

#20: *Jesu Bleibet Meine Freude (Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring)*

Listen to track 20 of *Songs of Justice and Peace*.

Scripture:

"[Jesus] is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being; he sustains all things by his powerful word." Hebrews 1:3

Devotions:

This hymn is often sung in German, but there are two English translations. Read each of them out loud.

Jesu, joy of our desiring,
Holy wisdom, love most bright;
Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring
Soar to uncreated light.
Word of God, our flesh that fashioned,
With the fire of life impassioned,
Striving still to truth unknown,
Soaring, dying round Thy throne.
(by poet Robert Bridges)

Jesus remains my joy,
The comfort and essence of my heart.
Jesus resists all suffering,
He is my life's strength,
The desire and sun of my eyes,
My soul's treasure and delight.
That's why I won't leave Jesus
Out of my heart and face.
(by Dcs Amanda Spangler)

Look closely at the two versions. In Bridges' version, we experience with the poet a transcendental encounter with God. He describes a mystical union with God through the Second Person of the Trinity. The piece is beautiful, enticing souls to soar along with word and music to highest heaven.

While considerably simpler in wording, Spangler's translation is more literal, and captures the intimacy of the relationship between Jesus and us. The German speaks of how Jesus is embedded within our very bodies: our hearts, eyes and faces.

While the words of Bridges encapsulate a moment of mystical union with God, Spangler's translation describes a relationship that resides in every beat of our hearts. Though difficult to hear, if we listen carefully, we can perhaps uncover what the original text really says. Too often, we forget to listen deeply to what's really being said. Sometimes the simple, obvious message is beautiful, but the treasure that lies beneath is worth listening for as well.

Prayer:

Jesus, our joy, help us to find peace in you through every breath and every heartbeat. Open our ears to listen deeply to your children, and to share ourselves with them, as you have shared yourself with us. Amen.

Reflection:

Recall someone you spent time with today. How might you have heard Jesus speaking in their longings, suffering, or joy? How would your caring change if you imagined Jesus in each person you met?

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