

# Heritage Hymn of the Month

AUGUST

## “Thy Love, O Gracious God and Lord”

ELH 449

This hymn is a sung sermon based on Luke 19:41-48, the traditional gospel lesson for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity/Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (usually observed sometime in August). In this hymn we are meditating on Jesus’ weeping over Jerusalem, that He still loves people who reject Him.

The first three stanzas lay out God’s love for everyone – “Thou hast loved our fallen race” – expressed in Jesus’ incarnation, fulfilling of the Law, atoning death on the cross, and sending of the Spirit to give faith. The last six stanzas take up the question in the gospel lesson: “Why is Thy heart still yearning/Since the great world rejects Thy Word?” The answer to this is a beautiful pastoral appeal which declares that God is “full of sweet compassion” and wants only to “give us joy for sorrow.” The last verse demonstrates one of the strengths of our *Hymnary*: including the “funeral verse” which often ends a Lutheran hymn. The final verse preaches the emphatic certainty of arriving in heaven to enjoy everlasting life: “O Jesus, at my dying breath/Hold Thou my hand securely ... And I shall find in Paradise/The joys of life unending.”

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

## “As After the Water-Brooks”

ELH 462

This hymn by Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig is based on Psalm 42.

## Thy Love, O Gracious God and Lord

1. Thy love, O gracious God and Lord,  
All other loves excelling,  
Attunes my heart to sweet accord,  
And passes pow’r of telling;  
For when Thy wondrous love I see,  
My heart yields glad submission;  
I love Thee for Thy love to me  
In my poor, lost condition.

2. Yea, Thou hast loved our fallen race,  
And rather than condemn us,  
Cast out and banish from Thy face  
Thine only Son didst send us;  
Who died upon the cross, that we  
Should all be saved forever;  
Hence Jesus also died for me,  
My soul, forget it never.

3. Thy love, O God, embraces all,  
And Jesus’ merits cover  
The guilt of all, both great and small,  
The world of sinners over.  
Thy Spirit doth Thy light afford  
To all who will receive it,  
And from Thy knowledge bars Thy Word  
No soul who will believe it.

4. But what hath moved Thee, gracious  
Why is Thine heart still yearning [Lord?  
Since the great world rejects Thy Word,  
Thy love and mercy spurning?  
For men go on in sin each day,  
In carnal-minded blindness,  
And O how few Thy call obey  
And heed Thy lovingkindness!

5. In us no beauty Thou couldst see,  
And no intrinsic merit;  
We all were poor—but misery  
And sin we did inherit.  
We wandered each a different path,  
And in our lost condition,  
By nature children of His wrath,  
Whom sin doomed to perdition.

6. Our virtues and our own good deeds  
With God cannot avail us;  
With these the enemy misleads,  
Such righteousness shall fail us;  
Our will and strength and soul are dead  
In evil inclination;  
Christ Jesus has the ransom paid,  
And gained for us salvation.

7. O gracious God, Thy loving heart  
Was full of sweet compassion;  
And felt our woe and desp’rate smart,  
And planned our restoration;  
Thy grace and justice found a way  
To save us from death’s horror;  
And everlasting judgment stay,  
And give us joy for sorrow.

8. On Christ, the rock, I’m anchored fast,  
By faith in Him remaining;  
I’ll weather ev’ry stormy blast,  
My peace of soul retaining;  
On Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
My ever firm foundation,  
Until the harbor bar is crossed,  
And I see God’s salvation.

9. O Jesus, at my dying breath  
Hold Thou my hand securely,  
And may I in a living faith  
Hold fast to Thee most surely;  
That my last prayer to Thee may rise,  
My soul to Thee commending,  
And I shall find in Paradise  
The joys of life unending.