

“My Spirit, Father, I Commend”

“My Spirit, Father, I Commend” is a three-stanza hymn based on Luke 23:46, the very last words of Jesus: “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” The stanzas meditate on this prayer in the following three ways.

Stanza 1: As Christ’s dying prayer

The hymn begins at the cross and really never leaves. He has suffered greatly for us and now speaks His final words. Of all the many wonderful things He spoke, this is the last. He wills to die for us and does so with perfect love and trust in God the Father. By “spirit” He means His breath and life. But on the lips of Jesus these words mean more. Listen closely and the prayer is Trinitarian: “*Father*, into Your hands I (the *Son*) commit My *Spirit*.” And I chose the word “name” to call to mind Matthew 28:19.

Stanza 2: As the Christian’s daily prayer

“Now” is used in two senses here: “Now that Christ has died and risen” and “Now throughout my life.” “Morning, evening, ev’ry day” and “often” emphasize this second sense. Luther is the one who hears this prayer as a daily prayer. His Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer both include: “For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things.” I chose “joy and peace” with the idea of joy in the morning and peace in the evening.

Stanza 3: As the Christian’s dying prayer

I am to prepare diligently for the day of my death. This stanza helps me to do that. When that hour comes, I should think only of Christ crucified and my Baptism into the Triune name. I address my prayer to the Father through the Son. I chose the word “help” as a reference to the Holy Spirit, the Helper. And the last words of Jesus become my own, without ceasing to be those of the One who died for me.

This hymn will find a special place in the evening and before bed.