



What you are looking at is a labor of love mixed with self-doubts, loathing, and growth recorded over the span of more than a dozen years.

Each song traces some insight into an aspect of my life and personal experience. These experiences draw from reflections over the course of my lifetime. i've included the inspiration/ story behind the songs for those who like to read such. i personally love hearing about the "stories behind the music" so i thought i'd put that here for others who might appreciate it. i've also included pictures that are

meaningful to me—kind of like “thin slicing” my story.

Lastly, like any work of creative endeavor, there are a myriad of people who contribute to the work. From my aunts and uncles who seemed to play and sing so often that it just seemed to me like “of course everybody does that” to my mom who made me practice when i didn't want to. Finally, there is the patient companionship of my wife and inspiration of my children.



a young me with my Uncle Lloyd. My Uncle Lloyd played many instruments

and sang often—most of my mother's family did—so it just seemed natural to me and my brother growing up that we would too

LYRICS/stories

Wine from the Water came about while i was thinking over John 2. The miracle of Christ bringing happiness to this couple struck me as such a poetic sense of love. It also came at a time of significant self-doubt (like most artists i suppose) and i wondered if God could do that with me. Could He make something amazing out of my ordinary life that might bring happiness to others?

Wine from the Water

verse

everyday i wonder just who will be
standing in my place staring back at me
at the end of the day, when the sun goes down

i heard You walked on water through the wind and waves
in the dead of night taught the seas to behave
and i pray wondering,
“can You still bring wine from the water?”

chorus

there's this heart i see struggling to believe You can change me
earthen jar i find filled with longing to be loved by You,
—made new
can You still bring wine from the water?

verse

everyday i'm alive is struggle to breathe
things i tell myself, others telling me
just give up—you'll never be any good

*this is me in
Hawaii playing
for money
on a street
somewhere.
Honestly, i
didn't actually
make much
money, but
it was good
practice. i
loved that
Seagull 12
string guitar.*



but like a wedding guest at a feast of old
or an alchemist turning lead to gold
i keep asking myself,
“can You still bring wine from the water?”

chorus

*I AM the Way began as a week of prayer and consecration
for a school i work at. in 2007 i was looking for a theme for the
week and settled on the I AM statements in the gospel of John.
i wrote out a rough draft, my wife penned several fixes and
verse additions and i then edited it a little more until it seemed to
capture the essence of what we were after: that in the midst
of uncertainty you can always count on the I AM.*



special music at Ontario SDA church

I AM the Way

verse

Everyday i struggle with the questions;
i ask “Am i even goin’ in the right direction?”
Then i hear Him speak to me and in the silence He says

chorus

I AM the Way. I AM the Truth. and I AM the Life!

verse

Is there anything that i can know for certain?
or is it only ad-lib through the final curtain?
Then He reminds me of His Word and in the silence says

chorus

bridge

Asking, seeking, waiting, hoping,
listening, trusting Him to lead me!

verse

Everyday i wonder ‘bout my own existence”
i ask “how can i be sure that i will go the distance?
Then i take to heart these promises from Jesus. He says:

ending

I AM the Way, I AM the Truth, and I AM the Life . . .
I AM the Life!

*i imagine that most songs have an element of autobiography
in them. Never Leave came after a series of events that left
me wondering what in the world i thought i was doing wrong
in my life. During 2013 God seemed so distant. i felt that i had
really been trying to do everything right and yet it seemed
like everything was going downhill in a big way. This led me
through some familiar stories in the Bible again (elijah + peter).
i wondered what God would say to them. Then i realized that
He had! So the chorus' echoes God's words to each of them and
hopefully you can hear that message as well.*

Never Leave

verse

The crowds are gone the rain has come
i thought that we had won
now i'm running for my life—am i the only one?

Tired and beat and all alone
i beg the Lord to die
through the stillness He still speaks to me
reminds me i'm His child

chorus

There is something on My heart
i think you need to understand
together till the end of time
don't you know that you are Mine

Heaven and earth may pass away
but My promise still remains
I'm not leaving here today
no matter how far you run away
I'll be here

verse

the night is gone and day has come
and yet i feel afraid
ashamed of what i'd done—mistakes that i had made

my boastful words had proved untrue
i cursed His very name
would He ever take me back,
would He love me just the same?

chorus

bridge

Father God, I just need to know . . . I just need to hear . . .
are we . . . are we ok?

chorus

~~~~~  
Around the turn of the millenia there was just a lot of angst  
in the world, which i guess i absorbed. The first verse of *my  
Treasure* really echoes how i was feeling amidst the uncertainty  
of the future and raising my children in a world that i had  
never known. This is really a song asking God for His personal

touch in my life, to know  
that He was and would  
always be there.

## my Treasure

verse

It's been said that where  
your treasure is  
your heart will follow after  
my heart must be  
a million miles away  
'Cause down here, Lord,  
i've seen too much pain  
and not enough of laughter  
i yearn for you  
and a quiet place to stay

chorus

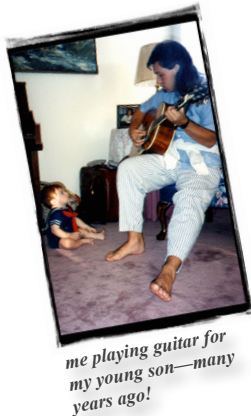
Jesus, be my 'Treasure i'm seeking here below  
give me a reason for life.  
Help me see You're with me,  
somehow let me know,  
that You'll still be my Treasure when i die

verse

If now your life here seems undone  
full of emptiness, frustration—  
a Lover's joy is wrapped and waits for you.

His name is Love: Emmanuel,  
Desire of all the Nations, Abundant Grace.  
His riches always new.

chorus



~~~~~  
Bible study and bike riding are really big revelatory
experiences for me. When i'm reading and thoughts come it
can be overwhelming. Then i go for a ride. That helps me
clarify and process what i've read. That's where this song
came from. i thought about the woman at the well—that's all
we know her by—in John 4 and what she must have struggled
with, what she was really seeking, and what gifts God brought
to her specifically that day. God saw her and got up early in
the morning to meet with her and reassure her He understood.
That's the story in *Grace Rains Down*.

Grace Rains Down

verse

The jar again is empty
—it seems it's always dry
have to face the world again
—can't let them see me cry

grab the pot and don't look back
—and hurry on my way
only time that's safe for me
is in the middle of the day

chorus

then i felt Your grace fall down
and like a blanket cover me
i'm wrapped up in the colors of Your love

help me help the world to see
there's more than we've dream'd of
there's more than enough grace to go around

*my daughter
took this
picture on a
family picnic
near a favorite
spot of ours
near Mill
Creek.*



verse

in silence i stare ahead
—in silence i'd hoped we'd stay
silence has become home to me
—there's nothing left to say

but when He spoke of love to me
He said i was His own
Words i'd always longed to hear
—words i'd never known

chorus

bridge

But sometimes at night when i am most alone
my fears, failures, faults come to me . . .
Just when i am faced with just who i used to be
i lift my voice and You rescue me

chorus

tag

His grace is always there rainin' down

~~~~~  
*What a Friend* came about as i was waiting to speak to a  
group of teenagers for a week of prayer. i got to the venue

early and as i was going over the message in my head i began to absent-mindedly play my guitar. Sort of a comfort mechanism. The chord pattern and unique rthym just happened. i found myself humming along and then realized that the syllabication pattern fit perfectly with this old hymn. Violat! Guest vocalist is a former student of mine.

## What a Friend (we have in Jesus)

traditional lyrics

Amazing Grace in a Minor Key is actually the oldest idea for a song i've ever had. This goes back to college days and performing at a local coffee shop. The place wasn't a sacred venue and i decided to do this blend of an old folk tune with the words to Amazing Grace. i arranged the pick pattern and thought it was a clever message to have AG done to the tune of HRS. i've done this song for more than 30 years now and i still love how the song changes from minor to major at the end symbolizing what God can do in our lives when we let Him.

## Amazing Grace in a Minor Key

traditional lyrics

This song came as a result of a very difficult funeral. A colleague and good friend passed suddenly. It was a shock to the local community and more than 2000 people came to pay their

*my wife and  
i at the place  
we first fell for  
each other—  
Charles Schulz  
skating rink*



respect. It was overwhelming to see what an impact he had. i turned to music to help me process and the homesickness for Heaven i felt comes out in the blues/pathos of the song. i am looking forward to meeting again *In that City*.

## In that City

When the day dawns in that city four square  
and all my sorrow will fade away—  
when at last i stand on that glassy shore  
all my troubles will be no more

When the King flings open wide those city gates of pearl  
and the redeemed walk on gold inside—  
i'll see Jesus face to face and know the peace of grace  
all my troubles will be no more

(instrumental)

i am waiting for that day when my Jesus brings me home  
i am waiting for the Son to finally rise  
i am waiting for the time to never say goodbye  
All my troubles will be no more

-6-

This song has a somewhat random origin! i was part of a group of faculty participating in a talent show and i wasn't sure what to do. i got the idea of using my computer to demonstrate how i lay down music track by track in layers. i thought about it and realized that playing the melody line first would kill all suspense. So, instead, i layed down all the background layers first. After each time i layed down a track i asked the audience if they knew what it was. Not until that last track (with the melody) did they guess! i was surprised. When i was finished i went to erase it but they shouted "don't! keep it!" i was really surprised. i went home, cleaned it up and . . . here it is.

## Joshua F't the Battle

(instrumental)

## Quiet Place

(instrumental)

*Earth and Sky* is a song about devotion to one's partner in life. My wife is patient and kind-i know because she still lives with me (30+ years!). We married young and made plenty of mistakes. We grew up together and though we have different venues, we understand each other's need for ministry. At times in our marriage i've poured too much out of the family into things + people outside of marriage. Yet she is still here. This song is

-7-



*my wife and i on a carnival ride in St. Joseph's,  
Michigan*

a response to that graciousness.

## Earth and Sky

verse

i'm sorry for all the times i lied  
—sorry for all the times you cried,  
and all the times i wasn't there

i'm sorry for every time i failed you  
and all the pain i put you through  
the little reasons i didn't care

chorus

i don't know how you still love me  
i don't know why you're still here  
i only know that if you'll have me today  
i promise i am here to stay  
till earth and sky pass away

verse

i just want you now to know  
—all the love i didn't show,  
was all about me and not about you

and if i could do it all again  
i'd love to promise i wouldn't give in  
i wanna be faithful to you

bridge

Until i draw my final breath  
i want the world to know i said

chorus

*This song—i Will Shout, i Will Sing—has a special place in my heart with its origin at the heart of a spiritual rebirth. Doing ministry can become just that: doing. But we aren't called to be human doings, we're called to be human beings. During one those dry times of spiritual depletion i discovered anew the stories of Jesus' constant passion to set people free: free from pain, bondage, guilt, and judgment. The miracle stories in each verse tell—i hope—the overwhelming sense of jubilation each person must have felt when Jesus spoke peace + healing into their lives. Then they were free to shout and sing. When Jesus does that for you, you can't help but celebrate aloud.*



## *i Will Shout, i Will Sing*

verse

born blind, deaf and dumb  
vacant eyes and frozen tongue  
i couldn't even speak my name

when others saw a beggar in need  
He saw the heart of me  
and i thrilled to hear Him say

chorus

you can speak, you can sing  
you can bring an offering  
a sacrifice of praise to His name

so i will tell, i will show  
i'll let all creation know  
He is the King of Kings to me

verse

part demonic uprising  
chains of my own devising  
i was living among the dead

journey on an angry sea  
He came there for me  
and i trembled when He said

chorus

you are free, free to sing  
free to bring an offering  
a sacrifice of praise to His name

so i will tell, i will show  
i'll let all creation know  
He is the King of Kings to me

verse

clad in the garments of shame  
a never ending cycle of pain  
i could only hang my head

waiting for the crushing stones  
but i was never really alone  
and i melted when He said—"you are free!"

chorus

free to shout, free to sing  
free to bring an offering  
a sacrifice of praise to His name

i will tell, i will show  
i'll let all creation know  
He is the King of Kings to me

chorus

free to shout, free to sing  
free to bring an offering  
free to raise up hands to our King

i will laugh, i will dance  
i will share the great romance  
the King of Glory has for you and me

chorus

i will shout, i will sing  
i will bring an offering  
a sacrifice of praise to His name

i will tell, i will show  
i'll let all creation know  
He is the King of Kings to me

tag

He is the King of Kings to me  
He is the King of Kings to me

*Praise the Name came as i was playing with a certain chord progression on the guitar. The music and lyrics just seemed to flow out. Probably one of the quickest songs i've written. Simple and focused on praising God for Who He is.*

## *Praise the Name*

verse

o praise the Name—  
the Name above all names  
the Name that breaks our chains  
and sets us free

o praise the One—  
the One who sent His Son  
and for us victory won  
dying on that tree

chorus

He walks among the lowly  
and He strides among the stars  
and He came to give back life to the dead

He heals the broken hearted  
and He wipes away our scars  
and for us He was broken bruised and bled



*one of my favorite pictures of my wife and i—celebrating the 50th anniversary of my wife's parents*



musical interlude

repeat all

*Tribute to Love* came as i was thinking about the strange dichotomy of being both a parent and a child. So often, we're caught between the two realities at the same time and yet the common denominator is memories of love: love we give and love we've received. Love is that feeling we all desire to have and hold on to. Love is the quest and fulfillment for human experience.

## *Tribute to Love*

verse

First one to rise and last one to bed  
a cool hand on a fevered head  
these are the treasured memories i recall

Making my lunch and a ride after school  
teaching me to live the golden rule  
these are the treasured memories i recall  
These are the treasured memories i recall

verse

Laughter in the kitchen  
a winter's warming tea  
these are the treasured moments to me

Games we played and books we read  
night monsters made to flee  
these are the treasured moments to me  
These are the treasured moments to me



*my wife and  
i with our  
daughter on  
a bike ride  
in Napa Valley. Her first year of college at the time*

chorus

We search the whole earth over  
just to see what love really is  
but all the verse that's ere been writ  
all boils down to this:

verse

A smile when you're lonely,  
shelter when you're afraid,  
a place that's safe to cry out loud

Someone to walk beside you,  
someone to hold your hand,  
someone whose heart is home in a crowd  
Someone whose heart is home in a crowd

chorus

We search the whole earth over  
just to see what love really is  
but every heart that's loved before  
knows the truth is this:

repeat last verse

*Wistful Childhood* is a song of reflection. Those times when you begin to cast back in your mind about the days of childhood and all that you miss. Also about the mistakes of parenting you wish you could take back. This song lives in the tension between your idyllic memory of the past and painful memories you'd like to forget. This tension brings a yearning for a future when all will be made right.

## *Wistful Childhood*

verse

i remember a little boy  
and Smokey the Bear in corduroy  
the best of friends until the sun went down



*holding my son  
Jonathon while  
we were visiting  
grandparents*

*my dad  
holding  
me shortly  
after i was  
born. Both  
of my  
parents  
were  
in the  
hospital!  
Dad from  
a gunshot  
wound,  
my mother  
giving  
birth to  
me!*



Sunny days and cloudy friends  
'n pockets full of odds-n-ends  
adventures and heroics of renown

Time flowed like a river then  
new friends just around each bend  
everything is haloed in times mist

But innocence was stolen by  
a heartless thief— you must not cry  
now questions and a trust try to coexist  
Will my life always be like this?

verse

i think upon my only son  
i reflect upon what i have done  
scars he'll carry just because of me

My father too had tried his best  
but veterans rarely learn to live undressed  
he was caught in the struggle to be free

Is there hope beyond this now?  
Can God bring healing here somehow?  
Can we sing beyond this sad refrain?

Heaven's where i long to be  
reunions waiting there for me  
where father, son, and i can finally meet  
The three of us will finally get to see  
all that God originally meant to be

tag verse 1a

Now and then i get asked to speak for graduation events.  
This particular class of seniors was a unique bunch and i couldn't  
just do a "regular" talk for them. In the months leading up to  
the June celebration, i reflected on them going into the world.  
What could i say to them? What should i say to them? One  
night i had a dream. Seriously. It sounds so "mystical" but it is  
true. The idea for this song came from that dream. So when  
graduation came i sang for them *Live so Heaven's crowded*.

## Live (so Heaven's crowded)

verse

Just the other day i dreamed of waking up in heaven  
of gates of pearl and sidewalks made of gold  
i wandered empty streets and silence filled the air around me  
that's when i knew this story must be told

As i walked alone i came upon a door twas open  
i peered inside as brilliance filled the sky  
Jesus wept alone and when i asked Him about His crying  
He slowly turned and looked into my eyes

chorus

Heaven's more than lots of fancy mansions  
and heaven's more than stuff like crowns  
and pavement made of gold  
heaven's 'bout the joy of friends and spending time with Jesus  
an eternity of never growing old

verse

As we walked along the banks and sat beside the river  
i listened to a chorus fill the air  
i thought the angels singing was more lovely than a sunrise  
but Jesus thought of everyone not there



*early family  
photo of a  
hike in the  
mountains.  
my wife and i  
took our kids  
to a favorite  
location of  
ours in the*

*San Gabriel  
mountains.*

*To the right  
is a more  
recent look  
at us!*



Jesus turned to me and then He spoke into the silence  
there's something that i really need from you  
i need you now to go and live—live so Heaven's crowded  
for in my Father's house are many rooms

chorus

ending

Heaven's more than lots of fancy mansions  
and heaven's more than stuff like crowns  
and pavement made of gold  
Heaven's 'bout living now so heaven will be crowded  
and our God who's love is worth more than the gold  
that's the greatest story ever to be told

*Welcome Home (re-union) has got to be one of my favorite  
mental image songs. Sometimes the predilection to wander in the  
wonder of the future is overwhelming and i can't seem to stay  
in the moment. i look forward to Heaven and all that that means  
for me: a RE-UNION with myself, others, and to finally meet Jesus.  
Sigh. Even so, come quickly Lord.*



*my wife in a  
reunion with  
our son on  
his landing  
safely from  
flying across  
America.*

## Welcome Home (re-union)

verse

i stand before the gates and i, i...  
i hesitate to go inside wondering if it's all a dream

Angel voices becken me "simply, come inside and see  
the face of love—the King of Kings!"

chorus

Welcome home to you My children  
Welcome home to you My very precious child  
I'm so glad you're home and finally here to stay  
I've waited long enough to say—welcome home!

verse

A thousand years have passed since they saw each other last  
but they're newlyweds again

A son who was lost in war now alive forevermore  
and it's all because of Him!

chorus

verse

As far as the eye can see exuberance in unity  
lost relationships restored

Shouts of joy and quiet praise form an anthem to Him who raised  
the source of love we call our Lord

bridge

Even tear tracks time could not erase  
are wiped away in the arms of His embrace

chorus/tag



*from clapping time in a crib (yes  
that's me) to playing various venues.  
this is a musical sample of my life—a  
**Personal Portrait.***

