

"Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit" BWV 106

1. Sonatina

2a. Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit. *In ihm leben, weben und sind wir,*¹ solange er will. In ihm sterben wir zur rechten Zeit, wenn er will.

2b. Ach, Herr, *lehre uns bedenken, dass wir sterben müssen, auf dass wir klug werden.*³

2c. *Bestelle dein Haus; denn du wirst sterben und nicht lebendig bleiben.*⁴

2d. *Es ist der alte Bund: Mensch, du musst sterben!*⁶ Ja, komm, Herr Jesu, komm!⁷

3a. *In deine Hände befehl ich meinen Geist; du hast mich erlöst, Herr, du getreuer Gott.*⁸

3b. *Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein.*⁹

**Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin
In Gottes Willen,
Getrost ist mir mein Herz und Sinn,
Sanft und stille.
Wie Gott mir verheissen hat:
Der Tod ist mein Schlaf geworden.**¹⁰

1. Sonatina

2a. God's time is the very best time.² *In him we live, move, and are,* as long as he wills. In him we die at the proper time, when he wills.

2b. Ah, Lord, *so that we may become wise, teach us to ponder that we must die.*

2c. *Put your house in order;*⁵ *for you will die and not remain living.*

2d. *It is the old covenant: Humankind, you must die. Yes, come, Lord Jesus, come.*

3a. *Into your hands I commend my spirit; you have redeemed me, Lord, you faithful God.*

3b. *Today you will be with me in paradise.*

**With peace and joy I go there [to heaven],
According to God's will;¹¹
I am consoled,¹² my heart and mind;
Gentle and quiet.
As God has promised me:**

¹Acts 17:28. The other words of this movement are newly written prose.

²"God's time" here does not mean "eternity" in the sense of "timelessness." The cantata indeed praises the will of God for making things happen in due season, "at the proper time."

³Psalm 90:12.

⁴Isaiah 38:1.

⁵That is, it is time to put your affairs in order and make a will or testament.

⁶Sirach 14:18.

⁷Revelation 22:20.

⁸Psalm 31:6, but there with "treuer" for "getreuer" (both mean "faithful"); the first part of Psalm 31:6 is quoted in Luke 23:46.

⁹Luke 23:43.

¹⁰First stanza of a hymn paraphrase of the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32).

¹¹Already in Bach's day, "in Gottes Willen" was an archaic expression for "nach Gottes Willen" ("according to God's will").

¹²This line implies not just a "consoled" heart, but also a "broadened" one. "Getrost" does mean "consoled," but a famous biblical passage about King Solomon's wisdom suggests a second, complementary meaning of the "getrost Herz" as a "broadened heart." In the Luther Bibles of Bach's day, 1 Kings 4:29 reads "Und GOTT gab Salomo sehr grosse Weisheit und Verstand, und getrost Herz" ("And God gave Solomon very great wisdom, and understanding, and broadened heart"). Of this "getrost Herz," the printed commentary in Bach's Calov Bible remarks, "im Ebr. ein weit Herz, das nehmlich viel, und grosse Sachen begreifen, und fassen kann" ("in the Hebrew: a broad heart that is able to comprehend and hold a lot, and great things").

Death has become my sleep.¹³

**4. Glorie, Lob, Ehr und Herrlichkeit
Sei dir, Gott Vater und Sohn bereit,
Dem Heiligen Geist mit Namen!
Die göttlich Kraft
Macht¹⁴ uns sieghaft
Durch Jesum Christum, Amen.¹⁵**

**4. Radiance,¹⁶ praise, honor, and glory
Be bestowed upon you, by name God Father, and Son,
[And] Holy Spirit.
The divine power
Makes us victorious
Through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

(transl. Michael Marissen and Daniel R. Melamed)



Scan or go to <http://www.bachcantatatexts.org/BWV106> for an annotated translation

¹³The notion in Bach's Lutheranism was that in death the body merely "sleeps" until it is transformed at its resurrection, as opposed to the Roman Catholic notion that the dead person spent time actively suffering in Purgatory before moving on to heaven.

¹⁴The Lutheran hymnals here read "mach," thus conveying the subjunctive "May the divine power make us victorious." Bach's cantata, however, reads "macht," thus conveying the indicative "The divine power makes us victorious." The oldest (non-autograph) source of Bach's cantata clearly reads "macht," not "mach."

¹⁵Last stanza of "In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr."

¹⁶In Bach's day, one of the meanings of the word "Glorie" (with an "e") in German and of the word "gloria" in English—both borrowed from French—was the halo or nimbus encircling the head or the whole figure in depictions of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God the Father, or the Virgin Mary.