

Worship through the HYMNS

We can come closer to our Savior through music.

I wish I could sing like Sister Schneider. I wish I could play the piano like Brother Menendez.

How many times have we heard or thought such things? Sometimes we think of musical talent as a special gift that belongs only to others, a beautiful talent we value but think we do not have.

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, music and singing are for everyone. Through the hymns, we can express gratitude and praise,

learn the Savior's restored gospel, remember His Atonement, and commit to follow Him.

Express Gratitude and Praise

When ancient Israel was delivered from Egypt, "then sang Moses and the children of Israel [a] song unto the Lord" (Exodus 15:1). As the Jaredites crossed the ocean, "they did sing praises unto the Lord" (Ether 6:9). And when the early Latter-day Saints dedicated the Kirtland Temple, they sang

William W. Phelps's new hymn "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."¹ In every dispensation of the gospel, the children of God have lifted their voices to praise Him with music.

Many of our hymns today share in this spirit of rejoicing and praise. For example, another beloved hymn by William W. Phelps proclaims:

*Redeemer of Israel,
Our only delight,
On whom for a blessing we call,
Our shadow by day
And our pillar by night,
Our King, our Deliv'rer, our all!²*

Hymns can also give voice to our gratitude for specific blessings, as expressed in this familiar verse:

*We thank thee, O God, for a prophet
To guide us in these latter days.
We thank thee for sending the gospel
To lighten our minds with its rays.
We thank thee for every blessing
Bestowed by thy bounteous hand.
We feel it a pleasure to serve thee,
And love to obey thy command.³*

As we sing these hymns, we follow the command "If thou art merry"—

JESUS LOVES US

One day I was sitting on the sofa listening to a CD. When the hymn "Teach Me to Walk in the Light" (*Hymns*, no. 304) came on, I thought about Jesus Christ's sacrifice for each of us. I remembered His love, humility, and compassion, and I felt my heart fill with gratitude. The Lord's Spirit testified to me that the Savior loves us.

My two-year-old son was sitting beside me, looking at pictures of Jesus Christ. He must have felt something as well because he looked up at me and said, "Mommy, Jesus loves you!"

Jesus Christ is a part of my and my family's lives. He is in my thoughts and heart. His gospel has changed my life.

Tamara Miranda Macário de Oliveira, Brazil



meaning if you are joyful or happy—“praise the Lord with singing, with music, . . . and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving” (D&C 136:28).

Learn His Gospel

In addition to expressing gratitude and praise, the hymns also give us opportunities to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ. For example, this familiar children’s hymn explains very simply and beautifully our relationship with our Father in Heaven:

*I am a child of God,
And he has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.⁴*

Other hymns show us how to live gospel principles, such as this favorite hymn, written in the pioneer era:

*Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor
labor fear;
But with joy wend your way.
Though hard to you this journey
may appear,
Grace shall be as your day.
'Tis better far for us to strive
Our useless cares from us to drive;
Do this, and joy your hearts will swell—
All is well! All is well!⁵*

Some of our most beloved hymns teach us to follow Christ’s servants, His chosen prophets in our day. “Praise to the Man,” for instance, helps us remember the important role of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Restoration of the gospel:

*Praise to the man who communed with
Jehovah!*



*Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer,
Blessed to open the last dispensation,
Kings shall extol him, and nations
revere.⁶*

Pondering these and other hymns and studying the scripture references listed in the hymnbook can help us learn the gospel and remember the Savior in our daily lives.

Remember His Atonement

One of the most important ways we remember the Savior is to partake of the sacrament each week. In preparation for this sacred event, we sing a hymn. Sacrament hymns remind us of Christ's sacrifice and its meaning for us:

*Behold the great Redeemer die,
A broken law to satisfy.
He dies a sacrifice for sin, . . .
That man may live and glory win.⁷*

*His precious blood he freely spilt;
His life he freely gave,
A sinless sacrifice for guilt,
A dying world to save.⁸*

*I think of his hands pierced and bleeding
to pay the debt.
Such mercy, such love, and devotion can
I forget?
No, no, I will praise and adore at the
mercy seat,
Until at the glorified throne I kneel at
his feet.⁹*

If sung thoughtfully and prayerfully, the words of sacrament hymns help us focus on the Savior. They prepare us to take the sacrament meaningfully and to recommit to take Christ's name upon us, to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments.

Commit to Follow Jesus Christ

Commitment to follow the Savior is expressed in many of our hymns. As we sing these hymns, we testify to our Father in Heaven that we desire to follow His Son. For example, consider these lines:

*Father in Heaven, we thank thee this day
For loving guidance to show us the way.
Grateful, we praise thee with songs of
delight!
Gladly, gladly we'll walk in the light.¹⁰*

The hymn "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go" makes a similar declaration:

COUNTING MY BLESSINGS

I have now been a member of the Church for 15 years. Throughout these years there have been tests and challenges. But there are many, many more reasons to kneel down and thank God for His infinite love.

As the hymn says:

*So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged; God is over all.
Count your many blessings; angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.
("Count Your Blessings," Hymns, no. 241)*

Whenever I have the opportunity to, I declare that we can find joy in this life and a fulness of joy in eternity. I testify that God made it possible and that, thanks to the Savior, we can live with Them forever.

Maribel Loayza de Aranda, Argentina

I FELT GUIDED

When I was laboring as a young missionary in Norway, my mission president called the missionaries together to tell us we had been asked to sing for two sessions at the 1958 dedication of the London England Temple. I was asked to be the accompanist.

When we arrived at the temple, I discovered to my surprise that I would be playing an organ instead of a piano. I had no experience with this organ, so I had to ask if someone could help me set the stops. Heavenly Father heard my desperate pleas, and a sister came to my rescue, setting the organ for quiet prelude and also for accompanying the choir.

Amid my desperation, I had a calm feeling come over me. And as I played the unfamiliar and unpracticed-on organ, I felt the love of the Savior guiding me. After one choir number, President David O. McKay looked at our mission president and said, "Well done." I was overcome with emotion at how we had been blessed in our performance. It had been flawless.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father. He is the holy Messiah, the Prince of Peace. He lives and will come again.

Richard Broberg, Idaho, USA

*So trusting my all to thy tender care,
And knowing thou lovest me,
I'll do thy will with a heart sincere:
I'll be what you want me to be.¹¹*

Our songs—whether of praise, gratitude, knowledge, remembrance, or commitment—are pleasing to the Lord. He has said, "My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12).

Fortunately, the Lord did not say, "Only beautiful songs are a prayer unto me," or, "I will listen only to those with musical

talent." In our music as in our lives, He is more concerned with the state of our hearts than our ability.

Whatever our level of skill, we can all participate in music by singing the hymns. And as we sing with all our hearts, we come unto Christ through the hymns. ■

NOTES

1. See *Hymns*, no. 2.
2. "Redeemer of Israel," *Hymns*, no. 6.
3. "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," *Hymns*, no. 19.
4. "I Am a Child of God," *Hymns*, no. 301.
5. "Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymns*, no. 30.
6. *Hymns*, no. 27.
7. "Behold the Great Redeemer Die," *Hymns*, no. 191.
8. "How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *Hymns*, no. 195.
9. "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, no. 193.
10. "Teach Me to Walk in the Light," *Hymns*, no. 304.
11. *Hymns*, no. 270.

