



Hymns 101 – Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling

At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:25-30 (ESV)

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling
Calling for you and for me;
See, on the portals He's waiting and watching
Watching for you and for me!

Refrain:

*Come home! Come home!
Ye who are weary, come home!
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!*

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading
Pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not His mercies
Mercies for you and for me?

Refrain

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing
Passing from you and from me;
Shadows are gathering, death's night is coming
Coming for you and for me!

Refrain

Oh, for the wonderful love He has promised
Promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon
Pardon for you and for me!

Refrain



Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20 (ESV)

Composed in 1880 by Will L. Thompson, a man who had been so frustrated with his inability to get anyone to publish his music that he created his own company to do so; this hymn of invitation was inspired when the author responded to an altar call given by the most famous evangelist of the day, Dwight L. Moody. In responding to this call, Thompson declared that he would devote himself to writing and promoting Christian music, beginning with this hymn. He was ultimately as successful with Christian music as he had been with secular. Records indicate that he sold over two million music books in his lifetime.

Although he became quite wealthy from his publishing business, Thompson lived his life in service to Christ by providing generous financial support to his church and other evangelistic ministries. His music enabled him to minister to millions in his own lifetime and has blessed countless more since. When visiting his friend D.L. Moody as the latter was dying, Moody clasped his hand and told him, "Will, I would rather have written 'Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling' than anything I have been able to do in my life." High praise from the man who had founded the Moody Bible Institute.

A few technical notes and explanations for the modern worshipper

In the first verse, "portals" is simply another word for "doors." See Rev 3:20.

The third verse is often omitted from hymnals or skipped by worship leaders when singing the hymn, but that misses the intent of the author. Each of the first three verses represents hearing Jesus' call at a different stage of life, from youth to adulthood to advanced age, while the final verse and the refrain assure us that all who respond to the call will be greeted with love and joy, rather than an impatient "What took you so long?"