I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW *Jesus*



ANDREW BAKER

Every hymn, whether old or modern, has a story behind it. One of the most touching stories comes from the 1800s, in the northern Indian province of Assam. A Welsh missionary, after enduring severe persecution, finally witnessed a spiritual breakthrough — one family in a hostile Indian village embraced faith in Christ and was baptized.

The village leaders were enraged. They seized the man, his wife, and their two children, demanding that he renounce his faith or watch his family be executed. Faced with this terrible choice, the man boldly declared: "I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back." He then watched as his children were killed before his eyes.

Still, the leaders pressed him. They brought his wife forward and demanded once more that he deny Christ. Again, he stood firm, replying: "Though none go with me, still I will follow." His wife was then struck down by the archers.

Left alone, he was given one final opportunity to renounce his faith. Having lost everything, he spoke his last words: “The world behind me, the cross before me. No turning back.” With that, he too was executed.

Yet, his words did not die with him. A year later, Welsh missionaries returned to the village and discovered that a revival had taken place. The very men who had killed this family had since come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The story spread, eventually reaching the Indian evangelist Sandhu Sundar Singh. Deeply moved, Singh adapted the martyr’s last words into song, setting them to traditional Indian music —one of the first uniquely Indian hymns. Later, English missionaries brought the hymn back to the West, where it reached Canadian songwriter George Beverly Shea, and it became the beloved hymn we know today.

Many believe that salvation is about making a commitment to God—deciding to

surrender, to overcome sin, or to live a better life. But the Bible teaches that salvation is not a decision we make; it is a gift we receive from God: **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"** (EPHESIANS 2:8 NKJV). Christ alone is our Saviour, the One **"Who gave Himself a ransom for all"** (1 TIMOTHY 2:6 NKJV).

When a person receives salvation through faith in Christ, gratitude fills their heart. The words of this hymn reflect that gratitude— a deep, unwavering love for the Saviour who first loved us.

Dear reader, our prayer is that you receive the gift of salvation by faith in Christ and follow Him all the days of your life.

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