

## **#3 of 12 - 5 & 10 on the 15th**

*(a monthly series on Christian missionaries who poured out (5) their lives in Christ's strength and power (10) sent out around the 15th of each month)*

### **Fanny Crosby: Blind for 94 years but helped millions to see**

Proverbs 28:26 — "Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe."

Intro Refrain - This is the third in a monthly series this year entitled *Victorious Christians You Should Know* from Warren Wiersbe's book by this title, introducing you each month to one amazing Christian from the past.

Church history is so important! It's both encouraging and inspiring to hear how Christians have sought the Lord, lived for Him, been sustained by Him to accomplish great things in the Kingdom of God, and then die and pass into eternal life. We are the church in our time! We must both take up the cause of Christ in our day and also live for Jesus with dedication and passion – laying down our lives so that the life of Christ might be lived in us and through us. I hope these short sketches inspire you to read more about each of these Christians and to go out, asking Holy Spirit, to help you live a more earnest and uncompromising Christian life.

### **Fanny Crosby: Blind for 94 years but helped millions to see**

Fanny Crosby, though blind for 94 years since the age of six weeks old, exemplified the spiritual insight that God desires for all people but that often eludes those who chase after the world that physical eyes can see.

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Fanny said that if she could have her sight restored, she wouldn't because her blindness was God's gift to her so she could write songs for His glory. "I could

not have written thousands of hymns if I had been hindered by the distractions of seeing all the interesting and beautiful objects that would have been presented to my notice.”

Fanny Crosby, born March 24, 1820, in Brewster, New York, is one of the most prolific hymn writers in Christian history. Despite losing her sight shortly after birth due to a medical error, Crosby’s life was marked by an extraordinary resilience and devotion to God, which she expressed through her music and poetry. Throughout her career, she composed over 8,000 hymns and gospel songs, most of which have the theme of seeing God’s spiritual and heavenly realm, many of which remain beloved in churches around the world today. Crosby’s early life was filled with hardship, but of her blindness specifically she said, “It seemed intended by the blessed Providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation.” She was raised by her mother and grandmother after her father passed away when she was young.

In spite of her blindness, Fanny was optimistic and full of grace. Though the doctor who caused her blindness, by carelessly and improperly treating her minor eye inflammation, seemed never to forgive himself as he moved away to a different town, Fanny said, “If I could meet him now, I would say, ‘Thank you, thank you’—over and over again—for making me blind.”

Her family encouraged her to learn and develop her intellectual and musical abilities. At the age of 15, she entered the New York Institute for the Blind, where she received an education in music and literature. There she honed her skills as a poet and songwriter, later becoming a teacher and a public speaker. Her most famous hymns include “Blessed Assurance,” “To God Be the Glory,” and “Jesus Is Tenderly Calling You Home,” all of which express themes of hope, faith, and divine love. Crosby’s work was influential not only because of the volume of hymns she wrote but also due to their emotional depth and maturity along with her theological richness. She was deeply committed to spreading the message of Jesus Christ through her music, which resonated with a wide audience, from church congregations to revival meetings.

Crosby’s hymn-writing was a Holy Spirit-filled and Holy Spirit-led process. “I never undertake a hymn,” she explained, “without first asking the good Lord to be my inspiration in the work that I’m about to do.” She’d hold a small book in her hand, then pray and meditate until she was in the right frame of mind, sometimes quoting several hymns to herself to prime the pump. As the ideas

came, she'd write the song in her mind and commit it to the vast storehouse of her seemingly endless memory as at times she'd have as many as forty different songs that were given her by the Spirit to hold and meditate on at once. She'd let the songs then lie still in her mind for a few days before dictating them to a friend who'd then send them off to the publisher. She would sometimes write as many as six or seven songs in a single day. Despite her prolific output, Crosby was known for her humility and never sought fame or financial gain from her music.

In addition to her work as a hymn writer, Crosby was also an advocate for the blind and an active member of several charitable organizations. She was a devoted Christian who believed her blindness was part of God's plan, and she often spoke about how it had strengthened her faith.

Fanny Crosby passed away on February 12, 1915, at the age of 94, leaving behind a legacy of rich spiritual music that continues to inspire people of faith around the world. Her hymns remain a vital part of Christian worship today, and her life serves as a testimony to the power of faith, resilience, and devotion to God.