



Amazing Grace

AMAZING GRACE

John Newton, 1779

A musical score for the hymn 'Amazing Grace'. It is written in G major and 3/4 time. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The lyrics are: 'A - mazing - 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.' The second system continues the melody and accompaniment.

Amazing Grace — the Article

As a music fan, I am always on the lookout for new songs to add to my i-Tunes playlist. I spend way too much time on Internet sites such as *Youtube* and in Apple's i-Tunes store in an effort to feed my habit. I recently came across a contemporary Christian song by the artist Matthew West, titled *Hello, My Name Is*. It's a song about the emotional lies Satan uses daily, such as defeat and regret, to steal us away from God. The chorus for the song is stated below:

*Hello, my name is child of the one true King
I am saved, I am changed, I have been set free
'Amazing Grace' is the song I sing
Hello, my name is child of the one true King*

Historians tell us *Amazing Grace* has been the song we sing for over 200 years. One of the most recognizable Christian hymns,

this song, that soothes the soul with lyrics praising God's endless grace and mercy displayed toward those of his creations who realize their imperfect nature and repent, was put on paper as a poem by John Henry Newton, an English sailor turned clergyman.

Newton had been exposed to religion off and on throughout his formative years. However, following his mother's death at age 6, young Newton became rebellious and often found himself on the wrong side of the law. While in his teens, authorities 'suggested' to Newton he enlist in the Royal Navy. Having done so, Newton gained the dubious reputation of being the most profane sailor in the navy. He spent his leisure time drinking, cursing and gambling – the illicit trifecta precursor to today's *sex, drugs and rock and roll*.

had many people in our home who found this very intimidating and uncomfortable at first, but when they saw that we just ate and talked about everything and laughed they usually wanted to come back. Not always!

We had three rules for our table.
1. Do not come to the table without a shirt.
2. No ball caps at the table.
3. Talk one at a time, take turns.
This went for everybody.

As the grandkids came along another was added:
4. No cell phones at the table. (Seems this is a hard rule for adults, too.)

It is so seldom we get to enjoy each other without any outside interruptions. Meal time is that perfect time.

Yes, I know I am the old one now, and this is what I see: even with all the technology; we are losing the art of communicating. I can remember the time not too long ago when I would get in the car with my grandkids and we would talk and sing, visit and laugh; now everyone is on their phone or iPod or watching a movie. Well I continue to sing and talk and laugh; I think it annoys my grandkids. I believe more than ever we need to find time to really communicate and-

what better way than at the table EATING and visiting.

We started with six at our table plus any company and now we have twenty six plus any company. We still love that special time with our family. It is hard for all of us to sit at the same table now, but we still find a way to sit, talk and enjoy each other more than ever. We so miss the evening meals, but sometimes we are still able to have some of the kids or grandkids for evening meals.

We thank you God for settings us in families.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
1 Corinthians 13:13

... Nell Franklin
Springdale, Arkansas



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old enough to try to fix his own plate as food was passed. The parents were so proud of him and proud that they had Dr Spock's book on how to raise your children. They informed us that their child was well advanced and acted much older because of the method they were using to discipline him. The chicken was passed; he grabbed the chicken with his hands and took the second or third piece he picked up. The mashed potatoes came around and, with his hands again, he took a few handfuls. This happened with everything that was passed to him. I guess they had not introduced him to a serving spoon yet. However, he did know how to pass food, as my parents later told us, trying to say something positive I guess. His parents apologized and said they were working with him on his table manners; they said that they would talk to him later, not to embarrass him. We all kept looking at my mother, her look broadcast to us "just don't say anything, we will talk later".

There was also the time a grown man burped as he stood up and hung his cloth napkin on the back of the chair and announced, "I really need to use the bathroom, be right back." That was more information than anyone at the table needed to know.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13:2

I tell you this because that has been 55 or 60 years ago and I still remember those meals,

I tell you this because that has been 55 or 60 years ago and I still remember those meals, and many more, like they were yesterday. I will say that after these particular meals the discussions were about manners, discipline and respect for others. We were taught by being sent from the table if our manners were not acceptable. I am happy my parents loved us enough to do that for us.

My very best friend was with me a lot; she shared a lot of our evening meals with us. You know she is a Christian today and I like to think it is because of my mother's unselfish act of letting me have her with me a lot of evenings since both of her parents worked.

I know it is old fashioned to sit at the table and have a prayer with no cell phones and no TV -- just eat and visit. We have

His naval enlistment having been fulfilled, Newton moved on to the noble profession of slave trading, for which he sailed the Atlantic Ocean. Newton's life changed in 1748 as he sailed back to England on a merchant ship. The ship he was

...Newton moved on to the noble profession of slave trading...

aboard was ravaged by a deadly storm, and Newton begged God for mercy. The storm subsided and for the remainder of the voyage to England Newton read the Bible along with other Christian literature. Newton's ship reached Britain May 10, 1748. By the end of the ship's voyage, Newton had accepted the doctrine of evangelical Christianity. Although his true conversion would occur later, it is evident Newton recognized the significance of his personal repentance and salvation, as he would proceed to commemorate May 10 each subsequent year until his death.

The newly converted John Henry Newton was ordained in 1764 as a priest of the Church of England. He was named curate (parish priest) for the small community of Olney, Buckinghamshire. At Olney, Newton was

much loved for his compassion toward the parishioners during his 16-year tenure. During this time his writing and oratory skills were very much works in progress. Much to Mr. Newton's good fortune, he developed a friendship with published poet William Cowper (*KOO-PER*), a poet who would pen such notable works as *Light Shining out of Darkness*, which 'gave the English language the idiom "God moves in a mysterious way/His wonders to perform."' (Wikipedia) Cowper was just recently removed from having been institutionalized due to insanity. The relationship the two men forged proved beneficial to both parties. Newton honed his writing skills with Cowper's tutelage while Cowper benefited from the rational stability exhibited by Newton. Together they started writing hymns, which at this time in history were not set to music. An organized worship service might have included the audience repeating or chanting the words.

Together, Newton and Cowper attempted to present something of a lyrical nature for each service. Historians believe the original text of what would become *Amazing Grace* was penned in 1772 and was presented to the attending congregation January 1, 1773. The

poem was included in a collection of works published anonymously in 1779 titled, *Olney Hymns*.

“Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said, who am I oh Lord God, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough, in your sight, oh God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men, O Lord God” (1 Chronicles 17:16-17).

Newton related to David more than other Biblical figures because of his obvious mortality ...

The author of these verses, King David, marveled at the grace of God. Newton related to David more than other Biblical figures because of his obvious mortality that rises out of the scriptures when they are read. Both men had committed their share of sins, many of those quite egregious in nature. And both men recognized their salvation was tied solely to God’s forgiving grace. Newton had titled what would become his most famous work *1 Chronicles 17:16-17* –

Faith’s Review and Expectation, the first line of which read, “*Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)*”. Newton’s sermon that day focused on the necessity to express our gratefulness for God’s guidance.

The poem significantly impacted churches in England. Churches in America were not as affected until the poem was set to music in 1835 when famed southern composer William Walker combined Newton’s words with the music of a traditional song titled, *New Britain*. The modern version of the song includes a verse that was added after it was included in another cherished literary work, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The vastly influential American classic, published in 1852 includes the now-adopted verse:

*When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise,
Than when we first begun.*

This verse was included when the version we know today was published in the early 1900’s by Edwin Othello Excell. It remains enormously popular today and is a standard in all major church hymnals, and it has been esti-

Your teens start driving and you hear, as they leave for school, “Mom I won’t be home till late tonight.” The parent responds “OK I am doing pork chops tonight and we will eat at 6:00. So if any is left I will put it on the stove.” You know, they may surprise you and be home just in time to sit down to the table. You may sometimes get a call saying, “Can I bring my friend home for dinner with me?” If yes is the answer, you will end up with more than you were counting on, and oh what fun.

An hour at the table was about normal at our house. Then homework started or all the other things of the evening started. This kept us in the loop of what everyone was doing and what was important to all.

“Use hospitality one to another without grudging.” 1 Peter 4:9

As busy as the whole family is now, I do realize this is not possible every evening, and maybe never possible. I know times are different now and adjustments have to be made. Since eating is a must that is a good time to try and be with family to eat. Maybe it is finding a quiet place to eat out. All I know is, whoever is in charge of the meals has a big responsibility in front of them. Not what to cook, but

getting everyone there. Sometimes it is impossible, but no matter how many make it to the table, try to have it for the ones who can be there, you may be surprised who will show up.

I can only speak of my own home life and what I have experienced as a child, and yes I can remember that far back, meals with my own siblings, mom, dad and me. I even remember meals at both grandmas’ houses, too.

When I was growing up we always had fun meals, with six kids and all of us having so much to share at meal time. Since my dad was a preacher we had a lot of company at meal time. Daddy always would say “hey stay for dinner, Reva always has plenty”....as my mother was in the kitchen putting another potato in the pan and making another pan of cornbread...but there was always plenty. It might just be soup and cornbread but we shared. There were a lot of funny things that happened as we had people from every walk of life at our table. It is not what you have to eat; it is the sharing and conversation that makes it great.

I remember one family...a man and woman and one little boy. The boy was probably about 4,

DON'T UNDER ESTIMATE DINNER

BREAKFAST---First meal of the day

LUNCH---A light meal between breakfast and dinner

DINNER---The main meal, taken in afternoon or evening...A formal meal in honor of a person or special occasion, usually between 5 and 7p.m.

SUPPER---as my generation called the last meal of the day, unless you were having a big meal for a special occasion or banquet, then it was called "Dinner"

* "Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way." Genesis 18:5

* "And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey...." Mark 1:6

* "And they did all eat, and were filled." Mark 6:42

Since the beginning of time eating has been important to all humans. I don't care what you call it or which meal it is ---I believe the dinner table holds the family together. It helps teach discipline, respect (as we talk one at a time), how to communicate, social skills, and table

etiquette. It is truly a bonding time for the family.

Meal time should be a happy time. Let's leave the scolding for a later time. Instead, use this time to find out how everyone's day went. Sometimes we may feel we had a bad day, but after we share it with others we may see it differently. It may even turn out to be funny after it is discussed with our family or whoever may be at the table.

Life has changed tremendously since families were raised in the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's. I still believe we, as parents, have to find the time to be with our family to talk. As our kids become teens it gets harder and harder because suddenly they have a life outside the home, too. I remember we always did our bible readings at night when our children were young; then we went to the dinner hour, then to getting up 30 minutes earlier and having it before the kids left for school, because everyone was scattered after school. We continued to try to have as many reading and studies as time would allow even though they were old enough to do their own reading.

mated that is performed ten million times each year! Newton's work has been chronicled on PBS by Bill Moyers and was in recent years made into a movie which enjoyed a showing at international film festivals and is currently available on DVD. The author Gilbert Chase stated, it "*is without a doubt the most famous of all the folk hymns.*"

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you"(John 15:16).

John Newton felt God set him aside to do His work, having turned him from a lifestyle that was the complete opposite of Christianity. Newton marveled at God's grace and mercy that led to his conversion. The Apostle Paul's conversion on that dusty road to Damascus, when he was on his way to request permission to persecute more Christians, was of the same ilk. Paul was called to be God's messenger to the Gentiles.

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst" (1Timothy 1:16).

Amazing Grace has long-captured the good news that no one, regardless of past trespasses, is beyond salvation. Christians and non-Christians alike must realize, however, that such a turnaround of one's life is not a job for mere mortals, but

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can *only* be accomplished through the grace and mercy of the one true living God. God has expressed such love for His creation that He has poured out His grace and mercy in the form of the blood of His only son, Jesus Christ, so that even the worst, as Paul once described himself, can experience for eternity the love of their creator and savior.

*Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall profess, within the vail, A
life of joy and peace.*

...Scott Carty
Fort Smith, Arkansas

"His Inner Compass"

When I was involved with Boy Scouting, I spent a little time trying to learn the use of a compass. A compass, if it's working properly, always points to true north. One who is skilled in orienteering knows how to use such information to find his way. Such a skill was never mine, however, and I've found a GPS to be a better alternative.

Each of us has within us an inner compass. This (we call it a con-

Each of us has within us an inner compass.

science) isn't helpful in finding physical directions, but when it comes to moral direction it can be quite effective. If it's used, that is, it can be helpful. But many ignore the promptings of this direction-finder.

Blayne Barber has attracted attention for the skillful use of his inner compass. Barber is an aspiring professional golfer. Last week he was on his way toward that goal. He was doing quite well in "Q School", a setting where golfers compete to see who will be allowed to play in PGA events. Barber was close to receiving his qualification. Then he disqualified himself.

Earlier in the week Barber was about to make a shot, and wondered if he had brushed a leaf, an act that carries a two-stroke penalty. His brother, who was acting as his

caddy, stated confidently that he had not brushed the leaf. Still, Barber assessed himself a one-stroke penalty just in case.

Six days later Barber gave in to his conscience and notified authorities that he was disqualifying himself. His uncertainty over whether or not he committed the violation was too strong, and removing himself from competition would settle the matter. He states he now feels peace and has no regrets. The majority of the golfing world is giving him a hearty round of applause.

What do we do when no one is looking? Can we live with ourselves after embezzling funds that no one is likely to miss? When no police officer is present to clock our speed? When we falsify the figures we enter on the 1040 form? Too many, it seems, have learned to ignore their conscience.

What do we do when no one is looking?

The apostle Paul once made a strong statement: "... I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men" (Acts 24:16). That may strike some as hypocritical. Didn't Paul once lead the persecution against the early church? Was he not responsible for arresting and even executing otherwise-innocent men and women?

He did indeed do such things - until he realized his error. After meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, he humbled himself by asking, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Later he would affirm, "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

An old adage says, "Let your conscience be your guide." To a point that is true. But Paul had a good conscience even as he led the effort to exterminate Christianity. Here's the first question: Are we listening to God? Do we know what He has commanded us to do?

Once we know the will of God (from reading the Bible), then the conscience's value shines, as it pulls us along to do what is right. If we ignore this inner compass, we expose ourselves to this possibility: "Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith, have suffered shipwreck" (1 Timothy 1:19). Let's not be shipwrecked. After finding true faith in God's word, let's then heed the promptings of our consciences.

...Timothy D. Hall
Lightgrams 11/8/2012

Amazing Grace Lyrics - John
Newton (1725-1807)

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.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to
fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and
snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus
far
and Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall
fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall
fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall profess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

(The following stanza was written
by an anonymous author, often
replacing the sixth stanza, or in-
serted as the fourth.)

When we've been there ten thou-
sand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's
praise
