

## **Wednesday, April 2: Land of Hopes and Dreams**

*Written by Matt Benton, Lead Pastor, Messiah United Methodist Church, Springfield, VA*

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5I2pryLKw0kmA41kEBBhFP?si=244c297e30d14a2d>

*Big Wheels rolling through fields*

*Where sunlight streams*

*Meet me in a land of hope and dreams*

A couple years ago I rented a movie from the library called *Blinded by the Light*. It's about Javed, the son of Pakistani immigrants to England in the late 80s. He is bullied by his peers in school because he is a minority. His father has a job far below his ability. His family is forced to endure undue treatment. And his world seems small. He is the other. He is a stranger in a strange land and is never allowed to forget it. Then one day he discovers Bruce Springsteen. And suddenly his world expands.

Now Javed's and Bruce's lives, situations, and contexts couldn't be any more different. And yet, somehow, something about what the Boss sang about (being born into a blue collar provincial determined life dreaming of something more, knowing that something more was attainable if only you had a car and the courage to be your own person) spoke to Javed. It made him dream for himself of a better life. It inspired, it breathed life into Javed's imagination. It was as if fire from on high had come down and illuminated something true and beautiful to Javed that he could never have recognized himself.

The journey we take during the Lent and Easter seasons is the journey of realizing that without a savior, we are stuck in a provincial, determined life of sin. Part of the Lenten journey is longing for more, longing for the freedom of God's love and grace. The Lenten journey is in confessing our need for a savior and discovering a God in Jesus Christ who comes to inspire, to breathe life into our very souls. And through Easter we come to believe and to know that which we long for, by God's grace, is our destiny. Through Lent and Easter we encounter the truth that is the very fabric of the universe.

Here is that truth that leads to life, that leads to new life. One day we should be brought to the land of hope and dreams. One day we shall ascend to our God. But not because we built a utopia. Not because we built a great tower and earned our way there. Not because we finally came together to fix all that is wrong.

We shall be brought to the land of hope and dreams because Christ himself shall bring us there. Jesus whom we crucified and God raised from the dead shall take us. Almost as if we board a train. A train full of redeemed sinners. A train full of the unworthy. A train full of God's children. A train bound for the promised land; for the land of hope and dreams.

This is our story. This is our song.

*Big wheels roll through fields*

*Where sunlight streams  
Meet me in a land of hope and dreams  
This train  
Carries saints and sinners  
This train  
Carries losers and winners  
This Train  
Carries whores and gamblers  
This Train  
Carries lost souls  
This Train  
Dreams will not be thwarted  
This Train  
Faith will be rewarded  
Big wheels roll through fields  
Where sunlight streams  
Meet me in a land of hope and dreams*