

Pastor D's Letter May 22, 2022

I love the Hymn "In Christ Alone." We sang it in church last Sunday during worship. The words for the hymn are as follows:

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

I love this hymn because it reminds me of both the justice and the mercy of God. It is the premise of our faith that God loved us so much that he took upon Himself the penalty for our unfaithfulness. While we sing that no power or hell or scheme of man can pluck us from our savior's hand (verse 4) we also sing that in Jesus "the wrath of God was satisfied" (verse 2). What great love God showed us to bear the penalty of our sin.

That phrase in the second verse, the one about the wrath of God being satisfied, is why this hymn isn't in our Presbyterian Hymnal. In 2013 as a new Presbyterian Hymnal was being put together and, "In Christ Alone" was being considered for inclusion. However, the hymnal people did not like the phrase "the wrath of God was satisfied." Here is a quote about what happened from an article as it appeared in USA Today on August 5, 2013.

"The committee putting together a new Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) hymnal dropped the popular modern hymn "In Christ Alone" because the song's authors refused to change a phrase about the wrath of God. The original lyrics say that "on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied." The Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song wanted to substitute the words, "the love of God was magnified." The song's authors, Stuart Townend and Nashville resident Keith Getty, objected. So, the committee voted to drop the song."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/05/presbyterians-decision-to-drop-hymn-stirs-debate/2618833/>

We like the "Committee on Congregational Song" and are often uncomfortable with the "wrath of God". We apologize for it, we avoid it, or we try to ignore it. But the truth is, the wrath of God is just, and Jesus did satisfy God's justice and quell God's wrath when he died for our sin. The committee wanted to skip over the wrath and get to the grace. What the "Committee", what we, fail to understand is this; there is no grace without the just wrath of God. But, when God's wrath is satisfied, God's love is magnified.

Thanks to Jesus, God's wrath satisfied, and here in the love of Christ, we stand.

I'm standing in God's grace with you,
Dr. D

NEWS UPDATES

- Join us for **Fellowship after Church**.
- **JOIN US FOR WVN Picnic in the Park this Wednesday @6p.m for a Potluck Diner.**
- **MASKS ARE OPTIONAL** IN WORSHIP! Be considerate of those who choose to wear masks and maintain social distance.
- If you cannot come in person, we continue to broadcast our **SERVICE LIVE** every Sunday at 9 a.m. on <https://www.facebook.com/SierraVistaPresbyterianChurch/>. Our account is public. **YOU DO NOT NEED A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT TO WATCH.** If you come to worship in person or watch at home, **invite a friend to join you.** **Worship sheets** are available on our website at <https://www.sierravistayuma.com/> under the NEWS Tab.
- If you wish to receive the monthly **newsletter** or know someone who wants to receive **Pastor D's Letter**, contact the church office with your email information.
- **THANK YOU for your CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT** of the church by giving in person, mailing a check, or giving ONLINE.