

*Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* What God does, that is done well

**Chorale quotations from chorale in purple, scripture in green**

**1 Chorus SATB** *Corno col Soprano, Flauto traverso, Oboe d'amore, Violino I/II, Viola, Continuo*

<p><i>Verse 1</i>          Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan,          Es bleibt gerecht sein Wille;          Wie er fängt meine Sachen an,          Will ich ihm halten stille.          Er ist mein Gott,          Der in der Not          Mich wohl weiß zu erhalten;          Drum laß ich ihn nur walten.</p>	<p><i>Verse 1</i>          Whatever God does, that is done well,          his will remains just.          However he takes charge of my affairs,          I will hold still before him.          He is my God,          who in time of trouble          well knows how to sustain me;          therefore I just let him rule.</p>	<p>Romans 8:28 We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him.</p> <p>God always does what is good.</p>
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**2 Recitative Bass** *Continuo*

<p><i>From Verse 2</i>          Sein Wort der Wahrheit stehet fest          Und wird mich nicht betrügen,          Weil es die Gläubigen nicht fallen noch verderben läßt.          Ja, weil es mich den Weg zum Leben führet,          So faßt mein Herze sich und lässet sich begnügen          An Gottes Vätertreu und Huld          Und hat Geduld,          Wenn mich ein Unfall rühret.          Gott kann mit seinen Allmachtshänden          Mein Unglück wenden.</p>	<p><i>From Verse 2</i>          His word of truth stands fast          and will not deceive me,          for it lets the faithful neither fall nor perish.          Indeed, since it leads me in the way of life,          my heart is composed and is content          with God's paternal faithfulness and grace;          and it has patience          when a mishap befalls me.          God can with his almighty hands          turn round my misfortune.</p>	<p>Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God proves true.</p> <p>God's word shows the way.</p> <p>Arioso and melisma on "turn round."</p>
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**3 Aria Tenor** *Flauto traverso, Continuo*

<p><i>From Verse 3</i>          Erschüttere dich nur nicht, verzagte Seele,          Wenn dir der Kreuzeskelch so bitter schmeckt!          Gott ist dein weiser Arzt und Wundermann,          So dir kein tödlich Gift einschenken kann,          Obgleich die Süßigkeit verborgen steckt.</p>	<p><i>From Verse 3</i>          Do not shudder, despairing soul,          when the cross's cup tastes so bitter to you!          God is your wise physician and miracle-worker          who can pour for you no deadly poison,          Although the sweetness lies hidden.</p>	<p>John 13:7 (Jesus): What I am doing you do not know now but afterward you will understand.          God will reveal the good in apparent tribulation.</p>
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**Cantata BWV 99****4 Recitative Alto Continuo**

<p><i>From verse 4</i>  Nun, der von Ewigkeit geschloß'ne Bund  Bleibt meines Glaubens Grund.  Er spricht mit Zuversicht  Im Tod und Leben:  Gott <b>ist mein Licht,</b>  Ihm <b>will ich mich ergeben.</b>  Und haben alle Tage  Gleich ihre eigne Plage,  Doch auf das überstandne Leid,  Wenn man genug geweinet,  Kommt endlich die Errettungszeit,  Da Gottes treuer Sinn erscheint.</p>	<p><i>From verse 4</i>  Now the covenant, unbroken from eternity,  remains the foundation of my faith.  It says with confidence  in death and life:  God <b>is my light,</b>  to him <b>will I submit.</b>  And though every day has  its own torments,  Still, after the suffering has been endured,  when one has wept enough,  there comes finally the time of deliverance,  when God's faithful intention appears.</p>	<p>Suffering will be  delivered into salvation.</p> <p><b>Gospel: Matt 6:34 Do not  be anxious for  tomorrow...</b></p>
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**5 Aria (Duet) Soprano, Alto Flauto traverso, Oboe d'amore, Continuo**

<p><i>From verse 5</i>  Wenn des Kreuzes Bitterkeiten  Mit des Fleisches Schwachheit streiten,  Ist es dennoch wohlgetan.  Wer das Kreuz durch falschen Wahn  Sich vor unerträglich schätzt,  Wird auch künftig nicht ergötzet.</p>	<p><i>From verse 5</i>  When the bitter sorrows of the cross  struggle with the weakness of the flesh,  it is nevertheless done well.  Whoever, through false delusion,  reckons the cross unbearable  will find no delight in the hereafter.</p>	<p><b>Epistle: Galatians 6:9 If  you sow to your own flesh, you  will reap corruption from the  flesh; but if you sow to the  Spirit, you will reap eternal life  from the Spirit.</b>  The struggle between  flesh and spirit leads to  good.</p>
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**6 Chorale SATB Flauto traverso, Oboe d'amore, Corno, Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Continuo**

<p><i>Verse 6</i>  Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan,;  Dabei will ich verbleiben.  Es mag mich auf die rauhe Bahn  Not, Tod und Elend treiben,  So wird Gott mich  Ganz väterlich  In seinen Armen halten;  Drum laß ich ihn nur walten.</p>	<p><i>Verse 6</i>  What God does, that is done well  Therefore I will abide.  I may be driven on the rough road  by distress, death and misery,  Yet will God,  like a father,  hold me in his arms;  therefore I just let him rule.</p>	<p>God sustains the Faithful  through earthly suffering.</p>
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English Translation by **Francis Browne** (August 2002) with amendments from translations by Melvin Unger and Albert Dürr.

## Conductor's Notes ©Ellen Frye

**BWV 99 *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*** (first version) is a chorale cantata composed for the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity and first performed on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1724. The chorale text is by Samuel Rodigast (1675), the melody by Severin Gastorius (1674) based on a tune by Werner Falorius (1659). The cantata is one of 17 with exceptional flute parts that Bach composed between July and November 1724. Robert Marshall believes a virtuoso flutist was likely in residence Leipzig during this time.

The general affect of the cantata is joyful for the basic message that whatever happens on earth, it is all for the best since God has the best interests of humans at heart. Both arias emphasize the correlation between human suffering and Christ's suffering on the cross: the first begins with the bitterness of the "cross's cup," the second with the "cross's bitter sorrows." The recitative between these two arias reminds the Faithful that whatever the trials of daily life, God's design eventually shines through.

1. The chorus opens with a concerto—a lively *tutti* for strings followed by a concertino for flute, oboe d'amor and violin 1. Each line of the chorale is introduced by the soprano with the other voices following in straightforward harmonies that emphasize the text: God always acts with reason and He is a true guide in difficult times; for that the Faithful must rejoice.
2. In the bass recitative, the Faithful are urged to take God's word as divine guidance and remember that God can turn around human misfortune. At the end, Bach transforms the *secco* recitative into an arioso with an extended melisma on the phrase "turn around."
3. The tenor aria is a meditation on the transformation of human suffering into salvation. In the ritornello, Bach offers two brief motifs that prepare for the text's first line, "Do not shudder, despairing soul": a pair of sighs for "shudder" and a descending chromatic tetrachord for "despair." When the tenor enters, Bach adds inversions of the motifs, first in the flute, then the continuo, and finally as the tenor sings, "cross's cup." The motifs and inverted motifs express the simultaneity

of fear and not-fear, despair and not-despair, alluding to the simultaneity of Christ's suffering and human salvation. In the B section—"God is your wise physician...who can pour no deadly poison"—Bach continues to develop the motifs and their inversions, but with underlying harmonies more major than minor. Two falling melismas—on "pour" and on "hidden"—assure the Faithful that human suffering, like Christ's suffering, leads to good.

4. The alto recitative, referring to the Gospel of the day (**Matt 6:34 Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own**), urges the Faithful to see God as light. At the end, Bach turns the *secco* recitative into an arioso with a melisma on "shining through."
5. The duet is a meditation on the struggle between spirit and flesh, a reference to the epistle of the day (**Galatians 6:9 If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit**). The harsh dissonances and sweet resolutions of the double canons for flute/oboe and soprano/alto express the struggle; at the end of the A section, the flute-oboe canons fall silent while the soprano and alto sing in parallel harmony the chorale refrain (**It is nonetheless well done**) over the continuo's ascending scale, all moving toward the cadence in D major. Bach sets the B section text ("whoever through delusion thinks the cross unbearable") to the canons and motifs of the A section, but at "will in the future not be delighted," he adds a new theme of upward leaps, first in the oboe and then in the voices leading to a melisma in parallel harmony on "delighted." As in the tenor aria, Bach is emphasizing the simultaneity of delight (of the faithful) and not-delight (of the damned). Whittaker calls the upward leaps a metaphor for "Christians being flung hither and thither."
6. The closing chorale is a plain harmonization of the chorale with the text summing up the requirement for faith: no matter how difficult life seems, have faith that God's intent will eventually become apparent.

### Galatians 5:25-6:10

If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another. My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbour's work, will become a cause for pride. For all must carry their own loads.

Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher.

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

### Matt 6:23-34

but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.