

## Just As I Am

I bought a book this week that is about the beautiful hymns we sing. The one that I focused on was one of my favorites, "Just As I Am" written by Charlotte Elliot in 1836. The book illustrates the struggles and the source of the hymn. I thought about how we strive to earn redemption but there is nothing we can do that will earn the death of Jesus on a cross. It was a gift offering us redemption. Two Thieves were also executed with Jesus. Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who hung there, hurled insults at him, "Aren't you the Christ save yourself and us." But the other criminal rebuked him, "Don't you fear God," he said, "Since you are under the same sentence?" We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Redemption, an unearned gift. That's what Christ gave to each of us. We can strive for perfection, but can we ever truly reach it? I thought for a very long time that I was not worthy of such a gift. But then someone told me that Christ said I was and that he died for me, for my soul. Christ made a sacrifice for each one of us and when we find that belief within our hearts, we discover the gift.

"Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me. And that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God I come, I come. Just as I am and wanting not to rid my soul of one dark blot. To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God I come, I come. Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt, fightings and fears with in, without, O Lamb of God I come, I come. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind, Sight, riches, healing of the mind. Yea, all I need, in thee to find, O lamb of God, I come, I come. Just as I am, thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve. Because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come! Just as I am, thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down; Now to be thine, yes, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

"The story of Charlotte Elliott mirrors many of our lives. Her sister said in 1821 that Miss Elliott became "deeply conscious of the evil in her own heart, and having not yet fully realized the fulness and freeness of the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, she suffered much mental distress under the painful uncertainty that such a one as she felt herself could be saved. After groping her way through darkness for a year, Dr. Malin of Geneva paid her a visit at her Father's house on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1822. He said to her, "Dear Charlotte. Cut the cable, it will take too long to unloose it; cut it, it is a small loss," and then bidding her give one look, silent but continuous at the cross of Jesus, she was enabled at once freely to say, "just as I am without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bid'st me come to thee, oh lamb of God, I come."

We thank you Lord for those who have gone before us and given us blessed words to sing and show our belief. We thank you for their wisdom and for their acceptance of your words working through them. Lord, we thank you for this day, may we spend time with you within the day. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and his leadership. Be with his family as they support him. Be with our leaders and our staff, bless their work. Bless those going on the trip to the Upper Peninsula. Guide and bless them in all they do, give them joy in the work and strength for the days. Bring them home safely to us. Be with us Lord, be with the broken, those who seek you, may they see you in our midst. Be with those who hunger, those who live in fear, those who are in need, those who seek you, be with those who suffer loss. May we minister to them in your name. In the name of our savior Jesus Christ, Amen

Quotes taken from the book, "Illustrated History of Hymns and Their Authors" by Rev. Edwin M. Long

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