

As the Heavens are higher than the earth

Words + Music: Richard Simpkin

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As the Heavens are higher than the earth

I started writing this song moulded around the various commands/invitations which appear in Isaiah 55 – Come and drink, listen, seek, delight etc. Noticing the 'For' in verse 8 drew me to starting the song there instead of with verse 1. This way the song starts with the nature of God himself, so that the invitations arise from knowing the majestic 'otherness' of God.

The chorus posed a problem. I wanted to give the opportunity for a personal response to those invitations, while at the same time proclaiming God's sure intention to accomplish his purpose through his Word (Isaiah 55:10-11). Having used the first 2 line of the chorus to give the response, 'I will trust, I will turn', I had 2 lines to explain that 'as the rain an the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.' (ESV). Condensing all this richness into 2 short lines isn't ideal, and it took me longer to write those lines than the whole of the rest of the song, but I hope that they catch the main point of those famous verses.

If I'm writing both words and music, I always write the words first. This isn't because there's any rule about what should be written first. I would simply rather let the shape of the tune be governed by the words rather than the other way round.

How to make it go

This is quite a gentle song. The first time of learning will need a full play through with a strong tune. It works well if verse 1 follows directly after verse 2, leaving the first chorus till after verse 2. Verse 3 needs to be much quieter than the rest of the song. Over-emphasising dynamics as musicians means that at least the congregation come with you some of the way! Singing the chorus twice at the end of the song works well after building dynamics up towards the end of verse 3.

Placement in a meeting

As the Heavens is a good song for just before the reading or sermon.

Richard Simpkin

As the heavens are higher than the earth

Words and Music:
Richard Simpkin
Em

D G/D D G

As the heavens are high-er than the earth, so his ways are high-er than the
Come and drink the ri-ver of his Word if you thirst for wa-ter that can
Come and lis-ten to his gen-tle voice for the words he speaks to us are

Asus⁴ A Bm Em

ways of this world, and his thoughts run deep-er than the mind of__ man; Fa-ther,
sa-tis-fy; come and join the ban-quet at the Mas-ter's_ feast where his
Spi-rit and life; come and seek your Sa-viour while he may be__ found, sure that

G A D D Chorus G A D

break in-to our dark-ened hearts. I will trust in you as you
love and faith-ful-ness pro- vide. I will trust in you as you
Je-sus' words can ne-ver lie.

G A Bm G/BA/C# D G A Bm

speak to me, I will turn to you as you call my name, as the rain gives life on this

G/E G A D

ar - id ground, so your word will bring your child - ren home.