

About...

At the end of myself

...how and why it was written

I have to confess that I love this song. It is one that I come back to again and again, even though it was one of the very first ones I wrote.

It was partly inspired by my long-held fascination with the beauty of paradox and symmetry in Christian language and imagery (which my university professors had to read about more often than was always strictly relevant to the focus of the syllabus of an English degree!) and partly by a stunning song by Jars of Clay – a band that have inspired me continuously since I was 15 and bought my (and their) first CD...

This song is called *Faith enough* and talks about that familiar but strange concept of strength being made perfect in weakness... hence the 'ice is thin enough for walking' and 'the bridge is weak enough to cross'.... with 'faith enough'.

I wanted to write a song I could use in worship that expressed these type of ideas and so *At the end of myself* came to life – it too uses a series of paradoxical images, but it goes in a slightly different direction in the chorus – recognising the power of our brokenness and smallness when we allow God to move through them, and expressing a desire to only keep what would be pure gold to God – even if that is not the things that appear strong or excellent to those around us.

...how, where and when it could be used

Though I have received very positive reactions to this song, and it is quite easy to sing, I have to admit that I have shied away from using it in corporate worship much, sticking only to a couple of response times where it just felt like the perfect fit.

As a worship leader it's always a difficult balance to tread in terms of the words you are putting in people's mouths. You want to challenge, to set the bar high – and of course it is your congregation's choice what they sing... but many of us when we are in a congregation get swept up in the music, or simply just sing all the words without necessarily pausing to think whether we mean them fully.

When we sing, we are simply praying with a melody, and some of the prayers contained in this song's chorus are pretty solemn vows – 'Jesus grow my brokenness'... and particularly 'take everything that won't stand the fire.'

Not all my friends agree with me, but I have been nervous about putting these words in people's mouths... perhaps not everyone really wants to pray this prayer right now. I obviously leave the judgement call open to you... sometimes I worry too much...

But I wanted to share it because it is a special song to me.

About...

At the end of myself

...its place on the journey to where world and worship meet

This is obviously not an outward-focussed song; it is about as personal as it gets.

But as I look back I see how almost all songs are part of this journey in some way... even if they are simply used by God to point out an overemphasis on something, or to raise a question.

Where i think this one fits in, is in probably two-fold. Firstly, in very obvious terms of expressing availability to God's work – even at a high personal cost. But secondly, and perhaps more significantly it expresses the tensions, and complexities, of a life of faith.

In many ways the gospel could not be more simple – we are told to be child-like. But things are not always black and white as we live with the tension of now and not yet, and as we allow God to transform us more into the image of Christ... sometimes faith is messy and difficult. Again we come back to one thing – it's about the heart and what it desires.