

My Jesus, I Love Thee

1. My Je - sus, I love Thee; I know Thou art mine;
 2. I love Thee be - cause Thou hast first lov - ed me
 3. I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
 4. In man - sions of glo - ry and end - less de - light,

for Thee all the fol - lies of sin I re - sign;
 and pur - chased my par - don on Cal - va - ry's tree;
 and praise Thee as long as Thou lend - est me breath;
 I'll ev - er a - dore Thee in heav - en so bright;

my gra - cious Re - deem - er, my Sav - ior art Thou;
 I love Thee for wear - ing the thorns on Thy brow;
 and say, when the death - dew lies cold on my brow:
 I'll sing with the glit - ter - ing crown on my brow:

if ev - er I loved Thee, my Je - sus, 'tis now.
 if ev - er I loved Thee, my Je - sus, 'tis now.
 "If ev - er I loved Thee, my Je - sus, 'tis now?"
 "If ev - er I loved Thee, my Je - sus, 'tis now."

TEXT: William R. Featherstone, 1862
 MUSIC: Adoniram Gordon, 1876

GORDON
 11.11.11.11

My Jesus, I Love Thee reads like the last hymn written by a seasoned believer on their deathbed, but it was actually written by a sixteen-year old (or possibly as young as twelve)! Its author reminds us of the immense value of what the Lord can do with a young man or woman of faith—just like Joseph, Ruth, David, Mary, the disciples, and others from Scripture.

This youth, William Featherston, wrote this poem as an expression of worship and gratitude to Christ soon after coming to saving faith. In an age when some worship songs about loving Jesus can feel thin or nondescript, Featherston gives us genuinely heartfelt and theologically profound words to express our devotion for Christ in all seasons of Christian life.

To say over and over again, “if ever I loved Thee...’tis now,” is to show a love for Jesus that grows over time. We love Jesus when we first turn to him, away from the “follies of sin” (verse one); we love him when we remember he first loved us on the cross (verse two); we love Jesus in suffering and even death (verse three) because he promises eternity with him (verse four).

That is *what* each verse says; now look at *how* he says it. Notice what adorns the repeated “brow” through the verses. Christ’s crown of thorns becomes the Christian’s crown of glory. The latter is only obtained after wearing the “death-dew,” an interesting Scriptural metaphor that combines the image of blessing with the reminder of the brevity of life.

It seems prophetic, then, that Featherston’s own life came to a tragic end at the still-young age of twenty-six. Years later, the founder of Gordon-Conwell Seminary discovered his poem and wrote a wonderful accompanying tune, creating this famous and timeless hymn. Still, I think Featherston would want us to remember that his crowning glory is not the poem he once wrote, but the Savior whom he loves.

Scripture to consider:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Exodus 34:6-8 | John 21:15-19 | 1 John 3 |
| Psalms 18 | Romans 6:1-14 | 1 John 4:7-21 |
| John 14:1-7 | 2 Timothy 4:6-8 | |