



*“My grace is sufficient  
for you, for my power is  
made perfect in  
weakness”*

**Amazing grace how sweet the sound**  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind but now I see  
**'Twas 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  
This grace that brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home.

John Newton (1725-1807), the writer of this hymn, was a captain of slave ships and an investor in the slave trade. He served as a sailor in the Royal Navy (after forced recruitment) and was himself enslaved for a time in West Africa by a Princess of the Sherbro people, in what is now Sierra Leone. He was rescued, returned to sea and the slave trade, becoming Captain of several slave ships. After retiring from active seafaring, he continued to invest in the slave trade. Some years later after experiencing a conversion to Christianity, Newton later renounced his trade and became a prominent supporter of abolitionism and was ordained as an Anglican cleric. He lived to see the British Empire's abolition of the African slave trade in 1807, just months before his death. (Wikipedia)

Not our usual introduction to a Bible Study, but nothing I believe, comes nearer to an example of grace than the life of John Newton.

**So, what is grace?** In Christian terms, it is the unmerited gift of divine favour in the salvation of sinners, and the divine influence operating in individuals for their regeneration and sanctification. Receiving God's grace is not a one-off experience, it continues throughout our lives as we live out the Christian faith.

*Ephesians 2:8-9* For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (NKJ)

Grace is the starting point of our faith. It is grace that is the enabling power that allows us to become children of God. The Bible makes clear that it is a gift and not something we can achieve ourselves. God wants us to underline that our salvation is entirely down to our acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

- Why is it, do you think, that so many people believe they can achieve salvation through their own good works?
- Does receiving God's grace mean we don't have to worry about good works?

Scripture teaches that we have victory over sin and death, but we must still fight to resist sin and walk in ways that honour God.

There are some wonderful scriptures assuring us that God's grace is sufficient for every need.

*Read: 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 Corinthians 15:10, 1 Peter 4:10, 1 Peter 5:10, 2 Timothy 2:1*

*1 John 1:14-17* The Bible tells us that God's grace is manifested in the person of Jesus Christ: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth ... Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:14-17, [NIV](#)).

We often hear the phrase: "*Saved by grace*" but do we understand what it means? It is through God's grace that sinners (you and me) are saved and reborn into the family of God. Through Christ's substitutionary death on the cross, God pronounces "not guilty" all who repent, confess their sins, and believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. As sinners, we deserve to die in our sins, but God's grace gives us everlasting life through Jesus Christ.

*Read: Acts 15:11, Romans 3:24, Romans 5:15, Titus 2:11, Titus 3:7, Ephesians 2:5*

I have often quoted the wonderful gospel song that paints a picture of what is being said in these verses:

I stood in the courtroom, the judge turned my way  
It looks like you're guilty now what do you say?  
I spoke up, "Your honour, I have no defence"  
But that's when mercy walked in  
**Mercy walked in and pleaded my case**  
**Called to the stand, God's saving grace**

**The blood was presented that covered my sin  
Forgiven when mercy walked in**  
I stood there and wondered how could this be  
Someone so guilty had just been set free  
My chains were broken, I felt born again  
The moment that mercy walked in  
**Mercy walked in ....**

- Can you put yourself into that picture?
- How important is it to understand that we have been set free – “*My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth and followed thee.*” (Charles Wesley)
- This is God’s grace: “*Grace that is greater than all our sin.*” Does that make you feel thankful?

This wonderful truth is also described as *The Word of His Grace* in Acts, and *The Gospel of the Grace of God*:

*Acts 14:3: So, they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the words of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*

*Acts 20:24: (Paul is speaking here) But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

*Acts 20:32: And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

- What message comes through in these verses?

There is another aspect of Grace that is talked about in the scriptures: Abundant grace. There is no end to the goodness, mercy, love, healing, forgiveness and so many ways in which God pours out his blessings on us.

*Read: 2 Corinthians 9:8, Ephesians 2:7, 2 Corinthians 8:9, John 1:16*

- What picture of God emerges from these verses?
- What can we learn from this that we could apply in our lives?

In Beverley Minster, along the north wall as you come through the door, are a series of wonderful carvings, most of which are depicting musicians. However, there are two very different ones. In Luke 18: 9-14, Jesus talks about the Pharisee and the publican. The first of these stood and prayed, thanking God that he was not like other men. He lived a blameless life and gave his tithes. The publican would not lift his eyes to heaven but beat his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* The Pharisee is depicted as

proud whereas the publican is portrayed as a man bending as low as he can to receive God's mercy and grace. However, if you look underneath the figure of the Pharisee, you will see that the mason has carved the face of the devil. One had received the grace of God, the other felt entitled – not the same thing at all!

As we begin to understand the enormity of God's grace and what it can do in our lives, we must remain humble and appreciate that it is all of God, and nothing of us.

*Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within  
Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin. (Bob Kauflin)*



**Prayer:**

**Father God, thank you for the all-encompassing grace that you offer to us.**

**Fill us we pray with that grace, that we in turn may demonstrate that grace to others.**

**Amen**