

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Breathe on Me, Breath of God
Common Praise #649

1. Breathe on me, breathe of God;
Fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
And do what thou wouldst do.
2. Breathe on me, breath of God
until my heart is pure
until my will is one with thine
to do and to endure
3. Breathe on me, breath of God
till I am wholly thine
until this earthy part of me
glows with thy fire divine.
4. Breath on me, breath of God
so shall I never die
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

This hymn is not found in the Lenten section of our Common Praise Hymnal but rather in the section titled, "the Holy Spirit." It's appropriate to sing on the Day of Pentecost as it alludes to the account of Jesus breathing on the disciples and filling them with the Holy Spirit (John 20:22) after his resurrection. It is also appropriate during the season of Lent as we meditate on following his example and walking in his ways

The hymn has a Canadian connection as it was written by Edwin Hatch who was a theologian who taught at Trinity College in Toronto. The handbook to the *Psalter Hymnal*, where "Breath on Me, Breath of God" was later published, referred to the oft quoted statement about Hatch's faith being "as simple and unaffected as a child" being an appropriate description of the hymn. It was also described in the introduction to the hymn in the United Methodist Church hymnal: "The simplicity of this profound hymn belies the education and knowledge of its author". Hatch knew that though he had written the hymn using simple words, they had profound meaning with references to the creation of humanity by God in Genesis and in the spiritual breath of God which came to humanity via Jesus at Pentecost.

The four verses we have in our Common Praise hymnal encourage us during this Lenten season to act lovingly as Jesus would (v 1). It's almost an early version of "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD). The second verse encourages us to seek pureness of heart so that our will becomes united with the will of God. The third verse encourages us to give ourselves over to God and purge those things that separate us from God's love. Finally verse 4 looks to our life after death in an eternity spent in God's presence.



Questions you might ask yourself:

- Read Genesis 2:7 and John 20:22.
- How do we inform our actions with the love of Jesus?
- What does it mean to be pure of heart?
- How can one become "wholly thine?"