

HYMN STORY: GIVE THANKS

Saturday, November 22

Reading: Psalm 100

***Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given
Jesus Christ, His Son***

***And now let the weak say 'I am strong'
Let the poor say 'I am rich'
Because of what the Lord has done for us***

Though he had piano lessons at a young age, it wasn't until his years at Bristol College in Tennessee that music became very important to Henry Smith (b. 1952). He wanted to write songs that honored Jesus Christ and would often sing his compositions at his church. In 1978, he wrote the song 'Give Thanks' in response to his pastor's sermon on 2 Corinthians 6:10 where Paul presents himself as a servant of God who is "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything." He was also influenced by 2 Corinthians 8:9 which says: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." Soon after writing the song, he sang it for his church with his future wife Cindy on several occasions.

At one of these services was a visiting military couple who heard and loved the song. Upon returning to Germany where they were stationed, they shared the song with their church. From there the song quickly spread in popularity throughout Europe. Integrity Music first published the song in 1986 but credited it as "author unknown." That same year, popular worship singer Don Moen released the song on his 'Give Thanks' album and its popularity spread. This is why 'Give Thanks' is sometimes erroneously credited to Moen as the author. A friend would bring a copy of this cassette tape to Smith who contacted Integrity Music claiming his authorship. The music company was glad to give Henry Smith the credit he deserved as they had been trying to find the author for some time. Smith wrote around 300 worship songs during his lifetime but 'Give Thanks' is the only one that was ever published.

This simple chorus appears in many hymnbooks today and is a wonderful reminder of the greatest gift we have been given – Jesus Christ. It is a call for us to lift up thankful voices to God because of the blessings He has given us in Christ. Thanksgiving should not simply be a one-year event. It should be an important part of every day of our lives.

Listen to 'Give Thanks' @ YouTube @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgyXJ6WORck>

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Give_Thanks_with_a_Grateful_Heart#:~:text=The%20song%20was%20his%20only,eventually%20left%20him%20legally%20blind.https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/history-of-hymns-give-thanks-with-a-grateful-heart