis manna to the hungry soul, and to the weary, rest." Even for one agonizing on a cross next to Jesus, His Words offered redemption and salvation during the last moment of life. Jesus is our Bread for He is the Bread of Life and of Heaven. He grants us – not a Sabbath Rest of one-day-in-seven only, but an eternal rest when we allow Him to do His labors through us.

"Dear Name, the rock on which I build, my shield and hiding-place, my never-failing treasury, filled with boundless stores of grace!" Jesus is the Rock of our Salvation, and it is upon that Rock that we must build our souls. Peter was not that Rock, but a stone taken from that Rock. Every Christian must be a "chip off that Rock of Christ." If we are, we will possess the same characteristics and appearance as the Rock from which we are cut.

"Jesus! my Shepherd, Brother, Friend, my Prophet, Priest and King, my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End, accept the praise I bring." Yes, we have the high privilege to be accounted brother or sister to Christ, though by way of adoption and not by being 'begotten.' Jesus is that ***"Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."*** (see Proverbs

18:24). Jesus is our Prophet, Priest and King, and the Way, the Truth and the Life! Not only is He our Priest, He is our High Priest who alone is able to interceded on our behalf before God the Father. He is all of these things, but much more than can be comprehended by our limited intellects. He is, frankly, our "*All in All.*"

"Weak is the effort of my heart, and cold my warmest thought; but when I see thee as thou art, I'll praise thee as I ought." Yes, we are now imprisoned in bars of clay, but one day we shall be wonderfully let lose just as was Lazarus from the grave-clothes of the Tomb. We can do no good thing in and of ourselves; but we can do the works of God when our hearts and minds are aligned with His Holy Will. Our best and warmest thoughts can never compare with the immensity of His Heart of Love and Compassion. One day, if we endure until the end, we shall behold Him face to face, and all mysteries with which we were previously burdened shall fall away as the practice weights of the runner.

"Till then I would thy love proclaim with every fleeting breath; and may the music of thy Namerefresh my soul in death!" Have you ever considered a name as music? Have you ever been so madly in love with the one to whom you are wed that the very mention of his, or her, name was as music on the evening breeze? In the stone-cold tomb of death His Name shall refresh our souls when we here our names called as was that of Lazarus. Our first breath of morning should be to call upon that name, and the last breath of the evening of this life should be to call upon that Holy Name.

"By thee my prayers acceptance gain, Although with sin defiled; Satan accuses me in vain, And I am owned a child." (omitted 4th verse) There is one prayer that the Lord will ALWAYS hear and heed – the prayer of the penitent sinner. If we are not aware of our depravity in sin, how can we ever be forgiven that of which we have not repented? We should never sin with impunity, but if we do, we have an Advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Adversary fades away and wilts like an evening shade when He steps to the Bar. We are made a child of God through, not our own merits, but the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. How amazing, and how wonderful! Have you been, Friend?