



Lord, for the Years

The title of this hymn, taken from its first line, is intriguing to an older person, such as the writer of this essay. But the hymn quickly blossoms out beyond that opening thought, encompassing all of life in a wonderful prayer of thanksgiving.

There is virtually no aspect of our earthly or Kingdom citizenship that is not covered by this survey of all that we have to be thankful for. Some of the things listed might seem to us to be too small or too mundane to mention to God. For some of the items listed, we might have to be reminded that they, too, are gifts from God, so basic or pervasive that we have taken them for granted.

One of the more interesting facets of this hymn is its final stanza which is a prayer for our-selves. It may, at first, seem selfish or at least self-centered to pray such a prayer. But, who knows better how to pray for us than we, ourselves? Our prayers for ourselves are the beginning of real prayer for the world. With the initial focus of our prayer being on us, we acknowledge our part and participation in the project of sharing Christ with the entire world.

Knowing that we have a place in God's project of redeeming the world should bring us to our knees in humble prayers of thanksgiving. We should, in that same vein, be thankful that we do not have to launch out into that world and that project on our own. The Holy Spirit is with us, the Church is with us. Thanks be to God.

Take this prayer hymn to heart and see how it affects how you view the world, how you view your life, and how you view your resources. All that we have and are become bound up in thankfulness and have a new and enriched place and purpose. Who we are and what we do matters whether on a local or a global scale. Perhaps the two arenas are one and the same.

Terry W. York
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