

# He Came for the Rest of Us

Jesus came  
for the wise and the strong.  
And He came, just as well, for the rest of us.  
Jesus came for the days that life seemed ordered and filled  
with meaning.  
But we rejoice because He came for the other days, too.  
Blessed by old men and shepherds  
Worshiped by kings and beggars  
And the rest in between.  
He loves us still.  
He did not come to receive *just* our joy and elation.

He came for the rest of us.  
He came for our doubts, our burdens, our sorrows and grief.  
He even came for the times when we doubted His presence.  
He reached down to us.  
When our loneliness seemed unbearable.

His love courted us.  
And His mercy enveloped us.  
His holiness consumed us.  
God's advent of grace put the pieces of our broken lives  
together.  
Along the path of our lives we've heard of blessed souls who  
could manage their problems, pick themselves up, find the  
reasons for all of life's challenges.  
But thank God, that He came for the rest of us!  
Not just our good.  
But also the rest of us.

He came to celebrate our youth but when our youth is spent,  
He celebrates with even greater passion, the rest of us.  
He came for the people of Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Judea.  
But He also came for the rest of us.  
So now He compels us to shout to the world, the joy of a

coming King.

So that every person can hear the invitation to join...

The rest of us.

He came... for the rest of us.

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## Before I meet Bart Wrinkle

when it's all said and done here.

look me up.

I'll be kicking back, slinging jawbones

with samson

who made it in the door by the grace of God

same as noah

found grace

discovered it

(he happened upon it or rather it happened upon him)

i'll be listening to stories of limping jacob and stumbling  
bartimaeus

I'll be all ears— smiling and wondering about weak eyes,  
pharisees and romance

discussing it with the miracle boy of Jesus' mud pies

look! there's Paul (no longer writing with big letters—the  
lasik surgery is divine)

he's catching up on his reading

checking out the far flung analysis of lettered theologians

from barclay to barnes to hal lindsay (just for fun)

I will not dare disturb him.

and Jesus is smiling

His kids—the whole crew is back home

all of them

He's feasting on the vision He's been waiting to see

me?

i'm the guy way over in the back of the family portrait  
next to a man named bart wrinkle (of whom i have not met)

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## **I Run to You**

I run to You like streams  
that are drawn into the sea,  
like a fire to kindled tree,  
like a child to dreams.

like time to eternity  
my one and only destiny

You are full.

Fill me.

I don't want to be more me.

I want to be new.

No me.

All You.

I want to hear Your voice.

Don't turn me away.

Bless me Father.

I won't leave until You do.

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# Modern Lamentations I

The image that swirls freely in perilous realms between  
sleeping and awake  
my banner of fullness in grief embodies every impulse.  
Fissures on the surface unveil the aspects of consequence  
And echoes of confusion and understanding.  
That feeling of helplessness when tragedy is unstoppable  
Regret stands in the foreground  
How could things have been different?  
(But these wonderings are barren tables built for food.)  
Madness filled the spaces between clarity and fogs of  
dementia.  
Shouting across the lake, I knew I could not be heard, nor was  
I ever.  
O the ugliness of There-is-nothing-we-can-do—  
The anger of lost years when things that could be reconciled  
were not.  
Truth elusive and yet garish  
These mysteries rise in a silent season and whisper their cold  
commentary  
But still there is more, (though I dare not guess).  
I stand by the unmarked graves of both thanksgiving and deep  
wounds—  
now scars.  
These are the moments when you wonder if you failed even as  
you survived.  
And what is left, is an unseen mist.  
There is no fixing when peace and truth are shrouded beneath  
the strong arm of will.  
Like the unraveling of precepts when the narrative spins a  
tale of dissonant perplexity.  
May the dawn of all things reconcile the pieces like glass  
stained in grief  
assembled in the aperture of the soul.

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# Today is Most Noble

God holds the future and redeems all of yesterday.

But today is closer to me.

What an amazing concept today, right now, really is. Today- I hope you aren't planning a siege on your enemy. I hope you aren't judging the person in the room. I hope you aren't swallowed up in regret. I hope you aren't poisoning your time with trivial, toxic thoughts of your own wealth, vanity or scheming revenge. I hope you are in the moment for this moment fashions eternity.

Today is a gift which is moving forward faster than thoughts or plans

Today is where i am right here and right now.

Today is an opportunity to change the little things

Today is closer. tomorrow is a promise and yesterday is an eternity from anything I could attain.

Today is most noble!

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# Holy From Beginning to End

Before the first man had first breath

Before the mystery of death

Angels worshiped the Holy one

The majesty of God's own Son

From infinite past he was and is and is to come

Holy

Holy above all living things

Before the glory of every king

Holy beyond man's striving for power

Holy beyond man's grandest hour

Holy

His fingers cast the stars in place

Holy

The fiery jewels in distant space

Separating land from sea

The master of eternity

His grand design, His perfect plan

To reconcile the fate of man.

Holy

He could not look on sin

Holy

And on a cruel hill  
Among the vulgar accusation  
The wreck of every wayward nation  
He took the cruel condemnation  
The dagger deep of dark damnation  
The angels watched in disbelief  
The sky was torn. a mother's grief  
This God who crafted night and day  
This Son of God, had found a way  
To take the burden of the sin  
The holy one in human skin  
No peace on Earth  
No Kings would bow  
Betrayed, alone  
Our punishment- a tragedy  
God, why have you forsaken me?  
The grand moment of redemption and  
The death sentence of hate  
History's darkest hour  
The triumph of sins power  
Or so it seemed  
But in this act

Man's deepest shame

Is now redeemed.

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## Letting God Out of the Box

I'm always amazed how the church as a whole  
is so quick to throw rocks at the sheep in the fold.  
We question each other's theology,  
spar over worship philosophy.  
We've got more fusses than one tongue can tell  
while outside the world is going to hell.  
We are driven by creeds, and motions, and clocks,  
haven't we learned not to put God in a box?  
Would Jesus approve of our political labels  
or would He come in and start busting up tables?  
Does He tire of us telling Him what He should do,  
what gender must teach, what strategy's true?  
Is the Bible the life source or inflexible judge?  
Is the church a haven for sinners or a group with a grudge?  
Do we think we can settle for boycotts and strife  
instead of seeking the lost and giving dead people life?  
What were we thinking when in front of the press?  
we majored on minors choosing to curse and not bless.  
I have to tell you from my point of view  
I keep wondering what in the world Jesus would do.  
Would He have us disputing which method is best,  
or making transformation be our holy quest?  
After all that's what this journey's about,  
not who has more sheep or who has more clout.  
I despise the reports of our ugly catfights.  
I'm appalled by the task of reading sinners their rights.  
When you preach condemnation, consider this fact,



they don't know Jesus. How'd you expect them to act?  
And please understand, I'm not where I should be.  
When i'm pointing at you, I'm pointing at me.  
There are times when i haven't lived up to His Name,  
when i've only the man in the mirror to blame.  
But now is the time to reject the mask,  
to heed the call, and get back to the task,  
to burn the political, decaying façade  
for an all out pursuit of our passionate God.  
Let's spend our time living meaningful lives  
giving mercy to sinners not dangerous lies.  
Let's bear the cross and drop the rocks,  
proclaim the good news and let God out of the box.

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## Grace and Recompense

This Fire of Love  
unquenched by Eden's wreck  
and flowing seemingly in perpetuity  
toward all that soon will be  
in all its violent beauty  
He shall hold all hell's poison and heaven's glory.  
Small beginning, love's grandest story  
from the heartbeat in a virgin's womb  
til one Sunday rising from the tomb  
One  
for all...  
Once  
for all...  
This is the salvation from garrulous platitudes and languorous  
days

Advent... in slightest breath, in manger lay.  
Ten-thousand kingdoms would bow through ages.  
The cause of grace and recompense  
From distant past to future tense:  
Jesus

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## homeplace

My grandfather lived

in a rustic house near a sloping cool branch with slippery  
stones

and verdant woods

I walked slowly toward the treeline where

mystery lay

and there in the shade of autumn's bough

i see darkness rising

close of day.

but death,

a far

closer

angel visited then and will and again because

it is unchanged, like the virgin nest of the wip-poor-will

though unwelcomed

tender unforgiving visitor on the side of the hill  
where i last heard his voice.  
away

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## The Belly of the Beast

Everybody ends up  
in the belly of the beast.  
There are few exceptions  
from the greatest to the least.  
You stumble into quicksand.  
You're weary of the world.  
Lies wreck your reputation.  
Insults, viciously, are hurled.  
Addiction lies in dormancy  
then rears it's ugly head.  
Depression sinks in slowly,  
Like the whispers of the dead.  
A chronic, stubborn stronghold  
infiltrates your weakened mind  
Confidants betray you.  
Sometimes, friends are hard to find.  
Childless in your 40's.  
"Will I ever be a mother?"  
Inside an unfamiliar place  
Near no sister or no brother.  
You're in the doctor's office  
And hear devastating news.  
You lose your hair to chemo.  
Indeed, no one gets to choose.  
Your marriage ends abruptly.

He left you with no choice.  
And for others, it's the silence.  
Separated from His Voice.  
Adversity just happens  
and no one gets a pass.  
But this- your devastation,  
is God's Holy Master Class  
Yes, this strong Professor  
is bolder than the rest,  
His challenges are brutal  
and He's silent in the test.  
He's far above all reason  
—mysterious is He.  
His text book is His Word.  
His school— adversity.  
But in each fearful crisis,  
we're cradled by the light  
There's joy within the suffering,  
There's peace amidst the fight  
Within our devastation  
—the bleak, forbidding war  
God shakes us in our deadness,  
with His fearsome roar  
What we assumed would end us,  
And our melancholy tales  
speaks only of His grandeur,  
His timing never fails.  
And in our silent terror,  
He's not worried in the least  
Despite how darkness lingers  
in the belly of the beast.