

I Gave My Life For Thee- February's Hymn of the Month 2023

By  
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In her lifetime, Miss Francis Havergal gave us many great hymns to enjoy and be inspired by. She wrote *I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, Who Is on the Lord's Side, O Saviour, Precious Saviour* and *Take My Life and Let it Be*. Of all the hymns she would give us, probably her first hymn, *I Gave My life for Thee*, is the best remembered. Interestingly, the first was almost lost because of a fire. Let me explain.

Miss Havergal was visiting friends in Germany and had spent the day sightseeing. In the home where she was staying was a painting of the crucifixion with the words, "I Gave My Life for Thee." The long day of activity had tired the 23 year old writer. Trying to find rest, she sat down, looked at the painting and read the words. A still small voice seemed to ask, "What hast thou given for me?" Miss Havergal tells us what happened next:

"Immediately in a flash the words came to me. I scribbled them in a few minutes on the back of a circular I had in my purse. I read them over and thought, well, this is not worthwhile poetry anyhow, so I won't bother to write it out on paper. I then thought, why keep it at all? So I threw it into the burning fire in the fireplace. Somehow, it did not ignite but fell out onto the hearth. As I saw it there, a sudden impulse made me pick it up. It was crumpled and singed, but I put it in my purse.

Some days later when I was back in England, I went to see an old woman in a poor house. She began talking to me about her Saviour as she always did. I thought I would see if she, a simple woman, would care for the verses which I felt sure were of no value to anyone. I read them to her and to my delight and surprise, she was so pleased that she requested a copy for herself. This I gave her and soon I was sending copies of it in all directions."

Saved from the fire, the hymn, *I Gave My Life for Thee*, has brought many a soul to Jesus-- the only one who can save us from the fire, the eternal fire of Hell.

I gave my life for thee,  
My precious blood I shed,  
That thou might'st ransomed be,  
And quickened from the dead;  
I gave, I gave my life for thee--  
What hast thou giv'n for me?