

“Killing Me Softly with His Song” by Roberta Flack
John 4:7-42

Today is the 40th anniversary of the day that Roberta Flack’s song, “Killing me Softly with His Song” hit #1 on the Billboard top 100 chart ... Feb. 24th, 1973 ... and stayed there for 4 weeks ... dropped a bit ... and returned to #1 for another week.

In John 4:29 we meet a woman who experienced perfectly the truth of Roberta Flack’s song, “Killing me softly with his words.” The message song is identical to the message of John chapter 4 ... you can meet someone who sees you for who you really are and understands you at your deepest core.

Let’s set the background for the song first, then the Bible story. In the song imagine you’re in a coffee house and there’s a singer performing on a small stage. As he sings you suddenly realize that he’s telling YOUR life story in song ... all your pain, hurt, doubts, and fears are flowing through his guitar and microphone into the crowd. Here’s how Roberta Flack put it: (play snippet one)

I heard he sang a good song
I heard he had a style
And so I came to see him and listen for awhile
And there he was this young boy
A stranger to my eyes...

Strumming my pain with his fingers
Singing my life with his words
Killing me softly with his song
Killing me softly with his song
Telling my whole life with his words
Killing me softly
With his song...

And in John 4:29 there is a woman who meets Jesus at a well, and there she experiences him in a most life-changing way ... suddenly she drops her water bucket and runs into town to say ... ²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

I think this Bible story, and this song speak directly to our deep human desire to simply be understood. To know that SOMEBODY cares, somebody hears me, and that I can be real and authentic without being rejected. Don’t you want that? I do.

I want to be loved, “warts and all”.

A. God knows me fully.

Psalm 139:1-6, LORD, you have examined me and know all about me ... ² You know my thoughts before I think them ... ³ You know thoroughly everything I do ... ⁴ LORD, even before I say a word, you already know it ... ⁶ Your knowledge is amazing to me; it is more than I can understand.

- The LORD's examination of us is complete and unhindered.
- The LORD knows our past, our "now," and our future.
- The LORD knows us so amazingly well, we can't even grasp it fully.

Being known *this* well is uncomfortably joyous: [Play snippet 2]

I felt all flushed with fever
Embarrassed by the crowd
I felt he found my letters and read each one out loud
I pray that he would finish
But he just kept right on...

Embarrassed. Feverish. "Discovered." But strangely delightful to be known so well.

John 4:13-19,

[13] Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again.

[14] But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

[15] "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

[16] "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

[17] "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—

[18] for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

[19] "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet.

- A prophet is a person who tells us God's truth. Jesus eagerly desires to be that kind of influence in our lives ... filling us with the kind of truth that sets us free.
- In Christ there is no need for shame, guilt, or embarrassment because the intimate knowledge he has of us is perfected mated to a loving grace that looks forward, not behind.

B. God will continue to love me fully.

1 Corinthians 13:12-13, Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- ... even as I am fully known ... these three remain ... the greatest, is love!

Roberta Flack sings about an enduring quality to this type of love: [Play snippet 3]

He sang as if he knew me
In all my dark despair
And then he looked right through me as if I was not there
And he just kept on singing,
Singing clear and strong...

God is going to keep on discovering, exposing, and loving you completely.

- “He just kept on singing, clear and strong ...” that’s a persistent love that never lets me go, and that’s exactly what I have in Jesus.
- Romans 8:39, “... nothing in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Nothing. It’s a beautiful thing to discover that in a human relationship ... some of us have that ... but all of us can experience that “never let go” love with Jesus.

“AAA” Faith:

- 1) Admit you need God’s help.
- 2) Agree that God’s way is best.
- 3) Apply God’s truth to everyday situations.

A closing prayer ... “Dear God, Your love is indeed strong and persistent, thank You for never letting us go. We delight in being so wonderfully made and known. Help us each in our faith walk to continue saying ‘yes’ to You, day by day. In Jesus’ name, amen!”