

God is Gracious

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study
Selected Scripture

John Newton was born 300 years ago in 1725. He eventually ended up as captain of a ship used in the African slave trade. In 1748, a violent storm battered his vessel off Ireland's coast so severely that he called out to God for mercy. While this moment marked his spiritual conversion, he continued slave trading until 1754 or 1755, when he ended his seafaring altogether. Newton studied Christian theology and later became an abolitionist and minister in the Anglican church. He wrote these lyrics to Amazing Grace:

*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.*

I. The Grace of God

- A. Grace is God's "unearned favor" or "unmerited favor."

II. The Picture of Grace

A. Overshadowing Mercy

1. **Titus 3:5**, *He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, [John 3:8]*
 - a) Mercy moved God with compassion to relieve sinners in their distress and affliction.
2. Paul teaches us that the entire work of salvation, from foreknowledge to glorification, can be encapsulated as "*the mercies of God*" (Romans 12:1).
 - a) Salvation is only possible for spiritually dead sinners because God is "*rich in mercy*" (Ephesians 2:4).
 - b) Peter praises God's mercy in this respect, **1 Peter 1:3**, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

B. Distinguishing Choice

1. From long ago, God purposed to show His grace on unworthy sinners, not based on anything good in the person
 - a) **Ephesians 1:3-4**, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*
 - b) **2 Timothy 1:9**, *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,*
2. God made a distinguishing choice in eternity past among fallen sinners of the human race and sovereignly purposed to fix His heart of love on His bride.

C. Unimpeachable Calling

1. The constraint of calling. **Acts 2:39**, *For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.*
2. God's call is effectual, meaning it will always effectively secure its divine purpose. It is unimpeachable in that it cannot be doubted, questioned, or criticized and is entirely trustworthy.
 - a) Those who respond in faith are "*the called of Jesus Christ*" (**Romans 1:6**).
 - b) All who are "*predestined*" are "*called according to His purpose*" (**Romans 8:30**)
3. **1 Corinthians 1:9**, *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
4. **1 Peter 1:14-16; 2 Peter 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:23-28; 1 Cor 1:2, 9; Gal 1:6; 1 Thess 2:12.**

D. Life-Giving Regeneration

1. Those whom God calls to Himself, He regenerates them and births into the Kingdom.
2. The need for regeneration (**Ephesians 2:1-3**)
3. The miracle of regeneration (**Ephesians 2:4-7**)
4. The explanation of regeneration (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)
5. The purpose of regeneration (**Ephesians 2:10**)
6. **Philippians 1:29, John 3:1-8, James 1:18; 1 John 5:1**

E. Declared Justification

1. God's grace justifies those condemned under His law when they trust in Jesus Christ.
2. To be justified is to have stood guilty before the judgment bar of heaven, but be declared righteous by God because of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - a) **Philippians 3:8-9**, *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—*
3. Other References
 - a) **Romans 3:28**, *For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*
 - b) **Romans 5:1**, *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

F. Life-Saving Rescue

1. **Colossians 1:13**, *He has delivered [rescued] us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,*
2. Saved, means “to be delivered from danger or destruction.” It represents being rescued from eternal peril.
3. **Titus 3:7**, *So that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

G. Forever Forgiveness

1. God forgives iniquity, transgressions, and sin (Exodus 34:7)
2. Forgiveness means to “lift up” or to “take away”. David wrote, **Psalm 32:1–2**, *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.*

H. Satisfying Sanctification

1. Justification and Sanctification are inseparably linked. **1 Corinthians 1:30**, *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,*
2. In Romans 8:29, Paul writes that the life-changing work of sanctification transforms believers into “*the image of His Son.*”

I. Eternal Glorification

1. **Philippians 1:6**, *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
2. Paul spoke of glorification in its past tense in **Romans 8:30** to emphasize its certainty.

III. All of Grace

- A. From start to finish, “*salvation belongs to the Lord*” (**Psalm 3:8**)
- B. Man's only contribution to salvation is the sin that makes it necessary.
- C. Therefore, all glory goes to God
 1. **Ephesians 1:6**, *To the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*
 2. **Ephesians 1:12**, *So that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.*
 3. **Ephesians 1:14** *Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*