

## Cantata BWV 105 Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht mit deinem Knecht

### 1 Chorus SATB *Corno, Oboe I/II, Violino I/II, Viola, Continuo*

Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht mit deinem Knecht. Denn vor dir wird kein Lebendiger gerecht.	Lord, enter not into judgment with your servant. For before you no living person is righteous.	Psalm 143:2 (dictum) No one is justified before the Lord.
---	---	---

### 2 Recitative Alto *Continuo*

Mein Gott, verwirf mich nicht, Indem ich mich in Demut vor dir beuge, Von deinem Angesicht. Ich weiß, wie groß dein Zorn und mein Verbrechen ist, Daß du zugleich ein schneller Zeuge Und ein gerechter Richter bist. Ich lege dir ein frei Bekenntnis dar Und stürze mich nicht in Gefahr, Die Fehler meiner Seelen Zu leugnen, zu verhehlen!	My God, do not cast me away— even as I bow in humility before you— from your countenance. I know however great your wrath and my offence, that you are both a swift witness and a righteous judge. I lay before you a free confession and do not throw myself into danger by denying, by concealing the failings of my soul.	Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from your might; Psalm 27:9 Lord, turn not thy face from me. Confession of guilt and plea not to be cast away.
--	--	---

### 3 Aria Soprano *Oboe, Violino I/II, Viola*

Wie zittern und wanken Der Sünder Gedanken, Indem sie sich untereinander verklagen Und wiederum sich zu entschuldigen wagen. So wird ein geängstigt Gewissen Durch eigene Folter zerrissen.	How they tremble and waver, the sinners' thoughts as they accuse one another and at the same time excuse themselves. In this way a troubled conscience is torn by its own torture.	Meditation on the difficulties of the troubled conscience when God is not present (indicated by lack of basso continuo)
--	---	---

### 4 Recitative Bass *Violino I/II, Viola, Continuo*

Wohl aber dem, der seinen Bürgen weiß, Der alle Schuld ersetzt, So wird die Handschrift ausgetan, Wenn Jesus sie mit Blute netzet. Er heftet sie ans Kreuze selber an, Er wird von deinen Gütern, Leib und Leben, Wenn deine Sterbestunde schlägt, Dem Vater selbst die Rechnung übergeben. So mag man deinen Leib, den man zum Grabe trägt, Mit Sand und Staub beschütten, Dein Heiland öffnet dir die ewgen Hütten.	But fortunate is he who knows his guarantor the one who will indemnify his guilt. Thus the bond is cancelled when Jesus sprinkles it with blood. He himself fastens it to the cross. The account of your goods, body and life— when your hour of death strikes— He himself will deliver to the Father. Thus, when they carry your body to the grave,  Let them cover it with sand and dust, for your savior opens to you eternal shelter.	The debt of sin is paid through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
--	--	---

### 5 Aria Tenor *Corno, Violino I/II, Viola, Continuo*

Kann ich nur Jesum mir zum Freunde machen, So gilt der Mammon nichts bei mir. Ich finde kein Vergnügen hier Bei dieser eitlen Welt und irdschen Sachen.	If only I make Jesus my friend, then Mammon is worth nothing to me. I find no pleasure here in this vain world and among earthly things.	Trading worldly pleasures for the Christian life.
--	---	---

### 6 Chorale SATB *Violino I/II, Viola, Continuo*

Nun, ich weiß, du wirst mir stillen Mein Gewissen, das mich plagt. Es wird deine Treu erfüllen, Was du selber hast gesagt: Daß auf dieser weiten Erden Keiner soll verloren werden, Sondern ewig leben soll, Wenn er nur ist Glaubens voll.	Now I know you will calm my conscience that plagues me. Your faithfulness will fulfill what you yourself have said: that on this wide earth no one shall be lost but shall live for ever, if only he is full of faith.	11 <sup>th</sup> verse of chorale, <i>Jesu du der meine Seele</i> , text and melody by Johannes Rist, 1641: God calms the troubled conscience; faith leads to salvation
--	---	--

English translation by Francis Browne (March 2002) with amendments from translations by Melvin Unger and Albert Dürr.

### Conductor's Notes © Ellen Frye

**BWV 105** was first performed in Leipzig on July 25, 1723, for the ninth Sunday after Trinity. This places it at the beginning of Bach's first annual cycle for Leipzig—the tenth cantata performed since his installation, the sixth newly composed cantata. The text for the first movement is Psalm 143:2 and for the last is the 11<sup>th</sup> verse of Johann Rist's *Jesu du der meine Seele*. The librettist for the other movements is unknown. The basic theme of the cantata is the familiar Old Testament Law versus New Testament Gospel.

- The first movement is a grand prelude and fugue. The prelude brings out the foreboding of the Old Testament *dictum*, "Lord, enter not into court with thy servant." The orchestra, independent of the chorus, begins with slowly ascending chromatic tetrachords and a sighing motif; the chorus emphasizes the "Herr" of the plea. The underlying harmony is dark until the third chorus section when a descending cycle of fifths leads to a prolonged dominant that prepares for the fugue. Set to the second line of the psalm, "For before you no living person is righteous," the fugue is a permutation fugue, each voice singing the same succession of subject and (3) countersubjects over a harmonic series of descending fifths. Two full expositions lead to a brief episode and finally the conclusion.

Prelude in 4/4	Mm 1 – 8	Mm 9–15	Mm 16–22	Mm 22–28	Mm 29–47.2
Orchestra	Imitative (a) ascending tetrachords and (b) sighing motifs		(a) and (b) motifs reversed	(d) Motif based on "Herr" motif	(a) & (d) motifs
Chorus		(c) "Herr" motif		(c) "Herr" motif	(c) "Herr" motif
Harmony	g	g->D	D->d	d->A	A->B <sub>7</sub> ->D

Fugue in c	Mm 47.3 – 67	Mm 67–87	Mm 87 – 93	Mm 93 – 128
Orchestra		Doubles voices	Episode	Conclusion
Chorus	Exposition 1, TBSA	Exposition 2, BTAS	Episode	Conclusion
Harmony	D -> g	g -> d	d -> D	D - G

2. The unaccompanied alto recitative paraphrases two psalms, 27:9, “O Lord, turn not thy face from me,” and 51:11, “Cast me not away from your sight” to further emphasize the harshness of the Law and the sinner’s need to acknowledge both the swift judgment of the Lord and the errors of the soul.
3. The first aria is a meditation on the sinner’s troubled conscience, which trembles in fear even as it seeks to justify sinful thoughts and actions. Bach scores the aria for oboe and upper strings, making the absence of the basso continuo an allegory for a conscience without firm grounding. The continually shifting modalities point to the sinner’s vacillations. Bach’s texture embodies both the trembling (the violin tremolo on sixteenth notes and the viola on eighths) and wavering of the soul (oboe and voice imitating and overlapping each other in a halting, fumbling motif). In the B section, the twists and turns of the melody emphasize the tortured soul. [See Note below for a comparison of this aria with the similar aria in BWV 33.]
4. The accompanied recitative for bass, the turning point of the cantata, is the voice of God reminding the Faithful that Jesus’ death on the cross indemnifies human sin and leads to salvation after death.
5. The tenor aria completes the shift from anxiety to the assuredness of faith. The melody—oboes, corno, and voice in unison—is dance-like with 32<sup>nd</sup>-note roulades in the first violin (and flute for the BSG study) for added exuberance. The solo conveys both the sweetness of the friendship with Jesus and the confidence that such friendship banishes the temptations of the world.
6. The closing chorale recapitulates the changing affects of the cantata and thus the progress of the sinner toward salvation. In the first *stolen*, the opening melody is disguised both by the harmony (beginning in B $\flat$  major instead of the more common g minor) and by the altered melody line in the first measure, where the altos sing over the sopranos on the third beat and the sopranos sing a B $\natural$  instead of a B $\flat$  on the fourth. The chromatically descending bass line refers back to the opening movement (the ascending chromatic lines of the orchestra in the prelude and the first countersubject of the fugue). The first violin repeats the chromatic descent in the brief interludes between each textual line. The entire accompaniment in the upper strings — moving from sixteenth-note quadruplets through triplets, eighth-note duplets, dotted triplets, and in the final chromatic descent, quarter notes — extends the metaphor for the trembling conscience gradually becoming calm, the dread of the Law being transformed into reassurance that Christ’s death means salvation for the Faithful.

The cantata progresses, movement by movement, through salvation history: Old Testament (1 and 2) with a meditation on sin (3), New Testament (4) with a meditation on the Christian life (5), and finally, the voice of the church in the chorale. Bach’s choice of modalities is an example of what Eric Chafe labels a “descent–ascent” cantata. In this model of tonal allegory, modulation to “deeper flats” (i.e., keys with more flats) signifies movement away from God, while modulation to fewer flats indicates movement toward God.

Movement	Descent			Ascent		
	1 Chorus	2 Recit	3 Aria	4 Recit	5 Aria	6 Chorale
Key	g minor $\flat\flat$	c $\rightarrow$ B $\flat$ $\flat\flat$	E $\flat$ $\flat\flat\flat$	B $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ E $\flat$ $\flat\flat$	B $\flat$ $\flat\flat$	B $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ g $\flat\flat$
	Dictum, Old Testament	Old Testament Law	Meditation on troubled conscience	Voice of God on the meaning of Christ’s death	Meditation on choosing Jesus over mammon	Affirmation that faith leads to salvation

*Deepest flats*

### A Note on Two Arias

The first arias of BWV 105 and BWV 33 have very similar motifs—an upward leap of a seventh followed by a mordant figure—yet the affects of the two arias could not be more different. Both arias are in major keys (BWV 33 is in C major, BWV 105 in E<sub>b</sub> major); both follow *secco* recitatives with texts that emphasize the God as judge. Here their similarities end. The alto aria of BWV 33 is lighthearted, even joyful; the soprano aria of BWV 105 is dark with despair. You can hear the difference right from the first notes of the orchestra. In BWV 33, the violin introduces the motif while the lower strings, including the cello, play pizzicato. In BWV 105, the oboe plays the motif, and the upper strings play *tremulante* figures. The absence of the continuo and the shifting modalities—chords in the third or fourth position—make the harmony sound unstable.

Further differences are heard in the complete melodic lines. The two arias begin similarly: the mordant motif, in BWV 33, fits the sinner’s footsteps that “falter fearfully”; the same motif, in BWV 105, fits the sinner’s thoughts that “tremble and waver.” But the second line of each text and melody is quite different: In BWV 33, the faltering footsteps are followed by “Yet Jesus listens to my plea” set to a melody that swells with the confidence of reassurance. In BWV 105, the thoughts that tremble and waver continue into further despair, and the melodic line twists and turns with sudden upward rushes and faltering descents. Bach’s music seems to be saying that, in BWV 33, God is ever present, buoying up doubt with understanding, while in BWV 105, God is not present and nothing can offset the torture of the soul.

The different affects of the two arias are a function of a fundamental difference between the two cantatas. BWV 33, a chorale cantata, opens with Christ as hope and comfort for the sinner. The church (indicated by the chorale) is present throughout the cantata with references to the chorale text in every movement. BWV 105, on the other hand, opens with the Old Testament and the Law and continues that theme in the first recitative. In the third movement, the sinner is still caught in the grip of sin. Hope will appear only in the next movement, where the voice of God will remind the sinner that Christ has taken on the burden of human sin.

### Lessons for the Tenth Sunday After Trinity

#### Epistle: I Corinthians 10: 6-13 Take heed lest ye fall

[6] Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

[7] Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

[8] Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

[9] Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

[10] Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

[11] Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

[12] Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

[13] There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

#### Gospel: Luke 16: 1-9 Parable of the unjust steward

[1] And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

[2] And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

[3] Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

[4] I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

[5] So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

[6] And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

[7] Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

[8] And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. [9] And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.