



Open Heavens HYMN 62: ON A HILL FAR AWAY STOOD AN OLD RUGGED CROSS

Description

This is **hymn 62 of the Open Heavens** daily devotion written by Pastor E. A. Adeboye, General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG).

HYMN 62: ON A HILL FAR AWAY STOOD AN OLD RUGGED CROSS

1 On a hill far away
Stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross
Where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Chorus:

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

2. O that old rugged cross,
So despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God
Left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

3. In the old rugged cross,
Stained with blood so divine,

A wondrous beauty I see,
For 'twas on that old cross
Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.

4. To the old rugged cross
I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day
To my home far away,
Where his glory forever I'll share.

Open
HEAVEN
Hymn

**ON A HILL FAR AWAY STOOD AN OLD RUGGED CROSS HYMN
COMMENTARY**

Beloved in Christ, few hymns capture the paradox of the Christian faith as poignantly as **“The Old Rugged Cross.”** It takes the universal symbol of torture, shame, and defeat and transforms it, through the lens of Christ’s love, into the object of our deepest affection and the source of our eternal hope. This hymn is a personal testimony of love for the cross, a clear-eyed look at its horror, and a triumphant declaration of the glory it secures.

Why Sing This Hymn

We sing this hymn to keep the brutal reality and beautiful purpose of the cross central in our hearts. It helps us to see past the world’s scorn to the **“wondrous beauty”** of God’s sacrifice, reaffirms our commitment to follow Christ regardless of reproach, and fixes our hope on the crown that the cross has won for us.

1. It is a Hymn of Personal Love for a Painful Emblem (Verse 1)

The hymn begins by painting a stark picture: an instrument of execution, an **“emblem of suffering and shame,”** standing on a distant hill. Yet, the singer’s response is not revulsion, but love: **“And I love that old cross.”** Why? Because of who died there and why: **“the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain.”** Love for the cross is inseparable from love for the Savior who died upon it and for the sinners He came to save. Our affection is for what it *accomplished*, not for the wood itself.

2. It is a Hymn of Divine Condescension and Wondrous Attraction (Verse 2)

This verse heightens the contrast. The cross is **“despised by the world”**—foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). Yet, for the believer, it holds a **“wondrous attraction.”** This magnetic pull comes from the breathtaking truth it represents: **“the dear Lamb of God left His glory above to bear it to dark Calvary.”** The cross attracts us because it is the place where infinite love stooped to the deepest shame to rescue us. The greater the descent, the greater the love revealed.

3. It is a Hymn of Transformed Vision and Double Grace (Verse 3)

Here, the singer’s spiritual sight is clarified. What the world sees as a blood-stained tool of death, the believer sees with **“wondrous beauty.”** This beauty is in the blood, for it is **“divine.”** The cross is beautiful because of the divine life that was poured out there. The purpose of this suffering is then stated with beautiful simplicity: **“To pardon and sanctify me.”** The cross provides both our justification (pardon) and our sanctification (being made holy). It is the source of our entire salvation.

4. It is a Hymn of Steadfast Loyalty and Glorious Exchange (Verse 4)

The hymn moves from observation to commitment. Because of all the cross means, the resolution is made: **“To the old rugged cross I will ever be true.”** This loyalty means being willing to share in its **“shame and reproach gladly”**—identifying with Christ in a world that rejects Him. This earthly faithfulness is met with a heavenly promise: a calling **“to my home far away.”** The chorus, repeated throughout, seals the great exchange: we **“cherish”** and **“cling to”** the cross now, so that we may one day **“exchange it”** for a crown. The way of the cross is the path to the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

A Word for Your Spirit Today

Does the call to follow Christ feel costly? Are you tempted to downplay the “foolishness” of the cross to fit in with the world? This hymn calls you to look again at the old rugged cross.

See beyond the shame to the Savior. See beyond the blood to the beauty of a love that would bear your sin. Let it attract you, thrill you, and command your loyalty afresh.

Make the conscious choice today to cherish the cross—to value its message above the world’s applause. Bear its reproach with gladness, for you know it is not the end. You are clinging to a temporary emblem that guarantees an eternal crown. Keep clinging, keep cherishing, until the day of glorious exchange.

I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.

In the name of Jesus, who bore the cross for me, Amen.