

## January's hymn of the month.

By  
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It's been said that being a pastor is the greatest calling on earth, and for so many this has come true. As with any calling, there are times of joy as well as times of sadness. For one pastor, it was during a time of sadness that a hymn would be born—a hymn that to this day still brings consolation and hope for a day when sadness will no longer be.

The year was 1772, and Pastor John Fawcett had been invited to fill the pulpit of a large Baptist church in London, England. After a time of prayer, he agreed to accept the invitation and make the move. Pastor Fawcett had ministered in two small Baptist churches at Wainsgate and Hebden Bridge, near Halifax, in what is now West Yorkshire, England. Now, he and his family would be moving—leaving behind many friends and church members. Moving day would finally arrive with the wagons all packed and saddened parishioners gathered around. As Mrs. Fawcett contemplated the coming separation, she finally broke down and said, “John, I cannot bear to leave. I know not how to go!” “Nor can I either,” said the saddened Pastor. The order was soon given to unpack the wagons.

Even though his salary at the small churches never exceeded more than \$200 a year, Pastor Fawcett remained faithful to the little corner of the world that the Lord had called him to. For more than 50 years, he ministered to these poor people of England and would have faded into history except for one small thing. To close out his sermons, Pastor John would compose poems. Thinking back to that fateful day when separation had become too much to bear, he wrote a poem and titled it, “Brotherly Love.” Eventually, the words would be wedded to music and appear as a hymn with a new title in 1845.

On this side of Heaven, there is sadness and separation; but for those who are willing to trust in Christ and His saving grace, there's coming a day when “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Rev. 21: 4)

Pastor John Fawcett wrote of this day of reunion when he gave us these words:

Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love; The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above  
Before our Father's throne We pour our ardent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our aims  
Are one, Our comforts and our cares.  
We share our mutual woes, Our mutual burdens bear; And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.  
When we asunder part It gives us inward pain; But we shall still be joined in heart  
And hope to meet again.

The hymn of the month for January: **Blest Be the Tie That Binds**