

Speaking to the soul



Amazing Grace

Dear brothers and sisters, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Galatians 6:18

The story of John Newton is well known. He first went to sea with his father when he was eleven years old and soon became deeply involved in working on slave ships. It was a terrible experience and, after falling out with the crew of the Pegasus in 1745, he even found himself in slavery. Three years later, he was rescued, and on his return home, he

read the Bible and became a Christian. He became a Church of England vicar and famously reflected on his conversion in his hymn 'Amazing Grace'. His life was completely transformed, and he knew that it was entirely down to God's gracious gift to him. In his latter years, he fought for the abolition of the slave trade.

The apostle Paul often reflected on the amazing grace of God. The word grace takes us right to the heart of God's nature. He is a generous God who loves to share his gifts with us, and he did that supremely by sending Jesus into the world to be our Saviour. When he wrote to the Ephesians, Paul said: "We praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins...God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God" (Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:8). God has given us the best gift imaginable, and there is nothing we can do to pay for it or deserve it.

If you have lived a good life, I'm delighted, but you will never live a life that is so good that you will deserve or earn salvation. It cannot be done. All we can do is recognise that God is incredibly generous and willing to give salvation to anyone who will receive it. No wonder Paul finishes this letter by longing that his friends in Galatia will experience the grace of God for themselves.

QUESTION

In your own experience, what is so amazing about grace?

PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for your incredible generosity. Help me not only to receive your gift but to pass it on to others.
Amen

Photograph - Beyond Ballintoy

