



"Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.5, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

01/15/08

Program 16 – “Oh Happy Day”

Philipp Doddridge, c. 1750 © Arrangement © 1963 Edwin Hawkins

In 1969, the Edwin Hawkins Singers took this adapted hymn all the way to #4 on the US pop charts, and #2 in Britain. “Oh Happy Day” became the first of its type -- a gospel hymn crossing over to hit the pop charts¹ It happened at least one more time when Judy Collins’ a capella recording of “Amazing Grace” spent 67 weeks on the chart from 1970-1972, and peaked at #5.² Today we refer to Edwin Hawkins’ rendition of the song as an “Ultimate Oldie”, but just consider that the original “O Happy Day” hymn was written 250+ years ago!

The song’s author, Philip Doddridge, was born in London in 1702 – the 20th child of his parents. He was only one of two that survived infancy. It’s been noted that -- that fact alone ‘is enough to make anyone famous, without anything else’. Like Charles Wesley, who was the last of a mere 18 live births and Doddridge’s junior by 5 years, Philip was so small and silent that his parents thought him stillborn. Both became hugely-successful hymn-writers.³

At the age of seven, Edwin Hawkins was already the keyboardist for his family’s gospel choir. With this hit song, Grammy-winner Hawkins distinguished himself as one of the originators of the urban contemporary gospel sound. The Edwin Hawkins Singers are less well-known for backing Melanie on the song, “Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)”.

- Recorded by the *Northern California State Youth Choir* on their 4th album
 - San Francisco Bay area DJs started this song from that album; popularity spread
 - Oh Happy Day features the lead vocal of Dorothy Coombs Morrison
 - Song was also recorded by the Four Seasons
- (Source⁴)

“Oh Happy Day” was controversial when released. A group of local pastors petitioned to have it pulled from rock radio, and many Christians criticized the group for performing in mainstream venues.

“We thought, *Why would we just spend our lives singing to each other?*” Hawkins says. “Those that don’t know Jesus are the ones we should be singing to and telling about Jesus Christ...I think that it’s not just the song, but the gospel itself that transcends all racial barriers, language barriers, all of that,” he says.⁵

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oh_Happy_Day

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazing_Grace

³ <http://www.evangelical-library.org.uk/lectures/doddridge.html>

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Hawkins

⁵ <http://gospelgal.blogspot.com/2006/05/story-behind-song-oh-happy-day.html>

Oh Happy Day

(arr. & adapt. Edwin Hawkins, 1968)

Oh happy day - *oh happy day*
 Oh happy day - *oh happy day*
 When Jesus washed - *when Jesus washed*
 Oh when he washed - *when Jesus washed*
 When Jesus washed - *when Jesus washed*
 He washed my sins away, Lord - *oh happy day*
 Oh happy day - *oh happy day*

He taught me how to watch
Fight and pray, fight and pray
 And live rejoicing every day, every day

Oh happy day - *oh happy day*
 Oh happy day - *oh happy day*
 Oh happy day - *oh happy day*

"Fight" was added.
 Discuss why.

O Happy Day's melody is much better known as "*How Dry I Am*"!

O Happy Day

(Philipp Doddridge, approx. 1750)

O happy day, that fixed my choice
 On Thee, my Savior and my God!
 Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
 And tell its raptures all abroad.

Happy day, happy day, when Jesus
 washed my sins away!
 He taught me how to watch and pray,
 and live rejoicing every day
 Happy day, happy day, when Jesus
 washed my sins away.

O happy bond, that seals my vows
 To Him Who merits all my love!
 Let cheerful anthems fill His house,
 While to that sacred shrine I move.

'Tis done: the great transaction's done!
 I am the Lord's and He is mine;
 He drew me, and I followed on;
 Charmed to confess the voice divine.

Now rest, my long divided heart,
 Fixed on this blissful center, rest.
 Here have I found a nobler part;
 Here heavenly pleasures fill my breast.

High heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
 That vow renewed shall daily hear,
 Till in life's latest hour I bow
 And bless in death a bond so dear.



Salvation Brings Joy!

Rom 14:17	"For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. "
Gal 5:22	"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ..."
Rom 15:13	"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. "
Psa 35:9	"And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation."
Isa 35:10	"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness , and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Final Thoughts – Remember the day you placed your complete faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation? If you haven't yet – simply understand your need for Him, and invite Him to come into your heart and life today.

*"The LORD Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation. Therefore, with **joy** shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation"* – Isaiah 12:3