



September 25, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

John 14:27

INFO

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"HOME AGAIN" AT ABC HOMECOMING SUNDAY

We've celebrated ABC Homecoming Sunday on the first Sunday of November for at least two decades, so we've begun planning for the 2024 version. Each year we're surprised by some people who make an effort to return to this church because it had special significance during a formative time in their lives. As I reflected on this, the phrase "**Home Again**" stuck in my mind. I wondered, why is visiting a place from our past so important to us?

A phrase from a song came to me, but I couldn't quite remember how it went. When I searched on-line for "home again song," I was surprised to find several entries:

(1) **When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again**¹ - This song from the Civil War era (1863) put inspiring new words to a bawdy drinking song (original final line: "We'll all drink stone blind; Johnny fill up the bowl"). The new lyrics expressed a longing for the War's end, when young soldiers would find their way back to their childhood homes:

*When Johnny comes marching **home again**, Hurrah, hurrah!
The men will cheer, the boys will shout,
The ladies, they will all turn out.*

(2) **I Will Be Home Again**² - Another war --- more fractured relationships. Written in 1944, the song was popularized by Elvis Presley in a 1960 album. Again, a soldier stationed overseas is reassuring his sweetheart that he's determined to come back to her:

*I will be **home again**. We'll start anew
Darling, until then our dreams will have to do
Ahh, sweetheart, the love you're giving thrills my hungry heart
You make my life worth the living although we are apart.*

(3) **Back Home Again**³ - On a somewhat lighter note, John Denver sang in 1974 about the feeling a long-haul trucker has as he's returning to his home and family after a lengthy trip:

*Hey, it's good to be back **home again**
Sometimes this old farm feels like a long-lost friend
Yes, and hey, it's good to be back home again.*

(4) **Home Again**⁴ - Elton John wrote and sang in 2013 about the reality that, once we leave "home," we can never return to exactly the same reality, even though there's something within us that longs for those simpler times:

*If I could go back home; if I could go back home;
If I'd never left, I'd never have known.
We all dream of leaving, but wind up in the end
Spending all our time trying to get back **home again**..*

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(5) **You Can't Go Home Again**⁵ – So, in that sense, you have to accept the reality Kenny Rogers faced in this 1994 song:

*Every cowboy knows how the story goes when you're
running out of dreams.*

*You can mend your ways, you can walk for days,
but you can't go **home again**.*

The plaintive last line of the song is:

*Don't be disappointed if you sometimes stand alone
Among memories, old pictures and old poems.*

(6) **I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen**⁶ – However, the home-again longing often has the last word, as expressed in this classic (1875) song in which a devoted husband assures his Irish immigrant wife that, even though she is in her later years, he will make she has a chance to return to her cherished homeland (maybe in a coffin?):

*I'll take you **home again**, Kathleen, across the ocean
wild and wide;
To where your heart has ever been since first you were
my loving bride.*

.....

Okay, has any of this inspired you to make a special effort to come “home again” to ABC on **Sunday, November 3**? Check out the announcement below to see what you can do to help us all get into the Homecoming spirit.

Pastor George Van Alstine

¹ Listen to the Mitch Miller version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtEqgG2EdTs>

² Duet with Charlie Hodge: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybSy1Vgx_Pk

³ John Denver: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPndmL6Hfls&list=RDwPndmL6Hfls&start_radio=1

⁴ Elton John: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kP-7moQKd9M>

⁵ Kenny Rogers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9N3jjk2Oc4>

⁶ Three interesting versions:

Bing Crosby: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeWHUbvZXu0>

Elvis Presley: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=833Peu3J-fg>

Irish Tenor Josef Locke: <https://voices.pitt.edu/TeachersGuide/Unit%205/IIIITakeYouHomeAgainKathleen.htm>