

Sermon followed by Service

January 16, 2022

Ephesians 3:14-21

Do you have time to run out of gas? I have a bad habit of letting my gas tank get too empty for my wife. And when I try to excuse myself: “But I didn’t have time,” what’s the answer back? “Do you have time to run out of gas.” Five minutes at the gas station or who knows how long stuck at the side of the road. If we don’t have time to run out of gas, we better find time to gas up.

What is true with our cars is true for our brains and bodies as well. Skip a meal, wait too long to eat, and what can happen? Our minds turn to mush and everything takes longer. Or we get impatient and hangry - if we don’t have food to bite, we bite at each other. We may have thought we didn’t have time to eat, but what do we find? Fixing our mind-mush mistakes and healing the hearts we hurt takes even longer.

What is true for cars and for brains and bodies is also true for our hearts and souls. So, as we begin this new year, how’s your heart-tank, your heart and soul-tank? Filled-up full for all you have ahead of you? Or are you feeling a bit empty, feeling the gas-gauge go down? Our lesson today helps us fill up and fuel up.

Our lesson is a prayer ... or about a prayer, Paul’s prayer for his people.

.....

What do you want people to pray for you? Better health, better job, that your car make it through COVID, that you have enough money to get ahead or keep ahead of the bills? What do you want people to pray for you? That God changes the world, that God makes the world right for you and yours? When Paul prayed for his people, that’s not what he prayed for, at least not here. Paul wasn’t praying that God change the world around us and make the world right for us. No, Paul prayed that God change us, that God change us inside, to make us strong and powered for life, no matter what the world is doing around us.

How does that sound? Which would you rather have? Your world made right for you? Or your insides made strong for you? My first thought is to pray that God fix my world for me: “God make my life better, easier, happier; God,

make life go good for me!” But what happens if my insides are hollow and empty? A better life on the outside will be just as hollow and empty, never enough. What happens if my insides are all anxious and worried, stressed and on edge? If I’m set on all that’s wrong about me and around me, I probably won’t see how good God is blessing me, will I? And if my insides are weak and worn inside, it won’t matter how good God blesses around me, I’ll be too weak and worn to appreciate God’s blessing.

So Paul didn’t just pray that God give us better outsides, or that God fill our lives with good, but Paul prayed that God fill us with God. Why God and not just good? Because God created us to be with him and like him, and filled with him. So what happens when we’re not filled with him? There is an emptiness, a darkness, a deadness, a hole in us that sucks the life and the love and the hope right out of us. And trying to fill that hole, trying to make ourselves feel full and alive with the stuff of this world, with chocolates and beers, with work and busy-ness, with fun and games - no matter how good those things can be with God, without God they will always leave us running on empty.

So what did Paul pray? **“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power in your inner being.”** Paul’s not asking for dollars from an empty wallet, food from an empty pantry, gas from an empty tank, power from a dead battery, or love from a cold, empty heart. God has all the riches of heaven and earth ... and for his children God has the heart to give his children whatever we need. So Paul doesn’t just pray for a better life on the outside, Paul prays for our insides. He prays for power, power to brace you, support you, reinforce you. Power to invigorate you, charge you, to make you strong on the inside.

Please don’t get the wrong idea about that strength and power. When we think of strong, we often think independent, strong-willed, standing on our own. It’s easy to think that strong people make things right, they make life right by what they say and do. That’s not God’s way to strength. And that’s not God’s way to make life right. God’s strength comes through connection; “worse,” God’s way to strength is through dependance. We don’t like that word “dependance” or the feeling of dependance, do we? Dependance can feel weak; dependance can feel out of control. With all that’s going on around us, we want to feel strong and in control, don’t we? Not dependance. But what is faith? Dependance. Dependance on God’s plan and promises; dependance on God’s strength; dependance on God’s way. That dependance, instead of leaving us weak and out of control, that

dependance is what makes us strong with the strength of God himself, because through dependance on Jesus, through faith in Jesus, we have Jesus - God himself! - living in us!

Depending on Christ, we get to be strong inside. Does COVID have you feeling kaput or crazed? Do worries at work have you on edge? Are you feeling sapped by the stress of life? Think of God's power in Jesus - you saw just a bit of it as he changed the water into wine. Baptized into Christ, you get to face the world knowing you have Jesus living in you; you get to face the world with God's promise to make all things work for your good. How about that for strength?! Do failure and guilt ever eat away at you? Think of God's love in Jesus - crossed by Christ, your guilt is paid for; you don't have to pay; you don't have to beat yourself up - you get to live forgiven because you are forgiven! How about that for strength?! Do the demands of life drain you? Covered by Christ, all the biggest demands are already taken care of - you're already right by God. You get to face the world approved by God; how about that for strength?! Does the thought of death and dealing with death get you down? Even in the valley of the shadow of death we get to be strong; we have the promise of Jesus - "because I live, you also will live." No matter what is sapping you, draining you, getting you down, with Christ, we get to be strong inside.

Sometimes when we're trying to be strong with Jesus, we don't know how to do the strong thing. We want to be strong and steady, but instead just show ourselves to be stubborn and stuck on self. Sometimes, we want to be strong and encouraging, but when things aren't going our way, we get impatient and pushy. We want to be strong for what's right, but sometimes we get mixed up on God's way and my way, God's right and my right. Sometimes instead of being strong with Jesus, what comes out of us is the weakness of the world.

And so Paul prays. And we pray for ourselves and for each other - not just that we be strong, but that we be strong with Jesus as people rooted and established in love. Rooted and established in love we don't find our strength in bullish or biting words. Rooted and established in love we don't find our strength in muscle or mass. Rooted and established in love we don't find our strength by putting other people down and in their place. No, rooted and established in love, we find our strength in the love of Jesus.

Strength to forgive with the heart of our Father.

Strength to sacrifice (sacrifice self) with the heart of Jesus.

Strength to be gentle, strength to be patient with the fruit of the Spirit.

Strength to persevere in the face of trouble.
Strength to hope and cheer in the face of death.
Strength to live a life of victorious love, because we are filled to the full with
God.

Where do we get that kind of power and strength? Through dependance and faith. **“Faith [that] comes from hearing the message ... the message [that] is heard through the word of Christ.”** Do you find your soul-tank running empty? Do you hear yourself resorting to the strength of the world? Before your tank runs empty, before you resort to the ways of the world, let’s go to God’s power-source, the Gospel, to be filled to the full with God. Then, no matter what the world throws at you, no matter how the world reacts to you, you will be tapped into the power of God and his love, with God himself filling you and powering you.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
A Family Connecting in Christ



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January 15 & 16, 2022

The Service

OPENING HYMN

"Arise and Shine in Splendor"

Hymn 375

Arise and shine in splendor; Let night to day surrender.
Your light is drawing near. Above, the day is beaming,
In matchless beauty gleaming; The glory of the Lord is here.

See earth in darkness lying, The heathen nations dying
In hopeless gloom and night. To you the Lord of heaven -
Your life, your hope - has given Great glory, honor, and delight.

Lift up your eyes in wonder - See, nations gather yonder
From sin to be set free. The world has heard your story;
Her sons come to your glory, Her daughters haste your light to see.

Your heart will leap for gladness When from the realms of sadness
They come from near and far. Your eyes will wake from slumber
As people without number Rejoice to see the Morning Star.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

CONFESSION

If we claim to be without sin,
we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

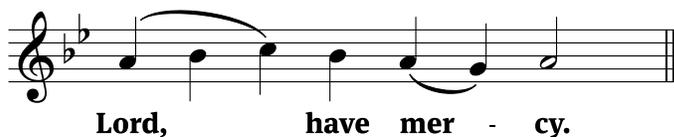
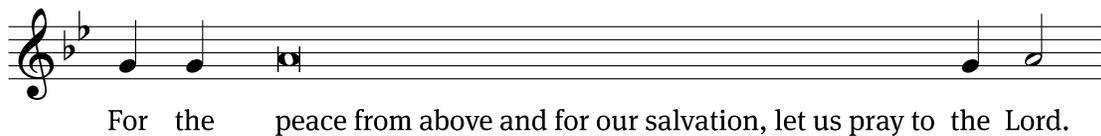
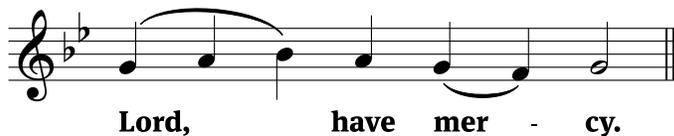
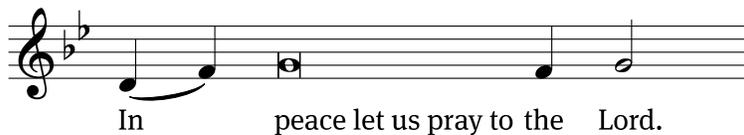
Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD, HAVE MERCY (KYRIE)



For the well-being of the Church of peace of the whole world, for the
God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and
praise, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, com - fort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.
A - - - men.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST (CHOIR)

Gloria in Excelsis

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace
to his peo - ple on earth.

Refrain

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Refrain

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

Refrain

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, the Father. Amen.

Refrain

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you gave your one and only Son to be the light of the world. Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and believed to the ends of the earth; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 62:1-5

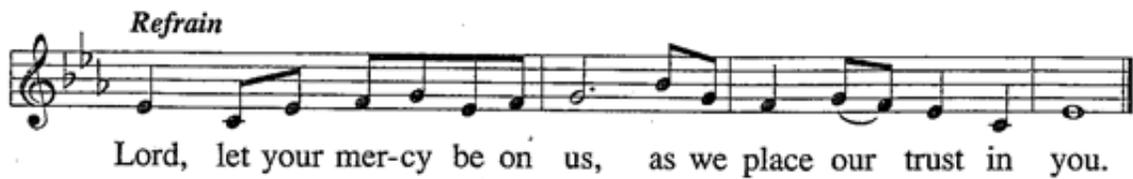
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet,
till her vindication shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.
The nations will see your vindication,
and all kings your glory;
you will be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.
You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
No longer will they call you Deserted,
or name your land Desolate.
But you will be called Hephzibah,
and your land Beulah;
for the Lord will take delight in you,
and your land will be married.
As a young man marries a young woman,
so will your Builder marry you;
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 145



Great is the LORD and most wor`thy of praise,*
his greatness no one can `fathom.

One generation will commend your works to an`other,*
they will tell of your `mighty acts.

The LORD upholds all `those who fall*
and lifts up all who are `bowed down. *Refrain*

The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the `proper time.*
You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every `living thing.

The LORD is near to all who `call on him,*
to all who call on `him in truth.

He fulfills the desires of those who `fear him,*
he hears their cry and `saves them.

Glory be to the Father and `to the Son*
and to the Holy `Spirit,
as it was in the be`ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. `Amen. *Refrain*

SECOND READING

Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I knelt before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches

he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The cantor/choir sings the refrain and verse.

The congregation joins to sing the final refrain

Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Refrain

GOSPEL

John 2:1-11

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

“Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”

His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

Hymn 721

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry Ev’rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry Ev’rything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged - Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev’ry weakness - Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Savior, still our refuge - Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you; You will find a solace there.

SERMON

CONFESSION OF FAITH

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us.

C: **Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.**

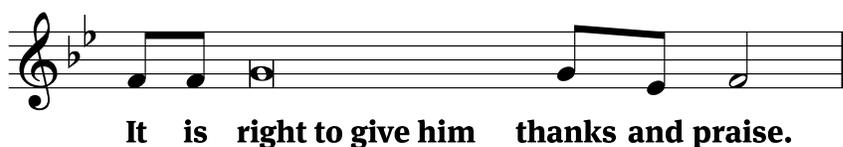
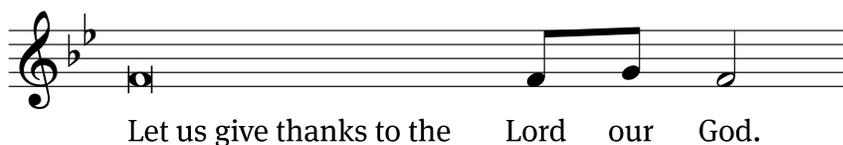
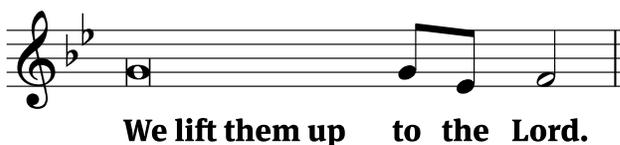
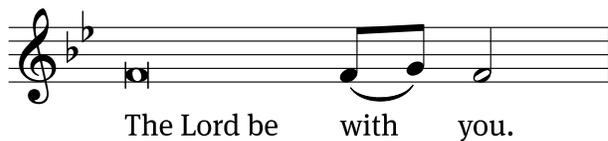
- P: Provide courage and compassion to all who preach and teach your Word. Fill them with a love like yours as they proclaim your grace to us and all people.
- C: **Move us to love all ministers of the Word wherever they serve.**
-
- P: Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.
- C: **Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.**
-
- P: Provide wisdom and insight to those who make laws and set policies. Give us respect for those who protect us from crime. Lead us to value the rights of our fellow citizens and to defend those who cannot defend themselves.
- C: **Bless our land with peace and prosperity so that the gospel may be proclaimed to all.**
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- P: Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.
- C: **Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.**
-
- P: Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind. *Pour out your special blessing on . . . (here name the person and the cause of the petition).* Give patience and compassion to all who care for the sick and dying.
- C: **Lift the eyes of the distressed to your love in Christ.**
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- P: Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.
- Silent prayer*

- P: Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people.
Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.
- C: **In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)
(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)

The following responses may be spoken or sung.



It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through

Jesus Christ our Lord who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Sanctus

The musical score is written on five staves in a single system. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some phrases connected by slurs. The lyrics are printed below the notes, aligned with the corresponding syllables.

Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er, God of
might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na
in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est,
ho - san - na in the high - est!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Lord God, you are worthy to receive thanks and praise from all people. You created the world and all who live in it, and in your mercy you saved us. We give thanks to you for the grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Though in very nature God, he took the nature of a servant and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. He offered himself as a sacrifice for sin and redeemed us from its curse and penalty. He rescued us from the

terrors of death and restored eternal life with you. He conquered our enemies and gained for us the kingdom of grace and glory.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood, and lead us to remember his suffering, death, and resurrection. Forgive our sins and fill us with the hope of new life in heaven. Hear our praise and receive our thanks as we worship you— the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD

Agnus Dei

Je - sus, Lamb of God; you take a - way the
sin of the world, have mer - cy on us.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the hymn, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Je - sus, Lamb of God; you take a - way the
 sin of the world, have mer-cy on us.
 Je - sus, Lamb of God; you take a - way the
 sin of the world: grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love.

By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“Jesus Loves Me”

Hymn 584

Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to him belong; They are weak, but he is strong.

Refrain

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who dies Heaven’s gates to open wide.

He will wash away my sin, Let his little child come in.

Refrain.

OFFERING

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