In the late 1960s, while expecting their third child, Bill and Gloria Gaither were going through a rather traumatic time in their lives.

Bill was recovering his strength from a bout with mononucleosis. They, along with their church, were the objects of accusation and belittlement. Gloria was experiencing a time of torment, including fear of the future and of bringing children into such a crazy, mixed-up world.

As Gloria sat alone in a darkened living room, tormented, and fearful, the Lord sent a calm and peaceful rest to her. The power of the resurrection of Christ seemed to affirm itself in their lives once again. Gloria remembers the realization that it was LIFE conquering death in the regularity of my day. The joy seemed to overcome and take precedent over frightening human circumstances.

And the song Because He Lives came out of their personal bout with darkness:

Because He Lives

(1) God sent His Son,
they called Him Jesus,
He came to love,
heal, and forgive;
He lived and died
to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove
À my Savior lives.

(2) Because He lives I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives All fear is gone;

because I know

He holds the future.

And life is worth the living just

because He lives.

(3) How sweet to hold

a newborn baby,

And feel the pride,

and joy He gives;

but greater still

the calm assurance,

This child can face uncertain days

because He lives.

(4) And then one day

I'll cross the river,

I'll fight life's final war with pain;

And then as death gives way to victory,

I'll see the lights of glory and
Because He Lives

I'll know he lives.

~Origin of Because He Lives (2)

I am a wife and a mother. It was in the middle of the upheaval in the sixties that we were expecting our third baby. The drug culture was in full swing, existential thought had obviously saturated every area of our American thought, the cities were seething with racial tension, and the God-is-dead pronouncement had giggled its way all through our educational system.

On the personal front, Bill and I were going through one of the most difficult times in our lives. Bill had been discouraged and physically exhausted by a bout with mononucleosis, and in that weakened condition had little reserve to fight the psychological battle brought on by some external family problems. Someone whom we had cared about a great deal had hurled some accusations at us and at the Fellowship of Believers and at the whole idea of the existence of God.

It was on New Year’s Eve that I sat alone in the darkness and quiet of our living room, thinking about the world and our country and Bill’s discouragement and the family problems—and about our baby yet unborn. Who in their right mind would bring a child into a world like this? I thought, The world is so evil. Influences beyond our control are so strong. What will happen to this child?

I can’t quite explain what happened at that moment, but suddenly I felt released from it all. The panic that had begun to build inside was gently dispelled by a reassuring presence that engulfed my life and drew my attention.

Gradually, the fear left and the joy began to return. I knew I could have that baby and face the future with optimism and trust. It was the Resurrection affirming itself in our lives once again. It was LIFE conquering death in the regularity of my day.

—Gloria Gaither