

**Hymn of the Month** is a new worship-focused series at Salem Hellers. Pastor Bruce often reminds us that worship is the most important thing we do. As part of our efforts to enrich and deepen our worship, each month we will focus on one of the more recently composed songs from *Hymns of Grace* that we hope will become familiar and loved by our congregation. We will explore different ways to introduce and incorporate these songs throughout the month; we want to help you become comfortable with them. May we grow together in faith as we learn these theologically rich songs and join our voices in corporate worship.

# Hymn of the Month

December 2024



*Thou Who Wast Rich*  
#219 *Hymns of Grace*

1

*Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor,  
All for love's sake becamest poor;  
Thrones for a manger didst surrender,  
Sapphire-paved courts for stable floor.  
Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor,  
All for love's sake becamest poor.*

2

*Thou who art God beyond all praising,  
All for love's sake becamest man;  
Stooping so low, but sinners raising,  
Heav'nward by Thine eternal plan.  
Thou who art God beyond all praising,  
All for love's sake becamest man.*

3

*Thou who art love beyond all telling,  
Savior and king, we worship Thee.  
Emmanuel, within us dwelling,  
Make us what Thou wouldst have us be.  
Thou who art love beyond all telling,  
Savior and King, we worship Thee.*

**Thou Who Wast Rich** was written in 1934 by Frank Houghton, Editorial Secretary for the China Inland Mission. Missionaries John and Betty Stam had been ruthlessly killed by communist bandits and Houghton set out on a journey to visit and encourage the remaining missionaries. He wrote the text of the hymn as he traveled through the mountains of Szechwan Province during the Communist rebellion.

**The music:** The melody of the hymn is borrowed from a 17<sup>th</sup> century traditional French Christmas Carol: *Quelle est cette odeur agréable?* (What is this perfume so appealing?).

**The text** is based on II Corinthians 8:9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." Reformed theologian Ligon Duncan identifies the theme of each verse -- **Verse 1 describes Christ's humiliation:** "The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition wherein He, for our sakes, emptying Himself of his glory, took upon the form a servant in His conception and birth, life, death and after His death, until His resurrection." (Westminster Larger Catechism). **Verse 2 tells of His incarnation:** the Son of God became a man to redeem His people from their sins. **Verse 3 focuses on adoration:** "that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:18).

**Hymn Recording:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McOBD0-E0Mk>