

## Lenten Reflection

*Something Beautiful by Bill Gaither*

If there ever were dreams  
That were lofty and noble  
They were my dreams at the start  
And hope for life's best were the hopes  
That I harbor down deep in my heart  
But my dreams turned to ashes  
And my castles all crumbled, my fortune turned to loss  
So I wrapped it all in the rags of life  
And laid it at the cross

Something beautiful, something good  
All my confusion He understood  
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife  
But he made something beautiful of my life

This song expresses all of our lives. Bill and Gloria Gaither have an anointed way of putting into words and song Spiritual truths. We all want to do good things and make a positive impact on other people's lives but we all fall short of God's best. The word "sin" means missing the mark. To become a Christian we must acknowledge that we are sinners and ask God's forgiveness. We should be daily meditating on and aware of all of the church seasons (and also Jewish holidays).

*Advent* – Every day we ask our self, "Are we ready for Jesus' return?" I don't get overly concerned about the hectic time before Christmas. If you enjoy giving you are going to be busy during this time; and if we are preparing for Jesus' return, why wouldn't we be busy doing good and giving in every way we can.

*Christmas* – One song asks, "Why can't we have Christmas the whole year round?" Every day we should look for ways to give and bless other people's lives.

*Easter* – We can celebrate the Resurrection each day. "Poor old Jesus ain't poor no more." We live in Easter; it is the Christian life. In our Bible study we should be spending most of our time in Acts and the letters. The Old Testament and the Gospels are under the Old Covenant; after the Resurrection and Pentecost, we are under the New Covenant. The letters reflect the Christian life.

I am not sure the words Jesus says are any more important than Genesis 1:1 or Revelation 22:21. Some Bibles put his words in Red. Jesus is the Word made flesh so all the Bible should be in red. I do understand we all hold Jesus' exact words in a special place in our spirit and, because of our appreciation and love for Him, I think that's OK (and I'm not sure if that can be helped anyway).

*Lent* – We use Lent to fast, buffet our flesh, and examine ourselves. That's OK; but we should also think in terms of that being a daily and weekly thing. I would like to look at some verses that may help us during Lent.

**Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.**

In Chapter 8 some Israelites have returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. Ezra the scribe and the Levites were reading and explaining God's law to the assembled Israelites. The people all started crying. The leaders said to the people to stop weeping and grieving; that the day was sacred to the Lord.

They heard the Law and responded; this was a day of repentance. It was not a time to cry but a time to be joyful, and really, to party.

For most of the people reading this, Heaven is not going to get real excited about us going to church this Sunday. Heaven probably more excited about me passing up a pastry shop than going to church or daily reading my Bible. That's a good thing; it means I don't miss church or skip daily Bible reading. Darrell Royal, the famous Texas Longhorns football coach said, after being upset by a much lower ranked team, that he would rather be the one upset than the one doing the upsetting. This is because he had a high ranked team. In basketball I see fans at different schools run out on the court after their team beats the Kansas Jayhawks or some other top team. I would rather be the Jayhawks who gets beat every once in a while than the team that only beats them once every few years.

**Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.**

**Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.**

If Heaven gets excited just because I do something good then that means I haven't been doing many good things. If Heaven just goes on without much hoopla because I did something good that means they expect me to do the right thing. That's where I want to be.

**Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;**

**14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

Jesus paid a high price for me to be free from sin and guilt. The whole chapter of Isaiah 53 tells of what happened to Jesus in order that we could free from sin and guilt. Jesus bore our punishment for sin.

**Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed**

## **Isaiah 58**

**58 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.**

**<sup>2</sup> Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.**

**<sup>3</sup> Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.**

**<sup>4</sup> Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.**

**<sup>5</sup> Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?**

**<sup>6</sup> Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?**

**<sup>7</sup> Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?**

**<sup>8</sup> Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.**

**<sup>9</sup> Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;**

**<sup>10</sup> And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:**

**<sup>11</sup> And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.**

**<sup>12</sup> And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.**

**<sup>13</sup> If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:**

**<sup>14</sup> Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**

Isaiah 58 is a good chapter to read every day during Lent. It's more than just giving up something; it is helping people.

## Psalm 51

**10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**

**11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.**

**12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.**

**13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.**

This is the passage that was the repentance verses for me. My wife and I were making sure we went to church every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. I had enough Spiritual sense to know I needed to do some asking for forgiveness. The reason I bring this up is because I learned this passage for a song my high school church choir did. When it was time to ask for forgiveness, I had to words to express myself. This is no small thing. Growing up as a Southern Baptist I did not understand that we could ask for forgiveness and God not only would forgive my sin but He wouldn't even remember them.

This experience made me make sure our children heard a lot of Christian music. I am nearly 65 years old at this writing and singing passages for Scripture has helped me on many occasions.

I will close like I started with a song; note verse 3 it is my favorite. I probably like it the best because I sin so much.

The writer of this song wrote this when at the spot his four daughters drowned after a ship wreck.

## **It is Well With My Soul**

Horatio Gates Spafford

1. When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.
  - o Refrain:  
It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.
2. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
3. **My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!**
4. And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.