

What Gospel Music Means to Me

Music does strange things to people. It quiets a noisy nightclub and soothes troubled hearts. The majestic sounds of a cathedral choir can make worshippers of the profanest. Music creates misty tears of remembrance and evokes aching sobs of grief, but also lifts weariness and spurs people to face their most dreaded challenges. Foot tappin', knee slappin', hand clappin' music pushes people out of their chairs and onto their feet. For me, Gospel Music wraps me in a warm embrace and makes me want to reach out to a needy world around me. Gospel Music begins and ends with hugs.

The roots of Gospel Music are deep in the troubles and trials of terrible times. Torn from their homes and ripped from their relatives, Gospel singers pined and yearned for a better world. The freedom denied them in their time was granted freely over Jordan some fine day. Moses was ready to lead people to Canaan Land and a chariot stood ready to take the weary soul to a land of glory. There was no more weepin' and a-wailin' there. And soon, the enslaved pilgrim would indeed be a-passin' through because this wicked world was not home. Gospel Music embraces weary souls in every weary land and hugs me when my own seemingly unstoppable, unanswerable trials push me down.

Gospel Music reminds me that I am not alone. There are angels watchin' over me and even King Jesus is a-listenin'! God's got the whole world in His hands – the little bitty baby, you and me, everybody here! There's a Balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole, even when I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain. It's all right because Jesus said He'll fix it. I can steal away to Jesus because I ain't got long to stay here. When I'm tired and when I'm worn, the songs of Gospel Music hug me close and assure me that God understands.

When Gospel Music hugs my heart, it sends me out in search of other hug-needy souls. I have this little light of mine that can't be hidden. I need to go tell this good news on the mountain. I'm sent to tell ol' Pharaoh to let God's people go free. We will overcome, we will walk hand in hand, we will live in peace someday. When the saints go marching in to glory, I want to be in that number. My well-hugged heart reaches out and encourages the discouraged and downcast soul to come and go with me to the place where peace and love abide, where there is joy, joy, joy.

Peter Silzer, 2011