

SONGS TO THE FATHER

By John F. Hall

In the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, that was made 80 years ago, the Wizard told the Tin Woodsman, who wanted a heart, these words, “A heart is not judged by how much you love, but by how much you are loved.” I tend to believe that writers who are much loved tend to write more positive, up-lifting stories. When I began to write this story, I decided to use four Christian songs and write a story around those songs. I asked my surrogate granddaughters to tell me their favorite Christian songs.

The first song in this story, “Echo,” is Lexie's favorite Christian song. It was written by Alexander Pappas, Chris Brown, Israel Houghton, Matthews Ntlele, and Steven Furtick. These are some of their lyrics: “When night has fallen, when fear is common, still You're calling me. When faith is lost, and my hope exhausted, You will be my strength. When my mind says I'm not good enough, God, You're enough for me, yeah! I've decided I'm not giving up, 'cause You won't give up on me. You won't give up on me. Your love is holding on and won't let go. I feel it breaking out like an echo. Your love is holding on and won't let go. I feel it breaking out like an echo. In every season you keep repeating promises to me. Now there's no stopping, what You have started, until it is complete...” The song is performed by American contemporary band Elevation Worship featuring Tauren Wells. Tauren said this about the song, “Echo is one of those songs that brings so much energy and joy into a room.” After watching him sing that song with audience participation, he is spot on.

Jade's song, “Run To The Father,” is the second song in this story. Cody Carnes and Matt Maher wrote the song. These are some of their lyrics: “I've carried a burden for too long on my own. I wasn't created to bear it alone. I hear Your invitation to let it all go. Yeah I see it now, I'm laying it down. And I know that I need You. I run to the Father. I fall into grace. I'm done with hiding. No reason to wait. My heart needs a surgeon. My soul needs a friend. So I'll run to the Father again and again and again. Oh,oh, oh. You saw my condition, had a plan for me. Your Son for redemption, the price for my heart. And I don't have a context for that kind of love. My heart has been in Your sights long before my first breath. Running into Your arms is running to life from death. And I feel this rush deep into my chest. Your mercy is calling out. Just as I am You pull me in. And I know I need You now...”

Cody Carnes said this about his song, “This song is just about any moment that you need to run to the Father. Yes it can be about salvation that's a big part of the song, but it's also just about needing God everyday. So many times we want to just run away from God but the reality is God has open arms. He's a loving Father. He's kind. He's a healer. He's a surgeon. He's a friend.” Cody is a dynamic performer. I watched his live concert performance on YouTube. The audience was just totally involved in singing to the Father.

The third song in this story is, “You Make Me Brave.” This is Skyler's song. Amanda Cook wrote the song.

These are some of Amanda Cook's lyrics: “ I stand before you now. I have heard of the majesty and wonder of You. King of Heaven, in humility, I bow. As Your love in wave after wave, crashes over me. For you are for us. You are not against us. Champion of Heaven, You made a way for all to enter in. I have heard You calling my name. I have heard the song of love You sing. So I will let You draw me out beyond the shore into Your grace. Your grace. 'Cause You make me brave. You make me brave. You make me brave. No fear can hinder now the love that You made a way. No fear can hinder now the promises You made.”

Amanda Cook said this about her song, “The song took only a matter of minutes to write, but it was the result of a long, dry season God took me through to reach the point where I was able to express what He had been doing through the last number of years. God has themes in all of our lives and I feel like bravery is something that He's always called me into. I've struggled with fear my whole life. You name it, I've been afraid of it. The song is a very personal statement to me because it's not written out of a place of declaration that I'm so brave. I'm writing myself into that character, writing myself into the person that I really feel called to be and to be. The water for me represents the presence of God, the expansiveness, the majesty, the wonder of who He is. The wave is His grace taking me deeper and further into His presence.”

The fourth song in this story was written by John Newton in 1772. These are his lyrics: “Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found. T'was blind but now I see. T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear and Grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed. Though many dangers, 'toils and snares we have already come. T'was grace that brought us safe thus far and grace will lead us home, and grace will lead us home.”

Andrea' Biocelli, a blind Italian opera singer sang Amazing Grace this past Easter Sunday. He sang, standing alone, in front of a closed cathedral in Milan, Italy. His powerful performance was broadcast and seen by 28 million people world wide. By faith, the Father in Heaven is in control of our lives. The young singer, Tauren Wells, wrote these words, “We should never underestimate the power of prayer. Prayer is the protective force around our lives.” Fear and anxiety can never stop us from singing, from our hearts, songs to the Father.

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