

# Coming to the Lord “Just As I Am”

Brian T. Whitaker

I spent some time recently reviewing the words to the hymn, “Just As I Am.” I don’t know about you, but in the church tradition in which I grew up, we would sing all six verses of this hymn twice through (and usually at a very slow speed) if the pastor thought someone might need to come forward and accept Jesus’s offer of salvation. Because this was done quite often (or, at least, it seemed that way), I soon grew tired of this hymn, and tended to glaze over when it was sung. It’s really too bad, because the lyrics are quite wonderful. Let’s look at a couple of the verses:

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

*Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve.  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

Lyrics by Charlotte Elliott, 1834.

As I meditated on these lyrics a couple of months ago, I was struck with a simple fact. *This is what we do every week in worship.* Whereas I had always thought of this hymn in salvation-oriented contexts (Billy Graham also uses it for this purpose), it really talks about us coming to the Lord regularly, sinners in need of His grace and cleansing, simply because He has freely invited us to come. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (NIV). When we have become His children, we are allowed full access to the Father any time. *Any time!* So when we worship at church or at home...when we pray...we can come to the Father without fear, ready to receive His mercy and grace. I come to Him “Just as I am,” faults and all, and He welcomes me. What a wonderful truth!!

As I thought more about that truth, the Lord led me to write an interlude for the song, which we first sang back in November:

*I come to you empty, with nothing to give,  
Just a sinner in need of Your grace.  
No excuses, no pretenses, I give You my all.  
Here I am! Here I am!*

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Isn’t it wonderful that we can come to the Father in worship and prayer so freely? The all-powerful King of the Universe invites me to have full access to Him at any time. That’s staggering if we take time to think about it! Whether in extended times of prayer or worship, or in brief “Please help me in this, Lord!” kinds of prayers, or in the songs we sing along with the radio in the car, we can come to the Lord just as we are. No pretenses. No reasons to hide. No shame—because He freely forgives us when we confess and repent. We cannot surprise Him with something that will suddenly make Him not want us around anymore. He knows it all anyway, and accepts us just as we are! Isn’t He wonderful?

Today, even as you read this, take a few moments to come to the Lord “just as you are,” to thank Him for the awesome things He has done to bring you into a relationship with Him.