

JUST AS I AM: BROKEN FOR CHRIST BY LAURA SHAW

"My Heavenly Father knows, and He alone, what it is, day after day, and hour after hour, to fight against bodily feelings of almost overpowering weakness and languor and exhaustion, to resolve, as He enables me to do, not to yield to the slothfulness, the depression, the irritability, such as a body causes me to long to indulge, but to rise every morning determined on taking this for my motto, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.'"

Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)

What a quote! Who would've ever thought that such words would come from an invalid-- someone who seemed to have every right to complain, every excuse to turn away from the living God because of her worthless situation...but instead, took up her cross to follow the only One who could save her. As a result, one of the most famous hymns of all time came from her hand, as well as hundreds of others. I remember "enduring" this invitation in the pew each Sunday at noon while my stomach growled as if I had never eaten a day in my life. I realized today as I listened to the song again and let the words sink in how badly I missed the message.

*"Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*"Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*"Just as I am, though tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*"Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*"Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*"Just as I am, Thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down;
Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*"Just as I am, of that free love the breadth, length, depth, and height to
prove,*

Here for a season, then above, O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871

Music: William B. Bradbury, 1816-1868

Wow! This is not the kind of message to roll your eyes over in the pew as you steal glances at your watch, is it? Read these powerful, truth-filled lyrics again and ask the Spirit to help you absorb them! What really amazes me is that Charlotte Elliott had a taste of being physically whole before she became an invalid around the age of 30. How difficult that would be! Yet, it wasn't until after her plight, that she came to know Christ. Believe it or not, there's a parallel for us today that stems from her experience. Most of us reading this are believers. We acknowledged our need for Him at the point of salvation....now that He lives inside of us, do we let Him fully act on our behalf?

We may or may not be poor, wretched or blind physically, my friends, but He longs for us to come to Him completely bankrupt and utterly in need of Him spiritually no matter what. Psalm 51:17 says, *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart."* Read that again....why do you think brokenness is called a sacrifice?

To the God who is able to give us *sight* in our dark world, *healing* for our depraved minds, *welcome arms* when we turn our backs on Him, *pardon and cleansing* for our sinful choices, and *relief* for our stress, tension and worry—let's come to Him today. For the **breadth**, length, **depth** and **height** of His love which has broken every barrier down—even when we're tossed about, even when we're *fearful and fighting*, even when our *conflicts are many and we choose to doubt*—let's come simply because we believe. And there before Him, lowly and contrite, as we ask the Spirit to take us there, we'll find all we need in the arms of our Lamb of God--here on earth for a season, and then above. Thanks be to God for the life of Charlotte Elliott, who showed us that the way to being whole in our everyday walk with Christ is to come before Him broken: recognizing that it is in Him that all fullness dwells. Let's make our sacrifice today!