



“The *Greyhound* had been thrashing about in the north Atlantic storm for over a week. Its canvas sails were ripped, and the wood on one side of the ship had been torn away and splintered. The sailors had little hope of survival, but they mechanically worked the pumps, trying to keep the vessel afloat. On the eleventh day of the storm, sailor **John Newton** was too exhausted to pump, so he was tied to the helm and tried to hold the ship to its course. From one o'clock until midnight he was at the helm.

With the storm raging fiercely, Newton had time to think. His life seemed as ruined and wrecked as the battered ship he was trying to steer through the storm. Since the age of eleven, he had lived a life at sea. Sailors were not noted for the refinement of their manners, but Newton had a reputation for profanity, coarseness, and debauchery which even shocked many a sailor.

John Newton was known as "The Great Blasphemer." He sank so low at one point that he was even a servant to slaves in Africa for a brief period. His mother had prayed he would become a minister and had early taught him the Scriptures and Isaac Watts' Divine Songs for Children. Some of those early childhood teachings came to mind now. He remembered Proverbs 1:24-31, and in the midst of that storm, those verses seemed to confirm Newton in his despair:

"Because I have called, and ye refused . . . ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also laughed at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer."

John Newton had rejected his mother's teachings and had led other sailors into unbelief. Certainly, he was beyond hope and beyond saving, even if the Scriptures were true. Yet, Newton's thoughts began to turn to Christ. He found a New Testament and began to read. Luke 11:13 seemed to assure him that God might still hear him: *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."*

That day at the helm, March 21, 1748, was a day Newton remembered ever after, for *"On that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of deep waters."* Many years later, as an old man, Newton wrote in his diary of March 21, 1805: *"Not well able to write; but I endeavor to observe the return of this day with humiliation, prayer, and praise."* Only God's amazing grace could and would take a rude, profane, slave-trading sailor and transform him into a child of God. Newton never ceased to stand in awe of God's work in his life..."

It was from that brush with death, his mother's love and spiritual foundation, that one of the worlds most recognizable and loved hymns was written over 250 years ago by the same John Newton. **"Amazing Grace"** *John Newton (Christianity.com)*

"Amazing Grace" is a free God given gift to all who ask. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."* John 3:16 *"For all have sinned and fall short of the the Glory of God."* Romans 3:23 *"...the wages (price or consequences) of sin is death, (forever separated from God) but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus."* Romans 6:23 *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* 1 John 1:9 *(Jesus said) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6 *(Jesus said) "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to him."* Revelation 3:20 *"...if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* Romans 10:9

All you have to do is believe and accept these scriptures are written for you. With a simple prayer of confession, repentance and belief, we all go from a John Newton the sailor to the John Newton known for his **"Amazing Grace"** song that is sung and played in all four corners of the world. Simply pray: ***Father God in Heaven, thank you for your Son Jesus. I believe Jesus died for me, was buried and raised on the third day. Today Jesus, I confess my sins, ask you to forgive me of my sins, take control of my life and make me the kind of person you want me to be.*** Joe and Patti

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