



HOUSECLEANING – *HEART-CLEANING*

How many of us enjoy housecleaning? Many do, but some of us wish that a magic wand could be waved and it could be done instantly! Realizing the impossibility of that happening, we must face the inevitable.

Have you noticed that once you get started, housecleaning isn't such a burden at all and that it's a joy to see that dirt disappear?

Now let's compare housecleaning with heart-cleaning. It's surprising how both can be done at once. A good way to do this is to pray the wonderfully rich hymns and songs we know so well.

For instance, have you been feeling somewhat remote from our Heavenly father? Have cobwebs gathered around your prayer life? It may be helpful to sing this prayer:

Holy Spirit, light divine, Dawn upon this soul of mine;
Let your word dispel the night, Wake my spirit, clear my sight.

Holy Spirit, truth divine, Shine upon these eyes of mine;
Send your radiance from above, Let me know my Savior's love. (LW 166:1,3)

What about that friend you had that disagreement with? It wasn't over anything very important, but there's still that lingering feeling of disappointment and regret. As you go about your work, ask the Lord for the courage to apologize to her and deal with your own guilt with this prayer:

Just as I am, without one plea But that thy blood was shed for me
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee, 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. (LW 359: 1,5)

Are you feeling some resentment during your housecleaning? "Why don't people pick up after themselves? Am I the only one who knows how to put toilet tissue on the dispenser?" Then it dawns on you that you need the Lord Jesus not only for the momentous trials of your life but also for the nitty-gritty details, too.

Lord, take my hand and lead me upon life's way;
Direct, protect, and feed me From day to day.
Without your grace and favor I go astray;
So take my hand, O Savior, And lead the way. (LW 512:1)

You and the Lord have talked through those irritations, and the resentment fades, but now you're feeling disappointment about something. Maybe that check didn't come in the mail, or maybe you weren't invited to the shower that some of your friends were invited to and you're feeling a little hurt. As you talk it over with the Lord, He tells you what's really important. Your response breaks out in this prayer:

Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will and make it thine, It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart it is Thine own, It shall be Thy royal throne (TLH 400:1,5)

A little worry now creeps in unexpectedly as you dust the family photos. You're worried about your parents, (or yourself) whose health seems to be deteriorating. You wonder about the future of your children in this uncertain world. Your dear friend has had a tragedy in her life. You remember to put these loved ones in the hands of the Lord with the beautiful hymn:

Children of the heav'nly Father Safely in his bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven Such a refuge e'er was given.

Though He giveth or He taketh, God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely To preserve them pure and holy.
(Hymnal Supplement 98-888:1,4)

As you dust that lovely figurine given by your mother or clean the upholstery in your living room, you realize what a blessing these things are and what a great God you have. He takes care of your needs—and even your wants! Your heart bursts with a song of thanks to Him.

Great is Thy Faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou has been, Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy Faithfulness! Great is Thy Faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy Faithfulness, lord unto me! (Hymnal supplement 98-899:1)

Before you know it, your work is over and you can look at your clean and fresh house with a feeling of peace and contentment—maybe with a dose of relief, too. You respond with praise:

Beautiful Savior, King of creation, Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee, Truly I'd serve thee, Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
(LW 507:1)

And, at night when you climb into bed exhausted from a day well spent, you place yourself in God's loving care and pray:

Now the day is over; Night is drawing nigh;
Shadows of the evening Steal across the sky.

Jesus, give the weary Calm and sweet repose;
With your tend' rest blessing May our eyelids close.

When the morning wakens, then may I arise
Pure and fresh and sinless In your holy eyes. (LW 491:1,2,5)

AMEN.

This devotional can be given with the narrator speaking the hymns while a pianist plays them softly.

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