

Hymn Written in a Hedge

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788) and his brother, John, were founders of the Methodist movement, originating as a revival in the 18th century Church of England.

It was a time of great change within the Christian church, and emotional responses to the new thing God was doing ran deep. It was not unusual for violence to result.

On one particular occasion in 1740, Wesley was preaching in the fields of a parish in Ireland when he was attacked by men who did not approve of his doctrines. He escaped to a farmhouse, where the farmer's wife hid him in the milkhouse.



When the mob approached her home to demand the fugitive, the brave Christian lady quieted them temporarily with refreshments. While Wesley's would-be captors were eating and planning their next move, she sneaked out to the milkhouse and directed Wesley to go through a rear window and to hide under a hedge.

From his hiding place, which was situated alongside a quiet, babbling brook, Wesley could hear the movement and angry voices of his pursuers. He settled back into the hedge to await their departure. He filled his waiting time by composing a hymn, a prayer of trust in God as his refuge. It was titled *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*.

Over the years, several musical scores have been written to accompany this hymn. The most popular has been a melody and arrangement by Joseph Parry in 1879. Here is a portion of its verses:

*Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last.*

(more)

*Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! Leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.*

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is Thy name,
Source of all true righteousness;
Thou art evermore the same,
Thou art full of truth and grace.*

Most likely, you don't find yourself hiding in a hedge today from enemies or circumstances that can cause you harm. But perhaps you are in some desperate situation in which you need hope and comfort.

If so, then it could be that this prayer, written in 1740, is meant for you today.

– Beecher Hunter