

Rock of Ages
St. Luke's Lutheran Church; Oakfield, WI
Weekly Devotion
August 9th, 2009



NIV Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. 4 Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

When times get tough the tough get going! I find in my own life that when times get tough I have a tough time getting going. As Christians we have an advantage over the rest of the world. When times get tough, we have another power source for strength, security and satisfaction. This power source does not rest in the chest of a brave man's heart or in the determination of a courageous woman's mind.

Augustus Toplady was born in England in 1740. His father was killed in action and never saw his son. He became a pastor in Dublin and served a congregation in London. Always a sick man, he contracted tuberculosis at the young age of 36. As he fought the disease he wrote the great hymn "Rock of Ages". The story goes that he found shelter during a storm that year in a dugout hollow of a cliff. He had been fortunate to find this hiding-place so quickly, and while waiting for the storm to pass he began to muse on the idea of the "rock of faith" being a shelter from the "storms of life". The words for a hymn began to form in his mind but, according to the legend that still persists, he had no paper in his pocket to write down the words. Looking down he saw a playing card, considered a sinful thing by the young cleric. Nevertheless, he picked it up and began to write:

*Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.*

Two years later he took his last breath on earth and closed his eyes in death on August 11, 1778.

*"Rock of Ages, cleft for me
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power*

*Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow
All for sin could not atone
Thou must save, and thou alone*

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;*

*Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul I to the fountain fly,
Wash me Savior or I die.*

The hymn "Rock of Ages" is considered by some to be the most popular English hymn of all time. His hymn is so simple even a child can understand its strength. Salvation is by grace alone on the work of Jesus Christ sacrifice on the cross, not by anything we have done or might do. Turn to the Rock of Ages, that does not move or change, but is always there for our forgiveness, giving us strength, security and satisfaction when times get tough and you have a tough time getting going.