

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross is a wonderful study of beauty in paradox. In it, Fanny Crosby (famous author of more than *eight thousand* hymns) draws a line from the bloody cross of Jesus to the shining river of life in the New Creation. In doing so, she effectively traces the long arc of God's sovereign plan of redemption.

When we consider the depth of humanity's fall, we realize that only a faithful, merciful, steadfast God could give such hope for redemption—but in the cross of Jesus, that's exactly what he did. Because Jesus died in atonement for our sins, we have the promise of complete healing from sin and its effect, death. We have the assurance of being justified perfectly by faith in the finished work of Jesus's suffering and death. That same assurance carries forward into our eternal hope of resurrection, new life forever with him.

Crosby wrote this hymn to encourage believers to draw near to the cross so that we will see and remember these precious truths. Along the way, she takes care to paint vivid pictures of what believers should expect to find in the cross: a precious fountain, healing stream, the Bright and Morning Star, the Lamb of God, shadows to walk and wait beneath.

Crosby's own life represented a kind of gospel paradox. All of her hymns are filled with striking, emotive imagery—yet she wrote them all while blind. In her words, *"It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me."* What faith in suffering! Only one who understands the depth of redemption at the cross could say such things. Using her words in this great hymn, so too may we.

Scriptures to consider:

Deut. 12:8-14

Zechariah 13

Luke 23

1 Cor. 1:18-31

Titus 3:4-7

Hebrews 4

Hebrews 12:18-24

Revelation 22

THE FIELDS CHURCH — HYMN OF THE MONTH

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

1. Je - sus, keep me near the cross, There a pre - cious
2. Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, Love and mer - cy
3. Near the cross! O Lamb of God, Bring its scenes be -
4. Near the cross! I'll watch and wait, Hop - ing, trust - ing

4
foun - tain, Free to all, a heal - ing stream,
found me; There the Bright and Morn - ing Star
fore me; Help me walk from day to day
ev - er, Till I reach the gold - en strand,

7
Chorus
Flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
Shed His beams a - round me. In the cross,
With its shad - ow o'er me.
Just be - yond the riv - er.

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

10
in the cross Be my glo - ry ev - er, Till my ran - somed

14
soul shall find Rest be - yond the riv - er.