

Amazing Grace

Introduction – This paper was written by a high school and college mathematics instructor. It was not written or produced by any particular church or denomination. It is provided free of charge as an expression of God's love for mankind.



Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

John Newton (1725-1807)

"Amazing Grace" is one of the most popular and beloved songs in the history of the world. It is recognized by billions of people, published in most church hymnals, included in numerous film productions, and frequently performed at funerals, both religious and secular. On November 20, 2016, I woke up at 4:15 am with the inspiration for this article. I invite you to consider some of the truths that are found in the words of this familiar song.

When John Newton penned the words, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound," he was not speaking of the sentimental melody. In the common practice of his day, words were often sung to various melodies as the words would fit. Although John Newton wrote these words, there is some question as to whether he ever used or heard the melody commonly associated with "Amazing Grace."

We know that John Newton spent much of his life working in the slave trade, a terrible occupation. However, James 2:9-10 (KJV) says, "9But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. 10For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Showing favoritism or treating people with partiality clearly falls short of God's plan for Christian love. Jesus said, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31 KJV). Do we like to be

treated poorly because of some characteristic that someone chooses? God is most holy; His standards are so extremely high. He says, if you commit even one sin, then you are guilty of all of them.

There are many philosophies and religions that teach the basic goodness of man. They are all false. Look at history or current events. We see war, greed, abuse, murder, lust, prejudice, hate, corruption, etc. The Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV), "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Since the fall of Adam, man has continued with a natural tendency to sin. Even the apostle Paul said in Romans 7:15-16, 18-19 (KJV), "¹⁵For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. ¹⁶If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice."

Christ did not die on the cross to save people who did not need to be saved. Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever taken anything? Have you ever looked at someone in a lustful manner? Jesus said that you are an adulterer. Matthew 5:27-28 (KJV) says, "²⁷You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." In fact, we are all in the same boat together. Without Christ, we are lost. Romans 3:23 (KJV) tells us, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

So, what is grace? Grace is God's unmerited favor. Salvation can never be earned. "⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV). Any religion that teaches you to earn salvation is a false religion. It is an insult to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and His blood that was shed to redeem mankind. Our attempts at righteousness are simply garbage in God's sight. In Isaiah 64:6 (KJV), we read, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Our hearts are desperately wicked. We are essentially guilty of all sins. Our attempts at righteousness are a failure. John Newton called himself a lost, blind, wretch. No one can be saved by the law. Our sinful nature makes it impossible. However, the law shows us how very much we need God's amazing grace. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ²¹But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²²Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Romans 3:20-22 KJV).

Please hear the Good News, the Gospel. God loves you! He even loves wretches. ⁸"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8-9 KJV). He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10 KJV). He heals broken hearts. He sets captives free. He gives sight to those who walk in darkness (Luke 4:18 KJV).

If the Spirit of God is speaking to you today, then today is your day of salvation. Second Corinthians 6:2 says that at just the right time, God heard you. If you cry out to God, He will hear you. On the day of salvation, He will help you. He will send the Holy Spirit to guide you and draw you to Him. Certainly, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation! There is no guarantee of tomorrow. Your heart may become hard and your ears deaf to His call. Today, if you are fortunate enough to hear His voice, I urge you to say yes to Christ and His love.

Jesus Christ is truly the only begotten Son of God, who came to this earth to fulfill His plan of redemption from the foundation of the world. He ⁷"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:7-11 KJV).

You can experience a spiritual rebirth today. Playing "Amazing Grace" at your funeral cannot save you from hell. You must repent of your sins and receive God's amazing grace into your heart today. Romans 10:9 KJV says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Will you pray today and begin your journey with Christ? "Lord Jesus, I confess with my mouth today that You are the only begotten Son of the living God. I repent and turn from my sins. I believe that You died on the cross to save me from my punishment and I receive You as Savior and Lord of my life. Please help me to grow in Your fellowship and serve You all the days of my life. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer today from your heart, then you have become a child of God. You have been born again and your adventure with Christ begins. Read the Bible each day, beginning with the book of John. Talk to God each day and ask for His help. Find a church that loves Jesus, loves people, worships God with enthusiasm, and teaches the Bible. They will help and encourage you on your journey with Christ.

May God bless you,
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