

The Folded Napkin – program note

At Lewis Avenue Baptist Church's 2006 Missions Conference, Dr. Dean Miller told us about the folded napkin. In John 20:7, we are told that the napkin which had been placed on the Lord's head at burial was "wrapped together [or folded] in a place by itself."

Dr. Miller told us about the Jewish custom where the master would signal the servant to clear the dinner table by wadding up his napkin and tossing it on his plate. If, however, he wanted to indicate that he was not finished eating, he would neatly fold the napkin and leave it next to his plate. In other words, according to Jewish custom, the folded napkin means the Master is coming back!

Beginning to work on an Easter Cantata, I was inspired to write lyrics for a song on the subject of the folded napkin. I sent these lyrics to Dr. Miller in Colorado for his feedback. In his reply of May 21, 2007, Dr. Miller said, "What a blessing it is to me to know that you were able to put that message to such grand and great words."

The first version of the song was performed at Lewis Avenue Baptist Church in Temperance, Michigan by my wife's vocal trio, the King's Daughters. Some time after that premiere, I was moved to insert another verse and set the whole song for Mixed Chorus and Piano. The first performance of this new version took place on May 1st, 2011, at the Centenary United Methodist Church in Granville, Ohio.

In Christ's Service,
--Donald M. Wilson