

Just A Closer Walk With Thee



Theme

This beloved hymn expresses the heart-cry of every believer - especially in the later seasons of life - to stay close to Jesus, depend on His strength, and trust Him to guide us safely home.

Background

- “Just a Closer Walk with Thee” grew out of the African American spiritual tradition, expressing a deep longing for Jesus’ daily presence and strength.
- The hymn spread widely after the Civil War through traveling evangelists, camp meetings & revival services, becoming a cherished prayer-song across the South.
- Although the song is much older, the first published version appeared in the 1940s when gospel composer Kenneth Morris arranged and preserved the melody.

Background

- The hymn became a beloved standard in gospel, country & New Orleans jazz traditions, recorded by artists like Louis Armstrong & Mahalia Jackson.
- Its enduring popularity comes from its simple, heartfelt message: every believer desires a closer walk with Jesus, especially in seasons of weakness, aging, or transition.

Just a Closer Walk with Thee

*I am weak, but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.*

Just a Closer Walk with Thee

*Through this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.*

Just a Closer Walk with Thee

*When my feeble life is o'er,
Time for me will be no more;
Guide me gently, safely o'er
To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.*

Just a Closer Walk with Thee

*Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

JESUS IS
STRONG
WHEN WE
ARE WEAK



Jesus Is Strong When We Are Weak

- Our weakness is not a failure - it is an invitation to rely on Jesus' strength.

9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9–10 ESV)

Jesus Is Strong When We Are Weak

- Jesus keeps us from spiritual harm as we walk with Him daily.

7 The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. 8 The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

(Psalm 121:7–8 ESV)

Jesus Is Strong When We Are Weak

- True satisfaction comes from staying close to the Jesus, not from circumstances.

11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11 ESV)

- He invites us to walk with Him, not run ahead or lag behind.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25 ESV)

Jesus Is Strong When We Are Weak

- God's strength is steady even when our bodies grow frail.

29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

(Isaiah 40:29–31 ESV)



Dangers, Toils and Snares

Seeing God's Faithfulness in Life's Trials

God's Faithfulness in Life's Trials

- Life brings burdens, but Jesus never leaves us to carry them alone.

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28–30 ESV)

God's Faithfulness in Life's Trials

- Jesus understands every fear, frustration & limitation we face.

*17 When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.
(Psalm 34:17–18 ESV)*

God's Faithfulness in Life's Trials

- Even when others cannot fully understand our struggles, Jesus does.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15–16 ESV)

God's Faithfulness in Life's Trials

- Jesus walks with us through every snare, trap & hardship of aging.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4 ESV)

God's Faithfulness in Life's Trials

- Jesus' presence gives courage when we falter or feel forgotten.

*6 “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”
(Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV)*

Jesus Guides Us Safely Home



Jesus Guides Us Safely Home

- Our earthly life has an appointed end, but eternal life with Jesus has no end.

1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (John 14:1–3 ESV)

Jesus Guides Us Safely Home

- Jesus Himself guides believers through the final transition from this life to the next.

*23 Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. 24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
(Psalm 73:23–26 ESV)*

Jesus Guides Us Safely Home

- Death is not a defeat for the believer - it is a doorway to God's presence.

6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6–8 ESV)

Jesus Guides Us Safely Home

- God promises a gentle, safe passage into His eternal kingdom.

18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:18 ESV)

Jesus Guides Us Safely Home

- Heaven is a real, promised home where we will be fully restored.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
(Revelation 21:3–4 ESV)

Practical Applications

- Pause during moments of frustration or fatigue & breathe a short Scripture, such as Psalm 23:1.
- Share a burden with a trusted friend, pastor or caregiver - don't carry it alone.
- Look for one small way each day to draw closer to Jesus (a hymn, a verse, a quiet moment).
- Reflect on the hope of heaven - not as an escape, but as a promise that brings peace today.

Discussion Questions

- Which line of the hymn speaks most deeply to your life right now?
- When have you felt Jesus' strength in your weakness?
- What burdens are you carrying that you need Jesus to share with you?
- How has your walk with the Jesus changed as you've grown older?
- What comforts you most about Jesus guiding you "safely to His kingdom shore"?

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