Last changed: 20 December 2025. Cantatas BWV 164 Aria (T) - Recit (B) - Aria (A) - Recit (T) - Duet (S/B) - Chorale.

Introduction and updates at melvinunger.com.

Ob I, II

Rit (99-106) Cm-Gm

Vla

NBA I/21; BC A128 13. S. after Trinity (BWV 77, 33, 164) *Galatians 3:15-22 (The purpose of the Law) parable of the good Samaritan) Librettist: Salomon Franck (see notes). FP: 26 August 1725 (Leipzig: St. Thomas)

*Luke 10:23-37 (The greatest commandment; Instrumentation: Flauto traverso I, II

J.S. Bach Cantata No. 164 Chamber Cantata presenting the Good Samaritan as the example of true Christian love and mercy.

The cantata's symmetrical form centers on no. 3, which identifies the crux of hte

symmetrical) forms, in which center movements (where the mirror image begins)

inverted (formal inversion reflects an aspect of reversal or turning in the text).

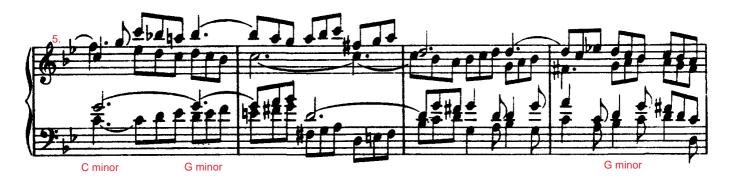
matter as expounded in the Gospel reading—that Christians should have a heart like the Good Samaritan's in Jesus' parable. Bach often used chiastic (x-shaped/

provide the crux of the matter. There antithetical elements meet or are paradoxically

Ihr, die ihr euch von Christo nennet

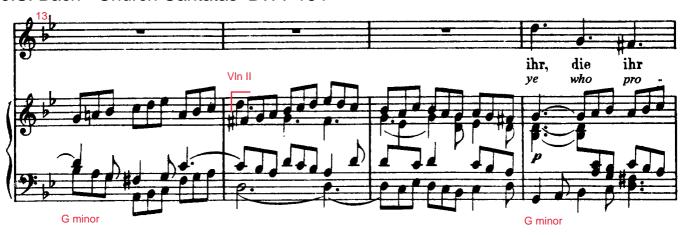


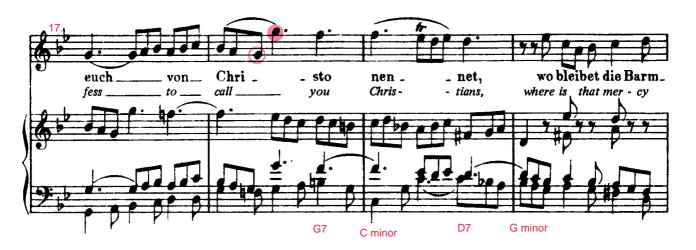
For word-for-word English translations, see Unger, Handbook to Bach's Sacred Cantata Texts.



This is a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental oridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement. Bach treats the motto here as a canon to illustrate the central idea that Christians must imitate Christ in loving one's neighbor, a precept originating in Leviticus 19:18. In the day's Gospel reading, Jesus quotes this Old Testament law. The idea is reminiscent also of Jesus' words, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 15:35). Bach chooses 9/8 meter, its forward propulsion pressing the accusation—or perhaps representing love (see m. 58). While the poem is in iambic meter, Bach places the opening word (unaccented in the poem) on a strong beat and follows it with two more strong beats to emphasize the accusation

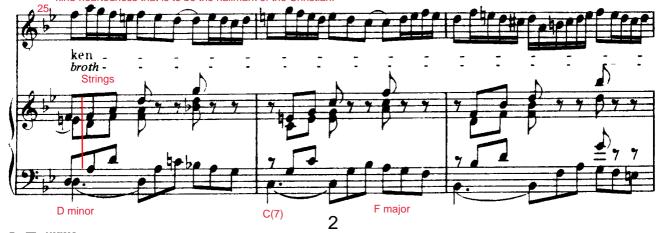






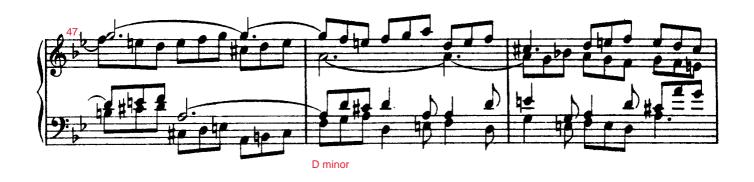


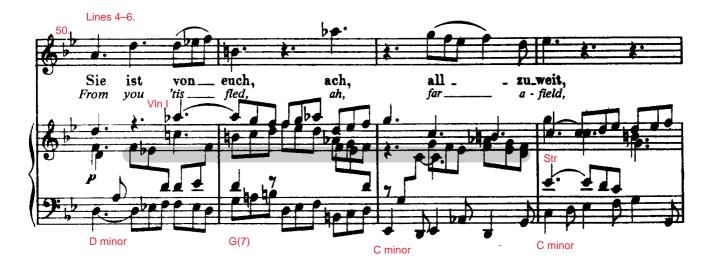
Text painting: A long melisma with supsensions leading to the third beat brings out the lilt of the meter, persumably to represent the kind-heartedness that is to be the hallmark of the Christian.

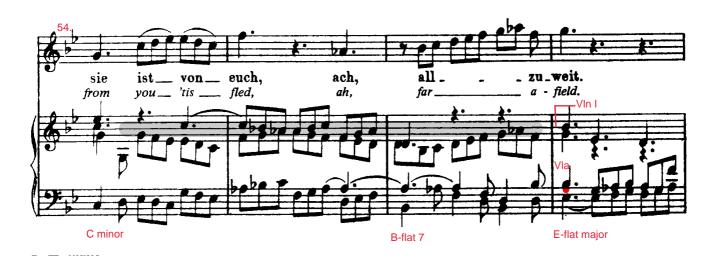


J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 164 Lines 1–3. The fact that Christians often do not demonstrate the compassion of _ net? Ihr, die ihr Christ shows them to be "poor weak sinners," a description associated - ers? Yewith D minor (see note). who pro -Ritornello D minor (for the significance D minor of D minor, see note). wo bleibet die Barm. euch von _ Chri _ sto nen _ _ net, _ call fess. _ to _ Chris you - tians, where is_ that mer - cy D minor her _ zigkeit, wo blei bet die Barm her zigkeit. wo, da_ran now_ re-vealed, where, where is __ that mer - cy now_ re-vealed by which_ D7 **C7** G minor (hemiola) net, daran man Chri_sti Glieder ken _ net? man Christi Glie der ken we know our Chris - tian broth by which we know our Chris-tian broth ers,





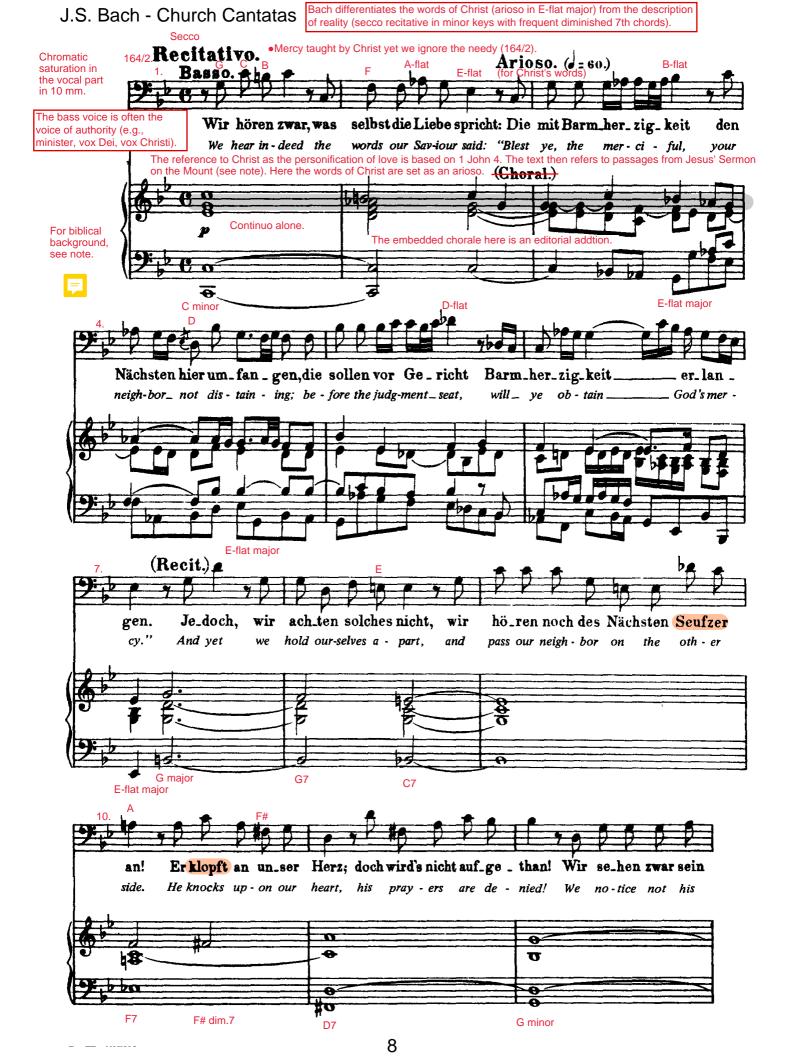




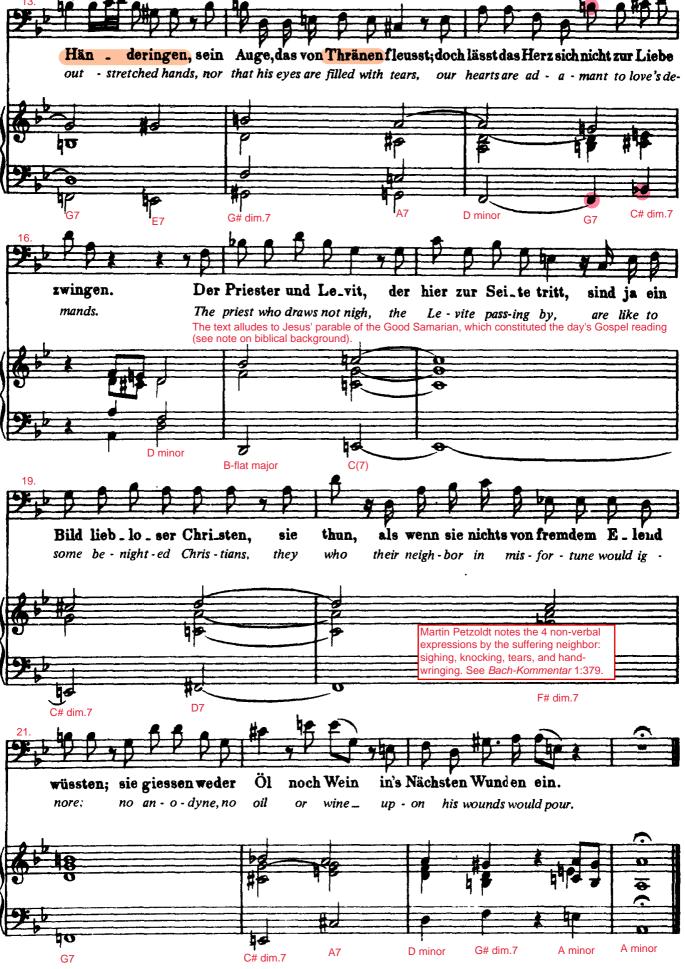








Tritone clash followed by cross relation for "heart that refuses to love. D minor C# dim.7 G7 sind Le - vite pass-ing by, are like to Θ mis - for - tune would ig -F# dim.7 his wounds would pour.



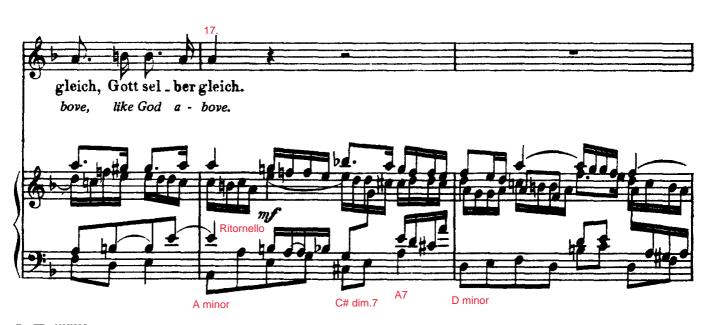
Alto is often the voice of intimate faith, the believing soul or church. See Martin Petzoldt, Bach-Kommentar 1:176, 541, 592, 694, 2:824, 2:917, 3:101, 143, etc. •Sharing the pain of others makes us like God (164/3). (Andante d= 66.) No upper strings. Ritornello derived from later the thematic material is thoroughly integrated in vocal & instrumental parts orm (Rhyme: ABCCB 'Gegenbar" form: ABB' Ritornello (mm. 1-9) Dm Lines 1-2 (9-17) Dm-Am E major D minor Rit (17-21) Am A minor _ines 3-5 (21-27) Am-Gm Rit (27-31) Gm Lines 3-5 (31-37) Gm-Dm Rit (37, 2-9) Dm A minor F# dim.7 D7 A minor G minor A(7)For biblical background, see note. Text painting: Descending lines of sighing duples depict taking compassion on one's neighbor as the Good Samaritan did. **Alto.** The timbre of the transverse flutes reinforces the idea of tenderheartedness. Lines 1–2. Nur durch Lieb unddurch Er _ bar men werden wir Gott sel ber gleich, durch Lieb _ By _ our _ love and ten - der mer-cy _ may we be like God a - bove; by love_ D minor

D minor

Rhetorical emphasis: Ornate melismas on "Erbarmen" ("showing mercy").

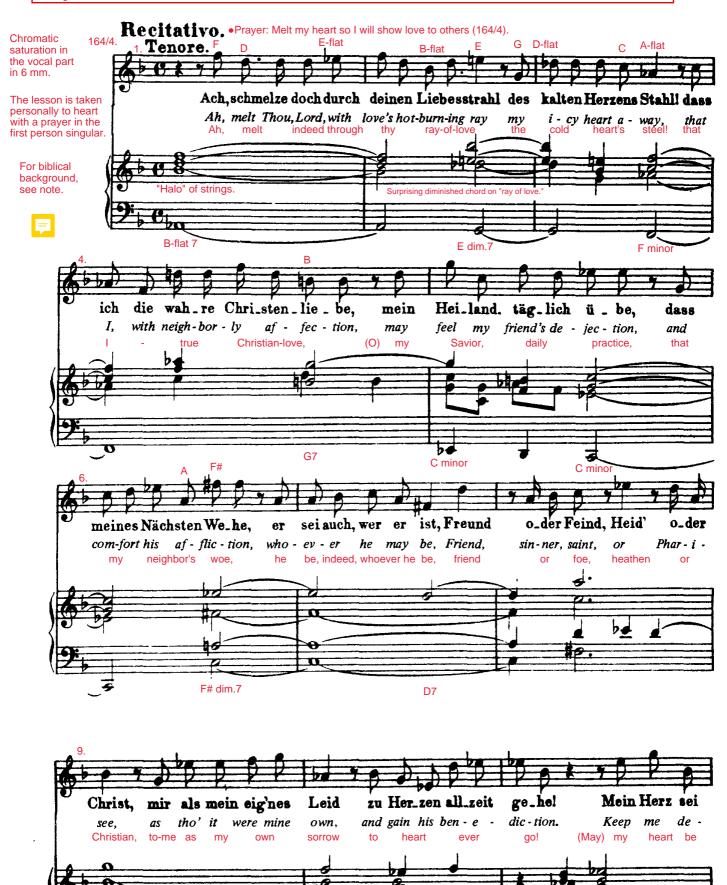












B-flat 7

E-flat major

E-flat major

bed

E-flat major

G minor



University Press, 2005), p. 519.

J.S. Bach - Church Cantatas BWV 164 Lines 1–2. Theme A: begins with canon at the octave, then free polyphony. Soprano. den, Hän die sich nicht ver _ schlie char - i - ty Hands in ex - tend Basso. Hän den, die sich nicht ver _ For biblical schlie _ background, see note. Hands char - i ty tend in еx G minor wird der ge than, der Him zsen, auf_ _ mel - ed find the heav -- ens_ 0 - pen_ wide, the heav Him . wird der - ssen, ed find the heav -F major B-flat major _ mel auf_ge _ than. wide; ens o-pen _ mel auf_ge _ than, ens o-pen wide,

G minor

D7

B-flat major







