

The Articles of
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Richly Blest

Ken Young is one of the most popular songwriters of our time among Christians, especially among teens and young adults. One of the reasons I believe his songs are so popular is because his music and lyrics go together like “two peas in a pod.” On top of that, the majority of the songs he writes are *fun* to sing, which naturally attracts us. Although his music is very “attractive,” there is something else that I personally enjoy about his songs, something that makes the songs worth talking about: the words or lyrics.

“Bluest sky, cloudy day, whether it’s good or bad that tends to come my way...” Before we go on with the rest of the first verse, let’s just look at the first half of it. *“Bluest sky?” “Cloudy day?”* Why in the world are we talking about the weather in an encouraging, uplifting song like this? I don’t believe it to be talking about the weather, and I doubt you do either. Could this be a comparison between *“good or bad that ... comes my way?”* Let’s say you walk outside, look up into the clouds and see the prettiest blue skies you have ever seen (not a cloud in the sky). What do you think? *I* would think that today is beautiful and it’s going to be a *“good”* day! On the other hand, if you were to walk outside, look up into the sky and it was cloudy and dark, you would think that it’s going to be a *“bad”* day. I think that’s what Ken Young is trying to get to visualize: the difference between *“good and bad.”*

“From the highest hill or deepest valley I will claim His rest, for the One who loves me makes me richly blest.” “From the highest hill or deepest valley ...” Again we have this comparison of *“good or bad.”* But this time he is using hills and valleys. Why? Because sometimes when we are happy we use terms such as “high” to describe our happiness, or when we are sad we say we are “low.” *“I will claim His rest.”* What rest of our God are we claiming? Jesus says in Matthew 11:28, “Come to me all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Jesus is telling us that if we are heavy laden, if we are tired, He will relieve us. Tying it into the verse it’s saying that, “No matter how I feel I will accept His help, *I* will claim his rest.” The fact that Jesus tells us “...Ye who labor and our heavy laden...” doesn’t mean that He will give help to you if you are a couch potato. Jeremiah 6:16 speaks for itself: “Stand in the ways and see, ... And walk in it. Then you shall find rest for your souls....”

“Fresh delight, deep lament, whether in joy or pain I’ve learned to be content.” We now have a new comparison dealing with *“joy or pain.”* It’s a joy to have delight in something, is it not? It’s especially joyous to have delight in something fresh, something new. Of course, it’s painful to lament over a loved one who has recently passed away. *“No matter how I feel though, I have learned to be content.”* Paul described his sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28: “... five times I received *stripes* minus one.” If you do the math that’s, roughly speaking, one hundred and ninety five (195) stripes! He continues, “Three times I was beaten with rods (Acts 16:22-23; 21:32), once I was stoned (Acts 14:5, 19), three times I was shipwrecked (Acts 27:1-44) ...” And that’s just the start of it! Paul went through *all* these troubles and he describes them as “... light afflictions ...” (2 Corinthians 4:17). Why does he describe all that as “light afflictions”? Because Paul learned to be content *“whether in joy or pain.”* That’s the way we should be my

friends: content with what we have and how we feel because “... *the one who loves me makes me richly blest.*” And you thought you had it bad that your mom asks you to take the trash out!

The second verse continues, “*For the One who fills me with His Spirit ...*,” obviously speaking about God “... *always knows what’s best, and the One who loves me richly blest.*” “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:25). If our God is truly that much wiser than us, that even when He is at His dumbest He is STILL wiser than us! Then wouldn’t you think that He would know what’s best for us? And that we can trust that judgment? I think so. Our God “... *always knows what’s best ...*” for us.

Then after all this we have the chorus, or it could just be a third verse. “... *And I know that life is like a ship that sails out on the sea, ...*” Have you ever been out on a boat before? Wouldn’t you say that life is unpredictable? “*Sometimes cradled by the calm, and sometimes plunged into the fury.*” You never know what life will throw at you next, whether sickness death, or peace and serenity. “... *But a peace within my heart provides a warm and sweet caress, ...*” But, oh that peace within my heart sure is nice! But what exactly is that peace that dwells in my heart? “... *for the One who loves me makes me richly blest.*” The “... *peace within my heart ...*” is knowing that God, our Lord, who blesses us and knows our every need, is with us every moment of every day.

“... *One who loves me makes me richly blest ...*” The phrase that brings the song its meaning, the most important phrase in the entire song, has not yet been discussed. Why has Ken Young repeated this phrase seven times? **EMPHASIS!** Ken Young puts so much emphasis on that phrase because of its importance. You and I should know how richly blessed we are, not just because we have clothes on our back, or a roof over our heads. We are blessed because we have God by our side and the ability to communicate with Him. Let me tell you that not everyone has that blessing.

Ken Young has many popular works such as, *Why Not Now?*, *Be With Me*, *Faithful Love*, *And Can It Be*, and many others. Many songs are being written and popularized in our day and time by Christians of the same faith, mind set, and goals. If we take time to understand and learn these new hymns, our worship, praise, encouragement, and edification *will* be strengthened.

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