

Amazing Grace

Lyricist: John Newton

Source: Carrell & Clayton's Virginia Harmony, 1831

Arranger: Edwin O. Excell

Scripture References

2 Corinthians 4:15

Acts 20:24

Ephesians 1:3-14

Revelation 21:10-13

Video Sample

<https://vimeo.com/712195460>

Hymn Devotional

"Amazing Grace," arguably Christianity's most recognizable and well-known hymn, has enjoyed widespread popularity for generations. Sung worldwide, translated into many languages, recorded thousands of times, its influence cannot be measured. When played or sung in virtually any setting, listeners will pause, perhaps reflecting on days gone by, tearing up or even humming along. Of all sacred music, this tune seems to conjure up the most memories and associations, causing listeners to take heed of a Higher Power. Lest we drown in the sentimentality, however, let us consider the truth within the text. Before we can enter fully into an understanding of grace, we must acknowledge the state in which we resided prior to receiving this grace.

The Apostle Paul, though long considered a saint, wrote of his constant struggles with sin and wrongdoing: "When I want to do good, evil is right there with me... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7: 21, 24, NIV). This learned theologian recognized his utter inability to overcome the very worst within himself. No amount of heroic efforts or mental struggle could aid him in conquering his innate desire and tendency to sin. He considered himself a wretch. In modern terminology, Paul thought of himself as a miscreant, a lowlife, immoral and derelict, a good-for-nothing. Indeed, Paul illuminated the human condition; each one of us can share his testimony as ours.

In the midst of such a devastating view of humanity, we come to a word of hope: grace. Grace is God's work of love within the most wretched of people; grace is receiving forgiveness regardless of what we have done; grace is being shown mercy when we deserve punishment and shame. By definition, grace is undeserved, unmerited. This incredible grace has the power to relieve our fears, carry us through times of heartache and troubles, leading us to the very presence of God. His grace encourages us to hope amid difficulties, and believe in the promises God proclaims in his Word.

The heart of the message of this well-loved hymn is that no matter how lost a person is, redemption is sure when one encounters the unconditional love of Christ. For those who have never experienced divine rescue and salvation in Jesus Christ, this grace comes as an offer of life-giving pardon and freedom from enslavement to sin. For those who have once tasted the sweetness of this grace, yet have fallen away for a season, this same grace beckons; offering continual forgiveness, never-ending hope, no matter how many times we fall. This grace will come from the hand of the God who loves and forgives all, for as long as life endures.

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