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AMAZING GRACE

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!” The beauty of the hymn, “Amazing Grace” stands the test of time. However, it may be that the song is so familiar that it has become pedestrian in the minds of so many. The hymn written by John Newton in 1772, captures beautifully the grandeur of God’s grace and mercy. It is positive and progressive in its’ message. As one cited it as being a true “golden oldie”. Indeed.

“Amazing Grace” has been recorded well over a thousand times and in various styles. Fiddlin’

John Carson was the first to record the song with musical accompaniment in 1930. Mahalia Jackson’s rendition in 1947 was the first to receive wide-spread radio airplay. The song also turned up at the Woodstock Music Festival in 1969, as Arlo Guthrie included it in his set. Judy Collins as well recorded it, though she did it A cappella, and the end result was a thing of beauty.

Recently while listening to a “mix” on YouTube, I heard the opening notes of “Amazing Grace”, I looked at the screen and saw a band of musicians dressed up like drugstore cowboys. They were laying a riff of country swing to the musical notation of the song. The lead singer added his flair to the song’s lyrics. As the song drew to a close, my mind turned somewhat presumptuous and thought he probably was clueless about the wondrous grace of God. He had just sung, “I was blind, but now I see”, did he really see?

Becoming more myopic how many can “see” or fully embrace the “wonderful, matchless grace of Jesus”? “*But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...*” (Acts 15:11) Take note of what Paul penned to the church in Ephesus. “*For by*

grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (2:8) To fully appreciate the magnitude of God’s grace and mercy focus in on the first seven verses of Ephesus, chapter two. You may have noticed that Paul uses the preposition “in” at least ten times in those verses. Showing clearly positional relationship to those who been brought into a relationship with Christ, by obedience to the gospel. For that matter the entire second chapter of Ephesians is a celebration of spiritual relationship as a result of God’s grace and mercy.



Think back to the hymn “Amazing Grace” and another thought presented, “how precious did that grace appear when I His word obeyed.” Now remember what was seen in Ephesians chapter two and the necessity for obedience in order to be brought into a blessed relationship with God and those of like precious faith. Factor that with what is seen in Hebrews chapter five and verses eight and nine. “*Although He was a son He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.*”

How does one fully communicate in words alone the monumental gift God presented to His creation. The precious gift of Jesus, who is the Christ. Which was done when we were “*helpless*”, “*enemies*”, and “*sinners*” (see Romans 5). Perhaps that is what John Newton was trying to convey in the words of “Amazing Grace”. Thanks be to God for His amazing, matchless grace and mercy. God loved us enough to send the very best; Jesus, the Messiah.

“Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I was lost, but now I am found, was blind but now I see” (John Newton) (wbe)

THE BULWARK