

What You Preserved

Song By: Jaxson R. Harlan (JHM)

Key: Em (minor)

Suggested capo: none (or capo 2 and play in Dm shapes if easier on the voice)

Tempo: 70 BPM

Time: 4/4

Intro

Em C G D (2x, fingerpicked)

Verse 1

Em C
I came up with the blinders on,
G D
Head down, hands hard, never looked around.
Em C
Warehouse nights and my daddy's fields,
G D
Schoolwork stacked till the sun went down.
Em C
Met her young and I took her name,
G D
Two babies came while I stayed the same—
Em C
Present in the house, missing from the frame,
G D
Running from the fear I already failed.

Verse 2 (same)

Em C | G D
(same pattern through the verse)

Chorus

C G
You didn't just save me from the fire—
Em D
You kept what I was too blind to hold.
C G
The woman who stayed when I wasn't there,
Em D
The children who somehow still call me home.
C G
You restored the years the locust ate,
Em D

You put the house back on the land.

C G

I was starving in a far-off country

Em D

And You were already running down the road.

Verse 3 (same as Verse 1)

Chorus

Bridge

Em D

I was the son who spent it all

C G

On work and worry and the fear of falling.

Em D

Came to my senses in the pigsty dark,

C G

And You met me before I finished calling.

Em D

Robe and ring and a table set—

C G

A grandfather now with open eyes.

Em D

All I thought I'd lost forever

C G

Was waiting in Your hands the whole time.

Final Chorus (same chords, fuller)

Tag

Em C

The blinders came off...

G D

And I finally saw

Em

What You preserved.

Worship Musical Direction

Play this as a testimony song, not a high-energy praise song. It should feel like a man telling the truth in a dimly lit room and then realizing the Father has been in the room the whole time.

Feel: Dark country gospel — dusty, honest, unhurried. Think weathered voice over a simple acoustic guitar, not a big worship production.

Groove: Slow, almost heartbeat. Let the spaces between the lines breathe. Do not rush the verses.

Dynamics:

Verses 1 & 2: Very sparse. Fingerpicked acoustic (or soft piano). Voice almost spoken. Leave room for the weight of the story.

First chorus: Lift just enough — add bass and light brushes or a simple kick. Keep it restrained.

Verse 3: Stay intimate. The “first time I looked and really saw her” line should feel like the air changes.

Bridge: Drop everything except guitar and voice (or just voice). This is the prodigal moment. Let it sit.

Final chorus: Open it up — full band, pedal steel or fiddle swell, stacked harmonies on “You kept what I was too blind to hold.” Still keep it from getting slick.

Tag: Strip back again. Last line almost a whisper, then let the last Em hang.

Instrumentation (keep it small):

Acoustic guitar (main voice)

Upright or simple electric bass

Light drums (brushes or kick + rim)

Piano or organ pad for warmth

Pedal steel or fiddle for the country-gospel color (enter on the choruses and last chorus)

Vocal: Raw, slightly gravelly, sincere. Don’t over-sing it. The emotion is in the restraint. Let the gratitude come through as wonder, not performance.

This is a song that should leave people quiet when it ends.