

About...

Still I come

...how and why it was written

I wrote this song on a day (maybe I should say one of the days) when I was really struggling to trust God about my financial provision, and how The Sanctuary will all come together.

I was having my daily worship time and I wanted to bring him something really true and honest – I knew I could still come to His presence feeling doubtful and fearful; I knew I was still welcome, eagerly anticipated even... but my own disappointment and frustration at not being stronger and more faithful was bothering me.

Writing this song helped me express this feeling, and singing it subsequently has helped me to do so again whenever I'm experiencing another anxious day. Being able to express the feeling clearly then helps me to allow God's light into the situation to transform it – reminding me of his promises, his proven faithfulness to me, and the fact that things happening in his kingdom aren't down to me having a spotless faith record... I just need to keep coming to his presence with a willing heart; that's all that matters.

I would have kept this song personal to me but for something I remember from a couple of years back. Everyone involved in leading worship at my old church in St Albans was having a general meeting about worship and what we would love to see happen, when one woman expressed her struggle with church actually not being a safe place to express difficult emotions – she felt we needed to make more space for that.

In every service there are people coming with stuff to praise for, and people carrying in unspeakable pain – we have to be careful follow God's lead in the approach we take and not just go for a happy medium or lowest common denominator that doesn't express the reality of where anyone's heart is at. Sure we have to be careful of creating a heavy atmosphere, and giving people words to sing about suffering when they are fine – perhaps even creating a problem. But ordinarily this isn't a situation we get into. More typically we fail to honestly contextualize our worship – enabling people to express their struggles, to God and to the community. And leave people forcing smiles and singing about the joy of his presence when they are at breaking point.

I'm not suggesting we launch every praise time by declaring pain over proclamation. But there is a place sometimes for risking opening a worship time with a song that speaks of struggle more than triumph.

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

I have only recently written this song, and in a personal context, and so have not tried and tested it in a congregational context. However, I do think it would be simple for people to pick up, and suitable, particularly for corporate response, and occasionally – in the right context and with a brave worship leader – for an opening block, or in response to discussion or prayer around difficult issues.

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

This song is really about a different, though related, journey – the journey to be more honest, real and holistic in our worship. There is a biblical precedent for songs of declaration, praise, joy, and for literally commanding our souls to liven up and praise him (e.g. Psalm 42). But just a quick glance through the psalms will show just how much content is lament, anguished heart-cry for mercy, and intercession.

We must be careful that our worship doesn't become about jollyng us up, or making us feel better – that isn't real, and misses the point of who it's for.

Our worship is to glorify God by honestly expressing to Him our thanks, adoration – and our pain. God is so good that almost always when we come to him, and pour out our hearts, we are blessed and uplifted.

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