

## Amazing and Abounding

*Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

*Romans 5:20*

The hymn *Amazing Grace* is considered to be the most popular hymn of the Christian faith. The poetic words were written in 1772 by English clergyman, John Newton. It tells the story of Newton's amazing conversion from being the captain of a slave ship to becoming a minister of the Gospel. Another English Puritan preacher, John Bunyan, in 1666, had his autobiography published entitled *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, which also attests to God's grace concerning his conversion and walk in the Christian life. Both John Newton and John Bunyan testify to being the recipients of this amazing and abundant grace.

One of the differences between the Old and New Testaments is distinguished by Law and Grace. John 1:17 *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* highlights this difference. In Romans five, the Apostle Paul shows the extensiveness of sin, and when the Law entered the awareness of sin abounded. The historical events in the Bible provide a glaring record of the far-reaching effects of sin. So many of the accounts are permeated with pride, jealousy, selfishness, anger, hatred, idolatry, and rebellion. But for a small minority, even God's Chosen People the nation Israel, had forsaken the one and only true God to follow the false deities of the surrounding heathen. It was apparent that the totality of the Law could only show men their failures and sinfulness. But praise God that the only One who could fulfill every jot and tittle of the law, Jesus Christ the righteous, came and brought grace with him. We see the amazing and abundant effects of this grace as our Lord interacts with every strata of society. A religious leader who sought Jesus one night was told that God loved him so much, that the Son of God came to die for his sins, and all he had to do was to truly believe. An outcast Samaritan woman, who had multiple failed relationships, was offered the Living Water that would finally satisfy her inner thirst. An adulterous woman at the point of being executed finds a pardon from the Savior and is told to go and sin no more. A tormented maniac, filled with a legion of demons finally finds peace at the feet of Jesus. Hopeless lepers receive restoration by the touch of the Master's hand. Even a dying thief who asked only to be remembered was told that he would be with Jesus in paradise that same day. No matter what range of sin existed in these people's lives, the abundant grace of God came to pardon and drastically changed them.

That saving grace continues as we journey through this life. In one of his verses, John Newton says that grace has brought us safe thus far, and grace will lead us home. Today let us live in gratitude for that grace and may we always show it to others.

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