

“Our Savior Lives and Holds Us, Amen”

B, Pentecost 8; Psalm 138

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Congregational UCC, Buena Vista, CO

Rev. Rebecca K. Poos

MY SAVIOR, MY GOD

"**My Savior My God**" is a 2006 radio single by contemporary Christian musician, Aaron Shust, from his album, Anything Worth Saying. Although usually credited as author and composer, Shust used the verses from Dora Greenwell's 1873 poem, "I Am Not Skilled to Understand", and added a new bridge. The song became a No. 1 hit on Christian radio by April 2006.

An Old Hymn Rediscovered

I am not skilled to understand
What God hath willed, what God hath planned;
I only know at His right hand
Stands One who is my Savior.

I take Him at His word indeed:
“Christ died for sinners”—this I read;
For in my heart I find a need
Of Him to be my Savior!

That He should leave His place on high
And come for sinful man to die,
You count it strange? So once did I
Before I knew my Savior!

And, oh, that He fulfilled may see
The travail of His soul in me,

And with His work contented be,
As I with my dear Savior!

Yes, living, dying, let me bring
My strength, my solace from this spring—
That He who lives to be my King
Once died to be my Savior!

JUST BE HELD

CINDY HELM: My favorite that comes to mind: Just Be Held. I first heard this song about a month after I lost Steve. I was driving home from a grief support meeting trying to figure out how things had fallen completely apart so very quickly. I had been searching everywhere for answers and finding none -- then this song came on the radio. I had to pull over and just listen -- tears were pouring out of my eyes and my heart hurt so bad -- but I was NOT ALONE!! Every word in this song was the start of healing for me. It will be three years on 6/7 that we lost Steve -- I am still healing and I still cry whenever we sing this song.

Lyrics:

*Hold it all together
Everybody needs you strong
But life hits you out of nowhere
And barely leaves you holding on*

And when you're tired of fighting

*Chained by your control
There's freedom in surrender
Lay it down and let it go*

*So when you're on your knees and answers seem so far away
You're not alone, stop holding on and just be held
Your world's not falling apart, it's falling into place
I'm on the throne, stop holding on and just be held
Just be held, just be held*

*If your eyes are on the storm
You'll wonder if I love you still
But if your eyes are on the cross
You'll know I always have and I always will*

*And not a tear is wasted
In time, you'll understand
I'm painting beauty with the ashes
Your life is in My hands*

*Lift your hands, lift your eyes
In the storm is where you'll find Me
And where you are, I'll hold your heart
I'll hold your heart
Come to Me, find your rest
In the arms of the God who won't let go*

Mark Hall: Just Be Held

Hall is a full-time youth pastor for 20 years. His group *Casting Crowns* has created and sung many hit songs over the years, their theme being that the Christian walk entails both knowing God's Word and being the hands and feet of Jesus,

"I've always had a Bible study and an experience that the song was based on. Every song I've ever written was not only a Bible study I've taught, but also a situation I've lived. There's one song on the album that *doesn't* have a story, this one, "Just Be Held."

But it does, actually! He'd written another song: "Praise You in this Storm" which is a song sung to God about us remaining faithful even in the storms. Hall wanted a part-two to that song about God singing back to *us*.

He says, "I had just studied Philippians with my students, and I told them that Philippians is called the Book of joy, and the ironic thing about that is how it was written from prison. Apparently, according to God's Word, **joy is deeper than happy**. It's more of an anchor, not in a calm sea, but an anchor in a stormy sea. I talked about that with them, and Matthew West and I wrote this song together based on that.

"I went on the road, sang this song on the entire tour, and then went home and the doctor told me I had cancer on my right kidney and it needed to come out. That really rocked me. I wasn't ready for that. Being a youth pastor, I'm the guy who helps other people get through their stuff. I'm the guy who encourages others, and I don't have my own stuff. That really stopped me in my tracks.

"I always wondered what I would think if I ever got cancer. I didn't go through the "I'm mad at God" phase, but the first thing that went through my mind is "How am I going to tell my kids?" Suddenly, all of the weight of my family was on my shoulders. I've been open with my story of being dyslexic, having ADD and being the biggest dork in Heaven, and I've always been out there with my story. This was different. My children are in my youth group. My kids are 12, 15, and 17. Suddenly I was picturing myself standing in front of my youth group and telling them how scared I was. I thought, I can't do that.

The very first night, I came to the song "Just Be Held," and the first line is "hold it all together, everybody needs you strong." In that moment, I realized that I was the story for this song. I don't see signs in things normally. I did see how God gave me this song a year and half before I got cancer because He knew I was going to need it. The song connects to Philippians 4:6,

which says when you're anxious about something, pray with thanksgiving. How do I do that? God showed me how to do it. I prayed, "God, thank You that *You* aren't anxious. I know I'm anxious, because I don't see where this is going, You do. Every night when I tell this story at concerts, I have cancer survivors stand up, and they are applauded, and they look at me with a connection. They understand what I share because they've been there.

BEDSIDE SOUL MOMENT

I have played this song on my phone at the bed of a friend and hospice patient as she faced her transition after a 15-year battle with cancer. She was ready to go be with God, and was pleading with me and God to make it happen now; she didn't understand why she had to stay here and continue to suffer. We talked about timing not being in our hands sometimes, and how hard that is to accept. How Presence is always there, even if it *seems* our prayers are not answered.

I sat by her side and played this song. She closed her eyes and let herself be Held. Tears streamed down both our faces. I could see her visibly relax and find peace in her being. God was in that place and we knew it.

As we sing this together, ask the questions:

When have you needed to "just be held?" Where do you need to stop trying to "hold it all together" because everyone "needs you strong" and you need to surrender instead to the loving arms of Spirit? How do we find joy that is "deeper than happy?"

Where might it seem that the world is falling apart, where actually, it's falling into place? Cling to that hope, and let us sing.

Philippians 4:6 (VOICE): Don't be anxious about things; instead, pray. Pray about everything. He longs to hear your requests, so talk to God about your needs and be thankful for what has come.

Outrageous grace. by Godfrey Birtill

From interviewer: I asked Godfrey of all the songs he'd written, which one had made the greatest impact on the Church? "I would probably say 'Outrageous Grace'. The song was born during a really difficult time and through intense spiritual battle. I remember waking up one morning with pain in my chest that was due to the stress of the battle, and I heard the Lord say, '**There's a lot of pain but a lot more healing,**' then the other words followed. Around that time I remember hearing Jeff Lucas round off a meeting saying, 'Lord, thank you for your outrageous grace to us,' and the phrase went with the other words completing the song."

From Barb Groy (her song choice)

I first heard this song at a Robin Mark concert a group of us went to in Alamosa years ago:

Seems like many times we get caught up in the negativities of life, the pain, the fear, hatred and sorrow, but if we really look at our lives and realize all the blessings and joys we have, the healing, the peace, the love and stay positive, we can get through so much more. If we don't let the negative (the enemy) come in and make mountains out of our mole hills and we lean on God for our strength, we can find great comfort and grace.

AMEN –

Warren say something before song.

My story of Estonia -- Jester Harrison conducting.

"**Amen**" is a traditional gospel song that was popularized by The Impressions with their 1964 version.

It was recorded earlier, in June 1948, and released in January 1949 by the "Wings Over Jordan Choir".^{[1][2]}

The song was arranged by Jester Hairston, for the Sidney Poitier film *Lilies of the Field* (1963), which popularized the song.

The song went to number one on *Cashbox* Magazine's R&B chart for three weeks and reached #7 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 singles chart in 1964.^[4]