

## The Covenant Prayer

**I am no longer my own, but yours.**

**Put me to what you will. Place me with whom you will.**

**Put me to doing. Put me to suffering.**

**Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,**

**praised for you or criticized for you.**

**Let me be full. Let me be empty.**

**Let me have all things. Let me have nothing.**

**I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.**

**And now, O wonderful and holy God,**

**Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,**

**You are mine, and I am Yours.**

**So be it.**

**And the covenant, which I have made on earth,**

**let it also be made in heaven.**

**Amen.**



sermon notes

**“Angels From the Realms of Glory”**

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*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

### **The Story of “Angels from the Realms of Glory”**

- James Montgomery (1771-1854) was an Irish poet who grew up and lived in a time of disunity and conflict with England.
- Montgomery’s parents were missionaries to the West Indies, and he was raised by the Moravian community.
- After flunking out of school and drifting, Montgomery’s writing talent got him a job at the *Sheffield Register*.
- The paper often advocated for Irish freedom and after the owner was run out of town, Montgomery took over.
- Montgomery’s editorial crusade against English rule and the institution of slavery landed him twice in prison.
- However, Christmas Eve 1816 marked a profound change when Montgomery published a poem called, “Nativity.”
- “Nativity” began with angels flying over the earth to proclaim the birth of Jesus, which resulted in the shepherds’ adoration, the sages’ gifts, and the saints’ praise in heaven.

### **The Fifth Stanza (Omitted from most hymnals)**

“Sinners, wrung with true repentance, doomed for guilt to endless pains; Justice now repeals your sentence, mercy calls you—break your chains.”

**The call to “come and worship...worship Christ the newborn king” is a call to enter a covenant of \_\_\_\_\_.**

*For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

Romans 6:5 (NIV)

## The Story Continued...

- Henry Smart (1813-1879) was an Englishman who left his law career and revolutionized music and thinking in the English church.
- Smart believed worship should be a joyful, corporate experience rather than passive and minimal as the traditionalists argued.
- Smart set Montgomery's "Nativity" to music and renamed it, "Angels From the Realms of Glory." This song opened the way for new and joyful musical styles in hundreds of English churches.
- Montgomery returned to the Moravian church and became a missionary like his parents. Collaborating with Smart, he composed more than 400 hymns that brought churches back to life.

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**"Angels..." is about Christian unity transcending all earthly divisions. It is only possible in a covenant relationship with God that is based on God's promises and lived out in human community.**

**1. Unity begins with \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"I'm praying not only for them but also for those who will believe in me because of them and their witness about me."*

John 17:20 (MSG)

**2. Unity involves \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind..."*

John 17:21 (MSG)

**3. We enter the \_\_\_\_\_ in unity.**

*"Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us."*

John 17:21 (MSG)

**4. Our unity enables the world to \_\_\_\_\_ and to be \_\_\_\_\_ by the grace of God.**

*"Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me."*

John 17:21 (MSG)

**What is our faithful response to this Good News?**

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## Renewing Our Covenant with God

### Prayer of Confession

God our Father, You have shown us the way to life in Jesus:

We confess with shame our slowness to love Him more and our reluctance to follow Him.

You have spoken and called us, but we have failed to listen.

You have shown us Your glory, but we have been too blind to see.

We have received countless blessings, but have given You little thanks.

We are unworthy of Your changeless love.

**God, have mercy on me according to Your overwhelming love and kindness. Forgive me, Lord, and cleanse me of my sin. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Amen.**

### The Covenant Renewal

And now, let us commit ourselves in covenant to Christ as his servants. Let us give ourselves to Him so that we may fully belong to Him. Jesus Christ has left us with many services to be done. Some of these services are easy and honorable, but some are difficult and disgraceful. Some line up with our desires and interests; others are contrary to both. In some we please both Christ and ourselves, but then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

## Answer key

The call to “come and worship...worship Christ the newborn king” is a call to enter a covenant of NEW BEGINNINGS.

5. Unity begins with PRAYER.
6. Unity involves HEART and MIND.
7. We enter the INNER LIFE OF GOD in unity.
8. Our unity enables the world to BELIEVE and to be TRANSFORMED by the grace of God.

What is our faithful response to this Good News?

WE RENEW OUR COVENANT WITH GOD.