***Lenten Awakening***

**Lenten Worship Series – Good Friday**

***Gifting Paradise***

**March 29, 2024**

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**S  Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim. **It is recommended that the person giving the devotional at the end of the service also be the narrator for the entire service.** |

***Gifting Paradise***

**[The Gathering] [The Word]**

**Narrator:**

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. ([Acts 4:12](https://www.biblestudytools.com/acts/4-12.html), NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—And this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no none can boast. ([Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.biblestudytools.com/ephesians/passage/?q=ephesians+2:8-9), NIV)

*“Whoever has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”* (Revelation 2:7, NIV)

**[The Gathering] [The Response]**

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| **SB#89/HC#161/SS#48 – O for a thousand tongues to sing (My Great Redeemer’s Praise)** | TB-59 – Azmon  TB-75 – Grimsby  HC-161  SS-48 | HTD3-T4 (4 vs.)  No HT CD  HCD15-T11 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#167 – Hail, Thou once despisèd Jesus** | TB-360 – Bethany  TB-370 – Hyfrydol | HTD11-T1 (4 vs.)  HTD1-T14 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#241 – And can it be** | TB-445 – Sagina | HTD4-T13 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#509/SS#106 – O boundless salvation!** | TB-506 – My Jesus, I love Thee  SS-106 | HTD2-T3 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#451/HC#71/SS#107 – Would you be free from your burden of sin?** | TB-945 – Wonder-working power  HC-71  SS-107 | No HT CD  HCD6-T11 |
| **SB#466/HC#105/SS#32 – I stand amazed in the presence (How Marvelous!)** | TB-769 – My Savior’s love  HC-105  SS-32 | HTD10-T8 (4 vs.)  HCD9-T15 |
| **HC#162 – The Power of the Cross** | HC-162 | HCD15-T12 |
| **HC#294 – Glorious Day** | HC-294 | HCD28-T14 |

**[The Gathering] [The Word]**

**Narrator:**

*2He grew up before him like a tender shoot,*

*and like a root out of dry ground.*

*He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,*

*nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

*3He was despised and rejected by mankind,*

*a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.*

*Like one from whom people hide their faces*

*he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

*4Surely he took on our pain*

*and bore our suffering,*

*yet we considered him punished by God,*

*stricken by him, and afflicted.*

*5But he was pierced for our transgressions,*

*he was crushed for our iniquities;*

*the punishment that brought us peace was on him,*

*and by his wounds we are healed.*

*6We all, like sheep, have gone astray,*

*each of us has turned to our own way;*

*and the Lord has laid on him*

*the iniquity of us all.*

(Isaiah 53:2-6, NIV)

**[The Gathering] [The Response]**

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| **SB#182/HC#12/SS#121 – Lord, make Calvary real to me** | TB-741 – same  HC-12  SS-121 | No HT CD  HCD1B-T12 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#32/HC#127 – How deep the Father’s love for us** | TB-663 – same  HC-127 | No HT CD  HCD11-T17 |
| **SB#161/HC#234 – Beneath the cross of Jesus** | TB-574 – same  HC-234 | No HT CD  HCD22-T14 |
| **HC#123/SS#55 – Shine on Us** | HC-123  SS-55 | HCD11-T13 |

**[The Gathering] [The Response]**

**Invocation**

**Narrator:**

Jesus knew the plan of His Father was being fulfilled. Even as Jesus knew earthly death was coming, He looked to God for help. While praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked God to take away what was about to happen…

***Gethsemane***

**[The Word]**

**Leader:** *32They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”*

**All:** *35Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36“Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”*

(Mark 14:32-36, NIV)

**Leader:** Jesus acknowledged that the plan of His Father was best. Jesus shared that the will of his Father was perfect.

**All:** *47Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” 49Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.*

**Leader:** *50Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.” Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.*

(Matthew 26:47-50, NIV)

**[The Response]**

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| **SB#32/HC#127 – How deep the Father’s love for us** | TB-663 – same  HC-127 | No HT CD  HCD11-T17 |

**Narrator:**

As the trial commenced and Jesus’ fate unfolded, two other men were sentenced to death. The judgment was given, and Jesus and the two would be crucified. Crosses were erected. Jesus was made to carry His wooden cross to Golgotha, the “place of the skull.” During the slow walk to the designated spot, a man named Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry the cross.

***The Crucifixion of Jesus***

**[The Word]**

**Leader:** *32As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). 34There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.*

**All:** *35When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is jesus, the king of the jews.*

(Matthew 27:32-37, NIV)

**[The Response]**

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| **SB#208/SS#63 – When I survey the wondrous cross** | TB-875 – The wonderful cross (first 16 bars, Boston)  HC-94 (use vs. 2 as chorus)  SS-63 | No HT CD  HCD8-T14 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#32/HC#127 – How deep the Father’s love for us** | TB-663 – same  HC-127 | No HT CD  HCD11-T17 |
| **SB#182/HC#12/SS#121 – Lord, make Calvary real to me** | TB-741 – same  HC-12  SS-121 | No HT CD  HCD1B-T12 |
| **SB#190 – O sacred head once wounded** | TB-226 – Passion Chorale | No HT CD |
| **HC#94/SS#97 – Lamb of God** | HC-94  SS-97 | HCD8-T14 |

**Narrator:**

Crucifixion in the ancient world was intended to take as long as possible. No vital organs were damaged, so it took two or three days to die, often from shock or asphyxiation, as muscles used for breathing grew weak. In Luke 23, there is a conversation described between Jesus and the criminals crucified alongside him. There was time to talk. This conversation is surely one of the most extraordinary in the Bible. It shows us the similarities of these three dying men, and yet, at the same time, how very different Jesus is.

**[The Word]**

**Leader:** *39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”*

**All:** *40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”*

**Leader:** *42Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

**All:** *43Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

(Luke 23:39-43, NIV)

**Narrator:**

Paradise. It’s a gift. It’s the place of blessedness. It’s the place where grace is everywhere. It’s the place where only grace can bring you. It’s the home we go to—by the way of the Cross.

Here on a cross, it suddenly becomes clear to a dying criminal that his life has been futile, and he deserves no more than death. This was no last-ditch effort to appear humble before God. Growing tired of his own jeering, he begins to watch Jesus. He recognizes a man who in no way deserves this fate. So why is he accepting it? Why is he taking this suffering alongside *me*? Why? What could the thief do but agonize, observe, and listen?

**[The Word]**

**Leader:** *27They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. 29Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying,” So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30come down from the cross and save yourself!”*

**All:** *31In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! 32Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.*

(Mark 15:27-32, NIV)

**[The Word]**

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| **Drama – Scene 1: The Mocking Crowds** |

**Leader:** ***25****Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

**All:** ***26****When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,”****27****and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.*

(John 19:25-27, NIV)

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| **Drama – Scene 2: The Women** |

**Leader:** ***33****When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.*

**All:** ***34****Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

(Luke 23:33-34, NIV)

**Leader:** ***46****About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).*

(Matthew 27:46, NIV)

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| **Drama – Scene 3: Jesus’s Words** |

**Leader:** ***44****It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon,* ***45****for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.*

**All:** ***46****Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.*

(Luke 23:44-46, NIV)

**Leader:** ***54****When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed,*

**All:** “*Surely he was the Son of God!”*

(Matthew 27:54, NIV)

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| **Drama – Scene 4: Jesus’s Death** |

***Paradise is a gift to you!***

**[The Word]**

**Devotional**

**[The Response]**

**Invitation**

**[The Response]**

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| **SB#769/HC#98/SS#104 – Jesus, see me at Thy feet** | TB-289 – Nothing but Thy blood  HC-98  SS-104 | No HT CD  HCD8-T18 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#32/HC#127 – How deep the Father’s love for us** | TB-663 – same  HC-127 | No HT CD  HCD11-T17 |
| **SB#49/HC#274 – How great Thou art!** | TB-488 – same  HC-274 | HTD1-T12 (4 vs.)  HCD26-T14 |
| **SB#178 – Jesus, keep me near the cross** | TB-238 – Near the cross  TB-237 – Healing Stream | HTD2-T5 (3 vs.)  HTD5-T8 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#179 – King of my life, I crown Thee now** | TB-89 – Lead me to Calvary | HTD9-T8 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#182/HC#12/SS#121 – Lord, make Calvary real to me** | TB-741 – same  HC-12  SS-121 | No HT CD  HCD1B-T12 |
| **SB#201/HC#137/SS#66 – Thank you for the cross, Lord (Worthy is the Lamb)** | TB-947 – same  HC-137  SS-66 | No HT CD  HCD12-T17 |
| **HC#123/SS#55 – Shine on us** | HC-123  SS-55 | HCD11-T13 |
| **HC#128 – My Tribute** | HC-128 | HCD11-T18 |
| **HC#226 – I Worship You** | HC-226 | HCD21-T16 |

**[The Word]**

**Challenge**

**[The Response]**

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| **SB#241 – And can it be** | TB-445 – Sagina | HTD4-T13 (4 vs.) |

**[The Sending]**

**Benediction:**

By his stripes we are healed.  
By his wounds, we are made whole.

Go in the name of Jesus Christ  
and live in the salvation made possible  
by the Goodness of this Friday. Amen.

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| **Lent 2024 – Good Friday** | |
| **DRAMA**  **The Thief**  **By Martyn Scott Thomas**  © Copyright 2023 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission. | |
| **Topic:** | The Crucifixion; Repentance |
| **Scripture:** | Matthew 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49;  John 19:16-37 |
| **Synopsis:** | One of the thieves crucified with Jesus gives his account of that day. |
| **Characters:** | Dismas – the repentant thief |
| **Props/Costumes:** | All black clothing. |
| **Setting:** | Bare stage. |
| **Running time:** | 5 minutes |

[*Dismas is standing center stage.*]

**SCENE 1: The Mocking Crowds**

**Dismas:** You don’t know my name, but you do know me; or at least you know about me. I was one of two men crucified along with Jesus. Some call me a thief, but my crimes were much more than a simple snatch and grab. I was a brutal highwayman, preying on travelers who were foolish enough to be on the road alone or at the wrong time of day. My gang and I would surround our mark, beat him mercilessly, and take all his belongings. The less he had, the more we beat him, often leaving him for dead. I’ll admit that sometimes I got more of a thrill from the beating than I did the robbery.

But that wasn’t the extent of my crimes. I found that my specific skill set gave me other possibilities. I was able to direct my rage against the Roman government and would often ambush isolated Roman soldiers or local officials. This made me a hero to my fellow Jews, who would gladly pay me to direct my anger away from them. It also made me an enemy of Rome, which eventually led to my downfall. I was caught in the act of beating a man, convicted of being a revolutionary, and was sentenced to death. This put me front and center for the crucifixion of Jesus.

I had heard about Jesus, but I assumed most of the stories were exaggerations. Healings and miracles? Why would he be punished for that? I’m not sure what he was really guilty of, but it couldn’t have been anything close to what I had done. It quickly became obvious that the Jewish leaders truly hated this man, though. As soon as he was lifted up on his cross, they started screaming insults at him and insisted that he prove who he claimed to be by coming down off the cross. The crowds were incited by them and joined in, telling him to save himself like he had saved others.

As I hung on my cross in agony, I became a forgotten man. I was once a hero to some of this mob, but now I was invisible. All they saw, all they cared about, was the pain and suffering of Jesus.

**SCENE 2: The Women**

**Dismas:** Within the crowd there were others; a small group of women who came to mourn this man. It was hard to tell from their tears, but I think one of them was his mother. The others were gathered around her as she collapsed on the ground in grief. It was as if her very heart was being ripped out. Occasionally, she would look up at the man next to me and scream something that I can only describe as ultimate suffering. And as Jesus looked down at her, weary and in extreme anguish himself, he had an unbelievable sense of calm about him.

He looked at a man who was nearby, and that man approached the grieving woman. He called to the woman and told her that this other man was now her son. At the same time, he told the man that this woman was now his mother. Incredible! Even as he hung dying, Jesus made sure that his mother would be taken care of. How did he have the capacity to even comprehend what was happening? Why did he even care anymore? Who was this man?

**SCENE 3: Jesus’s Words**

**Dismas:** Crucifixion is painful. So painful that they invented a new word to describe the pain: excruciating. As one hangs on the cross, nails ripped through hands and feet, breathing becomes more and more difficult. In one’s pain it’s not unusual to blackout or even hallucinate. So when I heard Jesus talking again, this time to no one in particular, I thought he was doing just that. But as I listened more closely, it seemed that he was calling out to God.

I’ll admit, I had a few choice words for the Almighty as I hung there in my own agony, but Jesus wasn’t cursing God as I was, he was pleading with him, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Was he really wanting mercy for his executioners? Again, I didn’t share his sentiment.

Around noon, the sky became dark. It was almost like the sun just disappeared. It was as if nature’s identity was tied to this man next to me. It seemed like the whole world was feeling his pain.

His next cry was definitely one of anguish: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” I wondered the same thing for myself, but Jesus’s cry had a much more personal tone to it; one of a child pleading with a parent. He truly felt like he had been abandoned in his time of greatest need.

The thief on the other side of Jesus now taunted him. Echoing the earlier cries of the mob. “Save yourself and save us!” I had seen and heard enough. Jesus was no ordinary man. This was my last chance. I screamed at the other thief, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” Then I turned to Jesus and said, “Remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

**SCENE 4: Jesus’s Death**

**Dismas:** I could tell the end was near. For Jesus and for me. But I had a new sense of peace. All I had experienced in the past few hours had convinced me that Jesus was the Messiah; God’s Chosen One. [*considering*] What had we done?

Just then Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” And that was it. He took his final breath and died. Immediately, the earth shook like it was being torn apart. Those gathered around the crosses were violently thrown to the ground. A centurion regained his footing and stood looking at the scene around him. A new awareness came over him and he exclaimed loud enough for the entire city to hear, “Surely he was the Son of God.” I couldn’t agree more.

My breathing was becoming more shallow as the effects of my own crucifixion settled in. I wouldn’t last much longer. I looked at the lifeless body next to me and realized he was no longer there. I looked up to heaven and smiled. A dying thug and thief had been redeemed by the very Son of God. My next stop: Paradise.

[*Blackout*]

***Lenten Awakening***

**Lenten Devotional – Good Friday**

***Jesus Gifting Paradise***

**March 29, 2024**

**By Major Catherine Mount**

**TITLE: Jesus Gifting Paradise**

**SCRIPTURE: Luke 23:32-43**

**INTRODUCTION:** Have you ever experienced a Horrible yet Beautiful day? Not the type of day that’s horrible because the weather is bad, and then it’s beautiful because you get to have chocolate cake. But the type of horrible that is life altering and painful, and the type of beautiful that is all about hope and relief. This is the kind of day that the thief on the cross was having. He was bearing the pain of crucifixion, and yet, he experienced renewed hope and freedom because He hung on a cross next to Jesus Christ, Messiah to humanity. The gospel in FLESH made the thief’s life beautiful on that day. . . this day. . . that we gather to remember.

**GOD’S GOSPEL REALITY IS BEAUTIFUL**

God’s gospel reality is a beautiful gift to each of us in a world that is full of brokenness and tragedy. [*Share the gospel in a couple of sentences with a focus on Jesus’ incarnation.*]

1. Nothing shows Jesus’ incarnation, more than his death on the cross. Jesus experiences crucifixion and death and *includes* himself with the worst (those thieves on either side of Him) so that God’s kingdom would come and his will would be done. Just IMAGINE the awe and the shock to this thief on the cross next to the Savior of the world. (Needham, pp. 196-197).
2. The thief on the cross did not *hear* the gospel that day; he *saw* it right next to him. And the beauty in that horrible moment shone through the thief’s circumstance. Something beautiful happened. Look at Luke 23:42: *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

There’s a beautiful hymn by Charles Wesley, that puts some imagination to this moment (S.A. Song Book #241, “And Can it Be”):

1) And can it be that I should gain

An interest in the Savior’s blood?

Died He for me who caused His pain,

For me who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! how can it be

That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

2) He left His Father’s throne above,

So free, so infinite His grace,

Emptied Himself of all but love

And bled for Adam’s helpless race.

‘Tis mercy all, immense and free,

For, O my God, it found out me.

**GOD’S KINGDOM PRESENCE IS BEAUTIFUL**

The KINGDOM of God found the thief! The kingdom of God was opened up to the thief on the cross in that moment. God’s Kingdom Presence was a beautiful gift in the face of the thief’s tragic circumstance.

1. All through the gospel accounts of his life, Jesus declares that the kingdom of God is near. Brothers and sisters, it is not only near – it is NOW. Choosing to LIVE in the saving knowledge and grace of Jesus invites his KINGDOM to come into your life right now, and in every moment of your days. The thief’s day went from horrible to beautiful because He met and believed in the One who awakened his soul to amazing love.
2. Again, use your imagination to put the thief with these words in Charles Wesley’s next 2 verses (S.A. Song Book #241, “And Can it Be”):

3) Long my imprisoned spirit lay

Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;

I woke; the dungeon flamed with light.

My chains fell off, my heart was free,

I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

4) No condemnation now I dread;

Jesus, and all in Him, is mine.

Alive in Him, my living Head,

And clothed in righteousness divine,

Bold I approach the eternal throne

And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

God’s Kingdom’ wasn’t the only gift the thief received that day. He was blessed with the promise of paradise.

**GOD’S PARADISE PROMISE IS BEAUTIFUL**

God’s paradise promise of what is to come is beautiful. Imagine these men in excruciating pain hanging on their crosses. And now use your Holy Spirit imagination to picture Luke 24:43. Jesus says: *“I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* Jesus died, so that we could have an eternal hope. He paid the price of our sin on that cross SO THAT we can experience the gift of paradise. Yes, we have a kingdom hope now, but we also have a paradise hope that is to come.

**INVITATION/SONG**

**CHALLENGE**

As we contemplate the greatest sacrifice known to man, as we remember the greatest act of redeeming love, are you living in the promise of God’s present Kingdom and His future paradise? Jesus was obedient to death on the cross. . . it created a way for you to experience His kingdom come NOW, and paradise for your eternity. Just like the thief, who deserved every bit of punishment and condemnation – Jesus extended grace and hope.

Could this be true?

* Can it be true that God has this forgiveness reality and kingdom promise for you too? Yes!
* Can it be true that His death on the cross is a payment for YOUR sins – the very worst parts of you? Yes!
* Can it be true that His kingdom could be real to you right now and in your everyday moments? Yes!
* Can it be true that those who confess, believe, and follow Jesus can even NOW, *approach* God’s throne? Yes!
* Can it be true that there is promise and HOPE of an eternal paradise that is WITH Jesus and free of all the horrible days, and filled with only the beauty and love of God? Yes!

Brothers and sisters, one thief on a cross chose to be arrogant and refused to see the Messiah before him, while the other chose to be willing and humble. One chose death, and one chose life. **What will you choose?**

Can it be true that we can live in freedom, and hope, and God’s amazing love? Yes.

On that horrible, beautiful day, Jesus gave the gift of His kingdom NOW and a paradise to come. Can it be? Yes. His amazing love made it so.

Song (SB#241): **And Can it Be**