

I'd Rather Have Jesus

Rhea Miller/George Beverly Shea

The story of this song is best put in words by the composer of the music. In his book, *Songs That Touch the Heart*, Bev Shea tells this story:

"Once again Mother—my musical guardian—had apart. A lover of beauty, be it a flower, a bird, a poem, an ennobling quotation—whatever—Mother was a collector...she loved to share poetry and she always had some verse in hand copied from a book or clipped from a magazine. It was her practice of leaving such writing on the piano music rack which led to my writing "I'd Rather Have Jesus" when I was twenty years old."

The same Sunday morning I read those wonderful words for the first time, I wrote music for them and used the song that same day in my father's church service. Of course, Mrs. Rhea F. Miller is the catalyst.

Without her inspiring lyrics, there would have been no song....Over the years, I've not sung any song more than "I'd Rather Have Jesus," but I never tire of Mrs. Miller's heartfelt words.

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;
I'd rather be His than have riches untold;
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land;
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand:*

refrain:

*Than to be the king of a vast domain or be held in sin's dread sway!
I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.*

George Beverly Shea traveled and ministered in song with Billy Graham for many years.