

DAY 1

My Day Begins

"I'm an old folks child, and I never realized until I was grown up how well they taught me values, how well they taught me survival skills: how to face life, how to face pain, how to face death, how not to be scared, and if you're scared that don't make no difference, just as long as you keep on steppin'."²

Old folks used to say,
"God is bread when you're hungry.
God is water when you're thirsty.
God is shelter from the storm.
God is rest when you're weary.
God's my doctor.
God's my lawyer.
God's my captain who never lost a battle.
God is my lily of the valley."³

Old people in the black community taught us that we should serve the Lord until we die. We can even serve the Lord on our deathbed or in any circumstances in life. If we have faith, hope, and love we can pass it on. If we

work together, pray and stand together, we can create a new heaven and ease life for each other.⁴

All Through the Day

Lord, show yourself to me in the people I meet today.

My Day Is Ending

Father, your sacred scripture promises that if I first seek your kingdom and your righteousness, you will provide all that I need.

I know that your Word is true and that you always keep your promises, rendering powerless the lies the evil one whispers into my ear in an effort to lead me into doubt and despair.

I know that you will never let me fall, no matter how strong the winds of disappointment, self-defeat, jealousy, and pride rage around me.

Just as the winds on the Sea of Galilee stopped at your command, your Word will still the winds that whirl around me.

You call me into communion with you through your sacred Word, when you proclaimed "I will not now call

you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you" (Jn 15:151).

You call me into communion with you through worship, when you sacrificed your life for mine for the redemption of my sins.

You call me into communion with you through community when I meet you in my friends, my enemies, my neighbor, and love them as I love myself.

Through your Word, worship, and community, I meet you every day of my life.

As long as I keep my eyes fixed on you, I will be alright. Amen.

DAY 2

My Day Begins

My people sang the songs of faith.
Songs of Adam and Eve,
Cain and Abel,
Noah, Moses, David,
And Jesus.

The songs of faith were passed on,
Taught, learned, and prayed

In an environment of love and celebration.

I did not realize I was receiving a religious education—that I was being taught prayer, salvation history, morals and values, faith, hope, love, and joy. I did not realize that the songs would form the basis of my lifelong religious education.

I did not realize that the songs would bring to me and to those I love comfort in sorrow, solace in grief, refuge in time of trouble, relief even from physical pain—always strength and hope, peace and joy.

Each spiritual is in its own way a prayer—of yearning or celebration, of praise, petition, or contemplation, a simple lifting of heart, mind, voice, and life to God.⁵

All Through the Day

I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free.⁶

My Day Is Ending

Father, you have given us the gift of song to delight,
to learn, to share, and to love.

While I may not be able to have your Word in my
hands at all times,

I can hold your Word in my heart through song,
I can sing when I am happy.

I can sing when I am sad.

I can sing when I need to feel close to you.

Lord God, may I never fear to sing your praises.

Blessed be God who created and longed for commu-
nion with Adam and Eve.

Blessed be God who sought after Abel and rightly
judged Cain for his sin.

Blessed be God who spared Noah and his family and
renewed the face of the Earth.

Blessed be God who raised up Moses to walk His peo-
ple out from bondage.

Blessed be God who anointed David to be a shepherd
of men.

Blessed be God who became Jesus Christ, true God,
and true man, to become sin for us, who knew no sin,
so that we may live eternally in communion with him.

Amen.

DAY 3

My Day Begins

Proud, strong men and women, artists, teachers, healers, warriors and dream makers, inventors, and builders, administrators . . . politicians, priests: They came to these shores in the slave trade. Those who survived the indignity of the middle passage came to the American continents bringing treasures of African heritage: African spiritual and cultural gifts, wisdom, faith, and faithfulness, art and drama.⁷

When I was growing up, many of the old women who had undergone the ignominy of slavery were around, and they told us about slavery because they said we had to know about freedom.⁸

All Through the Day

Christ has made me free.

My Day Is Ending

Dearest Jesus, because of what you sacrificed for me, I
am no longer a slave.

I am no longer a slave to opinion as my identity lies in
my relationship with you.

I am no longer a slave to others as earthly whims and
fancies hold no power or dominion over me.

I am no longer a slave to the world as you are the only
king I choose to serve.

I am a child of the Most High.

I share in the inheritance promised to Abraham.

Through Abraham's faith, he knew that your promises
are always kept and that his descendants would indeed
number the stars.

Thank you, my Lord, for freeing me from bondage.

Thank you, my Lord for the freedom to share the Good
News of your life, death, and resurrection with all
those I meet.

Thank you, my Lord, for freeing me from the burdens
that I place upon my shoulders, by taking them and
carrying them for me.

Thank you, my Lord, for sending Your Spirit to console
me when I feel I cannot take another step forward.

Thank you, my Lord, for giving me the words of life to
speak into another.

Thank you, my Lord, for loving me just as I am.

Amen.