

# Jesu, meine Freude

Motet "Jesu, meine Freude" by J.S. Bach

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## (Chorale)

Jesu, meine Freude  
meines Herzens Weide,  
Jesu, meine Zier.

Ach wie lang! ach lange  
ist dem Herzen bange,  
und verlangt nach dir!

Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,  
außer dir soll mir auf Erden  
nichts sonst liebers werden.

## (Romans 8:1)

Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches an denen,  
die in Christo Jesu sind,  
die nicht nach dem Fleische wandeln,  
sondern nach dem Geist.

## (Chorale)

Unter deinem Schirmen  
bin ich vor den Stürmen  
aller Feinde frei.

Laß den Satan wittern,  
laß den Feind erbittern,  
mir steht Jesus bei!

Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt,  
ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:  
Jesus will mich decken.

## (Romans 8:2)

Denn das Gesetz des Geistes,  
der da lebendig machet in Christo Jesu,  
hat mich frei gemacht von dem Gesetz  
der Sünde und des Todes.

## (Chorale)

Trotz dem alten Drachen,  
trotz des Todes Rachen,

Jesus, my joy,  
my heart's pasture,  
Jesus, my adornment!

Oh, how long! How long  
has this anxious heart  
yearned for you!

Lamb of God, my bridegroom,  
apart from you, nothing other on Earth  
shall become more dear to me.

There is therefore now no condemnation  
to them who are in Christ Jesus,  
who walk not after after the flesh,  
but after the Spirit.

Under your shelter,  
I am, from the storms  
of all enemies, free.

Let Satan threaten,  
let the fiend rage:  
Jesus stands by me!

Though, now, lightning cracks and flashes,  
though, too, sin and hell shriek,  
Jesus will protect me (lit. *Jesus will cover me*)

For the law of the Spirit  
of life in Christ Jesus (lit. *which made Christ live*)  
hath made me free from the law  
of sin and death.

Despite the old dragon,  
despite the jaws of death,

trotz der Furcht darzu!  
Tobe Welt und springe,  
ich steh hier und singe  
in gar sichrer Ruh.

Gottes Macht hält mich in acht,  
Erd' und Abgrund muß verstummen,  
ob sie noch so brummen.

**(Romans 8:9)**

Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich,  
sondern geistlich,  
so anders Gottes Geist in euch wohnt.  
Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat,  
der ist nicht sein.

**(Chorale)**

Weg mit allen Schätzen,  
Du bist mein Ergötzen,  
Jesu meine Lust!

Weg, ihr eitlen Ehren,  
ich mag euch nicht hören,  
bleibt mir unbewußt!

Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod  
soll mich, ob es viel muß leiden,  
nicht von Jesu scheiden.

**(Romans 8:10)**

So aber Christus in euch ist  
so ist der Lieb zwar tot um der Sünde willen;  
der Geist aber ist das Leben  
um der Gerechtigkeit willen.

**(Chorale)**

Gute Nacht, o Wesen,  
das die Welt erlesen,  
mir gefällst du nicht!

Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,  
bleibet weit dahinten,  
kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!

despite my fear of them!  
Rage, o world, and quake:  
Here I stand and sing,  
in entirely secure peace!

God's might watches o'er me;  
Earth and abyss must be silent,  
however much they keep on grumbling.

But ye are not in the flesh,  
but in the Spirit,  
if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.  
Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,  
he is none of his.

Away with all earthly treasure!  
You are my delight,  
Jesus, my pleasure!

Away, you vain glories,  
I do not want to hear you,  
remain unknown to me!

Misery, want, the Cross, disgrace and death:  
however much I suffer,  
they shall not tear me from Jesus.

And if Christ be in you,  
the body is dead because of sin;  
but the Spirit is life  
because of righteousness.

Good night, o creature  
who has chosen the world,  
you please me not!

Good night, you sins,  
stay far behind me,  
come no longer into the light!

<p>Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht, Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben, gute Nacht gegeben.</p>	<p>Good night, pride and pomp! And to you, life of iniquity, a special good night! (is given)</p>
<p><b>(Romans 8:11)</b> So nun der Geist, des, der Jesum von den Toten auferwecket hat, in euch wohnt, so wird auch derselbige, der Christum von den Toten auferwecket hat, eure sterbliche Leiber lebendig machen, um des willen, daß sein Geist in euch wohnt.</p>	<p>But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, (so that same Spirit) He, that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.</p>
<p><b>(Chorale)</b></p>	
<p>Weicht ihr Trauer-Geister, denn mein Freuden-Meister, Jesus tritt herein.</p>	<p>Yield, you mourning-spirits, for my Master of joy, Jesus, is entering in.</p>
<p>Denen, die Gott lieben, muß auch ihr Betrübten lauter Zucker sein.</p>	<p>To those who love God, even their sadness must be as pure sugar!</p>
<p>Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn, dennoch bleibst du auch im Leide Jesu, meine Freude.</p>	<p>Though I suffer here mockery and derision, yet, you remain, even in my sorrow, Jesus, my joy.</p>

**Notes on the translation:**

This translation is for the benefit of those studying the motet, who may not be readers of German (and should not be tempted to rely on the English language version of the text written in the choral score below the German original). Many existing translations, though singable, are usually misleading as to the actual meaning of Bach's German text: often the meaning is watered-down and obscured, or worse. I think my translation, though not metrical, rhyming, or singable, is far closer to the intended meaning, and will therefore help those studying the motet.

Of the eleven sections of this motet, Bach's choices of the text for sections 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, are taken directly from the New Testament, verses 1, 2, 9, 10, and 11, respectively, of the eighth chapter of the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans. Rather than a line-by-line translation of Bach's German language Bible text into English, I simply set the common English King James Version text of the same verses next to the German text.

In many cases, including the Bible verses, Bach's choral setting involves repetitions of phrases or parts of phrases. For clarity I have left out most of these repetitions, simply writing once, what may be repeated many times in the choral text.

See more on Jesu meine Freude: [http://schillerinstitute.org/music/jesu\\_meine\\_text.html](http://schillerinstitute.org/music/jesu_meine_text.html)

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