

## Bless the Lord, O my soul (10,000 reasons)

Jonas Myrin & Matt Redman

Popular across denominations and well-known from broadcasts and YouTube, it is likely that *Bless the Lord, O my soul (10,000 reasons)* will be familiar to some in congregations even where it has not yet featured in Sunday worship. Taking inspiration from Psalm 103 vv. 1 & 8, co-author Matt Redman says of the song, 'it's all about the voices' and notes it works well with a simple accompaniment on piano or guitar.\* Explaining the '10,000 reasons' imagery used in vv2 & 3, Redman links the concept to similar uses in hymnody (see, for example, v3 of Charles Wesley's *Come, let us join our friends above*, StF 744) saying simply it is 'a good number to sound big'. For those introducing the song for the first time, here are a few points worthy of note to help us sing together.

### Hear it here

Interview with Matt Redman and an acoustic version:

\*Worship Together, New Song Cafe, 2016  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HigO51Yorf0>

Version with proficient band and large congregation:

10,000 Reasons (Live at the Sing! 2018)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kq9NwmEXkoo>

### Range

✓✓✓ (congregational)

Voice 

The song was written in the key of G and some arrangements preserve this (including the two YouTube versions). Try to find a version in E which is much more suitable for congregational singing and gives a satisfying range.


Example 1: Very suitable congregational range

### Introduction

Songbook versions usually print the chorus first. A good introduction to this song can be made by simply playing over one whole, or half chorus, substituting chord I to end (i.e., E in our version) before the congregation join from the last beat of the bar:

Introduction Chorus

A C#m A B C#m A B E N.C. A E



*Bless the Lord, O my soul,*

Example 2: Introduction (don't slow down in the penultimate bar)

### Listen out for ...

Most published versions preserve the authors' empty bar between verse and chorus. In the early stages of singing/learning you will probably hear some singers start the chorus early. Don't inadvertently encourage or give in to this! The building of anticipation for the chorus contributes much to the song's shape and impact and it is worth persevering.

## Regularity ✓ (all verses differ)

As published, verses 2 & 3 differ somewhat from verse 1 both rhythmically and melodically, and slightly from each other. Nevertheless, they *will* match the rhythm and melody of v1 (try it) and this gives a version that is more congregational and less dependent upon a strong lead.

11

new day daw-ning; it's time to sing your song a - gain. What  
slow to an - ger. your name is great and your heart is kind. For  
strength is fail - ing, the end draws near, and my time has come;

Example 3: vv2 & 3 fitted to the same melody & rhythm as v1

Consider substituting a rest of only half-a-beat in bar six of the chorus from the first time of singing. The original quarter beat is stylish and enjoyable if there's a strong vocal lead, but a shorter rest is rhythmically easier for a congregation to place accurately and worth modelling from the beginning.

6

O my soul. I'll wor-ship

Example 4: Quaver substituted for semiquaver

## Syncopation ✓✓ (occasional, expected)

Syncopation features twice in the chorus and twice in the verse, both times in places that feel natural and predictable. Most congregations should have no difficulty in singing this together exactly as written.

## Instrumentation

Best with a guitar- or piano-based accompaniment, but organists can make a significant contribution with some smooth chords during later choruses. Tie wherever possible, take care not to dominate or be too heavy; instead add your unique contribution (mixtures, chorus reeds, 16' pedal). Something like this:

Voice: Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, wor-ship his ho - ly name. Sing like

Organ: A, E, B/D#, C#m, A, E, B(sus4), B

Pedals: [Bass line]

Example 5: Organ line for later choruses

## Song set medley options

Songs that could flow well from this song, or lead into it:

- Similar themes:
  - *Amazing grace! (My chains are gone)*, John Newton / Chris Tomlin
  - *Bless the Lord, my soul*, Taizé Community
- Similar tempo:
  - *How great thou art*, Stuart K Hine (StF 82)