

Dear Lillian Methodist Church family,

Most of you know how much I love old hymns. The older the better. In 1822, Charlotte Elliot was a bitter young woman. Sudden illness left her unable to walk, ill-tempered and resentful toward God. "If God loved me," she complained, "He would not have treated me this way."

A year into her disability, a dear friend loved her enough to tell her the truth of her ever-hardening heart. "You are holding to your hate and anger because you have nothing else in the world to cling to. Consequently, you have become sour, bitter and resentful." Charlotte responded, "What is your cure?" "The faith you are trying to despise," was the reply.

As they continued talking, she saw the peace and joy her Christian friend exhibited. She asked, "What shall I do?" Her friend minced no words. "You would give yourself to God just as you are now, with your fightings and fears, hates and loves, pride and shame." Her hard heart began to soften. "I would come to God just as I am? Is that right?"

She submitted to Jesus, her savior and her heart was forever changed. Although her physical body remained broken, her spirit was set free.

In 1836, she wrote the poem that began with these words: "Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me." For 190 years, the Spirit of God has used "Just As I Am" to call sinners to repentance and salvation. For Charlotte, these words of Jesus were a promise she clung to for the rest of her life. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37)

None since have expressed it any better. "Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve. Because Thy promise I believe. O Lamb of God I come. I come!

See y'all Sunday
Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader