



**“TAKE MY HAND, PRECIOUS
LORD!”**

Introduction:

A. A Well-Known And Beloved Hymn:

(Slide #2) Verse 1:

“When my way groweth drear, precious Lord linger near,
When my life is almost gone;
Hear my cry, hear my call,
Hold my hand lest I fall;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

Refrain:

Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand.
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Thru the storm, thru the night,
Lead me on to the light;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

(Slide #3) Verse 2:

When the shadows appear, and the night draweth near,
And the day is past and gone;
At the river I stand,
Guide my feet, hold my hand;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

Refrain:

Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand.
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Thru the storm, thru the night,
Lead me on to the light;

Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.”

Words and Music by Thomas A. Dorsey, 1938
Copyright 1938 by Hill & Range Songs, Inc.

B. Many Christians Can Be Greatly Encouraged By The Hymn’s Message.

I. (Slide #4) History Of The Song “Take My Hand, Precious Lord!”

- A. The Reason Hymns Are Written Varies -- Some Are Written After Reading A Passage Of Scripture; Some Are Written At Times Of Great Joy Or Victory; Some Are Written To Praise The Godhead; Others Are Written Contemplating Our Hope Of Heaven; Many Are Written In The Throes Of Anguish And Despair!

- B. “Take My Hand, Precious Lord!” Was Written After The Death Of Thomas Dorsey’s Wife, Nettie, And His Infant Son During Childbirth In 1932.
 - 1. Dorsey was born in Georgia in 1899 to a Baptist preacher; his mother was a piano teacher.
 - 2. Dorsey was born in Villa Rica, Georgia, about 40 miles from Atlanta, to a Baptist preacher; his mother was a piano teacher.
 - 3. At age 5 his family moved to Atlanta.
 - 4. When he was 16, he moved to Chicago and studied at the Chicago College of Composition and Arranging. He became a Jazz musician.
 - 5. He suffered a severe illness when he was 27 years old; this pushed him to his roots in religion; he was a choir director at the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago for over 40 years.
 - 6. He wrote hundreds of jazz songs and over 200 hymns; he became known as “The Father Of Black Gospel Music.”
 - 7. The background of “Take My Hand, Precious Lord”:
 - a. When he was 32 years old, he had an appointment to sing in a revival in St. Louis; his wife was in her ninth month of pregnancy; he did not want to go but feeling obligated, he went; he was a soloist on a hot, hot summer August day; as he finished his performance, a messenger boy ran up with a Western Union Telegram; it said, “Your Wife Just Died!” He made a phone call and verified the awful message of the telegram.

- b. When he got back to Chicago, he learned that his wife had given birth to a baby boy. Imagine the sway of emotions -- death of his wife; then learning that she had given birth to a son!
 - c. That night his baby son died. He buried his wife and son in the same casket.
 - d. In his own words, Dorsey said, "Then I fell apart. For days I closeted myself. I felt that God had done me an injustice. I didn't want to serve Him any more or write gospel songs. I just wanted to go back to that jazz world I once knew so well."
 - e. On the following Saturday evening, a friend, Professor Frye, took Dorsey to Malone's Poro College, a neighborhood music school. He sat down at a piano as the late evening sun crept through the curtained windows.
 - f. He began to play a melody that he had not played before and began to say, "Blessed Lord, Blessed Lord." His friend suggested that he make that phrase "Precious Lord."
8. The impactful message of the hymn:
- a. It captures the AGONY of one overcome with grief!
 - b. Verse 1:
 - 1. Verse 1 depicts life as a STORMY SEA!
 - 2. "Precious Lord" suggests that God is good and precious even in the midst of mankind's losses and grief! He is a suffering soul reaching out to God.
 - 3. "I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm worn." He feels that he is at "the end of his rope!"
 - 4. Perhaps he remembered Mt. 8:23-27, the narrative where Christ stills the storm, when he penned, "Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light."
 - c. Verse 2:
 - 1. This verse pictures man on a long, difficult journey.
 - 2. His "way grows drear!"
 - d. Verse 3:
 - 1. This stanza looks to a river of hope.
 - 2. He cries out for the Lord to take his hand.
 - e. The chorus says "At the river I stand; take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home."
 - 1. The picture is of Jesus, the Good Shepherd in the Gospel of John, leading the burdened soul home.
 - 2. The picture is of one standing at the Jordan River casting his eyes to the Jordan River.
9. He gave the song to Frye who introduced it the following Sunday at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. This was where Martin Luther King, Sr. was the preacher.
10. Dorsey was the first African American elected to the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Gospel Music Association's Living Hall of Fame.

11. He died in 1993.
12. Sources:
 - a. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-precious-lord-take-my-hand>
 - b. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_A._Dorsey
 - c. *Stories Behind Popular Songs And Hymns*, author Lindsay Terry, Baker Book House, 1990, pp. 47,48.

II. (Slide #5) The Forlorn Desperately Need To Lean Upon The Lord!

- A. Despondency Can Be SO Powerful!
 1. David's cry as he is mistreated: Ps. 31:22 "For I said in my haste, 'I am cut off from before Your eyes'; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You."
 2. Asaph's cry: Ps. 77:7-9 "Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? ⁸Has His mercy ceased forever? Has *His* promise failed forevermore? ⁹Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah"
- B. They May Not Feel Like Putting One Foot In Front Of Another.
- C. They May Feel SO Alone, Even Lost!
- D. When The Forlorn Only Focus Upon Themselves And Their Woes, They May Give Up Or Turn From God!
- E. How Difficult Can Life Become?
 1. When death takes your beloved mate or child or as in Dorsey's case, both, one may feel that he cannot keep going!
 2. Hear the agony:
 - a. "my way groweth drear"
 - b. "my life is almost gone"
 - c. "I cry; I call!"
 - d. "Hold my hand lest I fall!"
 - e. "I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;"
 - f. "When the shadows appear, and the night draweth near,"
 - g. "And the day is past and gone;"
 - h. "At the river I stand,"

F. The Plea:

1. “Lord, guide my feet; hand my hand!” Hold my hand lest I fall!

2. Refrain:

“Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand.”
Thru the storm, thru the night,
Lead me on to the light;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

III. (Slide #6) “Take My Hand!”

A. The “Hand Of The Lord” Is A Tremendous Biblical Topic!

B. “The Hand Of The Lord” Can Refer To Punishment:

1. Sometimes the “hand of the Lord” describes God’s hand of judgment against sin coming to punish the wicked!

a. Ex. 7:5 “And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, **when I stretch out My hand on Egypt** and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”

b. Ju. 2:15,16 “Wherever they went out, the **hand of the LORD was against them for calamity**, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. ¹⁶Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.”

c. I Sa. 5:6 “But the hand of **the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod**, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, *both* Ashdod and its territory.”

d. I Sa. 7:13 “So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And **the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.**”

e. Unfaithful Judah was going to be punished by God! “I will stretch out my hand against you!” You KNOW that punishment is coming to the wicked! Jer. 51:25

2. Sometimes that judgment is described as “enemies being handed into the hands of Israel.” Or Israel being delivered from the hands of enemies.”

a. Ju. 6:2 “And the LORD said to Joshua: ‘See! **I have given Jericho into your hand**, its king, *and* the mighty men of valor.’”

b. Ju. 7:7 “Then the LORD said to Gideon, ‘By the three hundred men who lapped **I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand.** Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place.’”

c. Ju. 7:15 “And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of

Israel, and said, ‘Arise, for **the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.**’”

- d. I Sa. 23:4 “Then David inquired of the LORD once again. And the LORD answered him and said, ‘Arise, go down to Keilah. For **I will deliver the Philistines into your hand.**’”
 - e. The Lord delivered the Philistines into Jonathan’s hand. I Sa. 14:10
 - f. II Sa. 3:18 “Now then, do *it!* For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, ‘By the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.’”
 - g. God delivered enemies into the hands of His people. II Sa. 5:19 “So David inquired of the LORD, saying, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?’ And the LORD said to David, ‘Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand.’”
3. Sometimes that judgment is described as Israel being delivered into the hand of their enemies.
 - a. Ju. 13:1 “Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and **the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.**”
 - b. I Sa. 28:19 “Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with me. **The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.**”
 - c. II Ki. 13:5 During the days of Jehu’s son, Jehoahaz, the LORD delivered them from the hand of the Syrians.
 4. When David was punished for his disobedience, he fell upon the mercy of God and asked God to choose his punishment: I Chr. 21:13 “And David said to Gad, ‘I am in great distress. **Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD,** for His mercies *are* very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.’” After David numbered the people and the prophet Gad gave 3 judgments; David said, “Let me fall into the hand of the LORD!” Let God determine my punishment!

C. “The Hand Of The Lord” Often Refers To God’s Blessings To His People!

1. He delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage:
 - a. Ex. 13:9 “It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’S law may be in your mouth; for **with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.**”
 - b. Ex. 18:9,10 “Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰And Jethro said, ‘**Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.**’”

- c. Dt. 5:15 “And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and **the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm**; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”
 - d. Dt. 6:21 “then you shall say to your son: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and **the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand**;’”
 - 2. David had numerous situations where the Lord blessed him!
 - a. I Sa. 17:37 “Moreover David said, ‘**The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.**’ And Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the LORD be with you!’”
 - b. II Sa. 22:1 “Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when **the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.**”
 - 3. God blessed Elijah as he was opposed by Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah I Ki. 18:46 “**Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah**; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.”
 - 4. God blessed Ezra in his leadership of people to return from Babylon to Israel. Ez. 7:28 “and has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king’s mighty princes. So I was encouraged, as the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me.”
 - 5. In Ezekiel, God gave him prophesies; it is said that “**the hand of the Lord was upon him.**” Ezek. 1:3; 3:14,22 et.al.
 - 6. Zacharias who had been deaf for nine months, from the time Lk. 1:66 “And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, “What kind of child will this be?” And **the hand of the Lord** was with him.”
 - 7. Ac. 11:21 “And **the hand of the Lord** was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”
 - a. Some brethren from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch and taught the Gospel.
 - b. God blessed their efforts!
- D. With A Mighty Hand, God Can Deliver You From ANY MAN’S Hand!
- E. With A Mighty Hand, God Can Deliver You Through The Woes Of Any Burden That Makes You Forlorn!

IV. (Slide #7) “Precious Lord!”

- A. Those Who Turn TO God In The Midst Of Fear And Turmoil Realize HOW PRECIOUS The Lord Really Is!

- B. “Precious” -- Loved; Valued, Treasured, Cherished!
 - 1. Ps. 36:7 “**How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!** Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.”

 - 2. I Pet. 1:18 “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but **with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

 - 3. I Pet. 2:6,7 “Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘*Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.*’ ⁷Therefore, **to you who believe, He is precious**; but to those who are disobedient, ‘*The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,*’”

V. (Slide #8) The Lord Will NEVER Leave Us Comfortless; He Will NEVER Forsake Us.

- A. Dt. 31:8 “And the LORD, He *is* the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”

- B. Josh. 1:5 “No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.”

- C. I Pet. 5:6,7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

VI. (Slide #9) The Lord Is Able To Deliver Thee!

- A. He Will Bring You Through The Fears And Heartaches!

- B. Daniel's Friends, In The Throes Of Imminent Death, Had Complete Trust In God! Dan. 3:17 "If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king."

- C. He Can Deliver You FROM Trouble; He Can Deliver You If Trouble Destroys You!

- D. Trust Him With All Your Heart!

(Slide #10) Conclusion

- A. Thank God That He Is Our Ever-Present Love, Care, And Support!

- B. May We Amidst Heartrending Troubles And Burdensome Grief Cry, "Take My Hand Precious Lord!"