

The Messenger

Bringing God's word straight to your door!



Free to Fly

Adapted from the resource *Closer to God Each Day* - by Joyce Meyer

Love offers people both roots and wings. It provides a sense of belonging (roots) and a sense of freedom (wings). Real love doesn't try to control or manipulate others. Jesus said that He was sent by God to proclaim liberty. As believers, that's what we're meant to do also—to free people to fulfill God's will for their lives, not to bring them under our control.

Have you ever seen parents push their children to do things they don't even want to do, just to meet their own frustrated desires? Or maybe a person who's clingy and emotionally smothering to a new friend because he or she is afraid to lose that person? Both of these are examples of a misguided, counterfeit kind of love that dominates rather than sets free—this is not at all the way true love works.

Love does not try to gain personal satisfaction at the expense of others. Love will always nurture and promote liberty. When we truly love God and others, we'll gladly allow the people in our lives to follow His plan—not our plan—and see who they can be and what they can accomplish in Christ. A caged bird cannot fly, so cultivate liberty! Allow people the freedom to be themselves and watch how they flourish.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Father, please help me be a person who loves others in a liberating way. Thank You for setting me free to be myself, and for giving me the grace to do the same for the people in my life. In Jesus' Name, amen.

There Was Jesus by Jay Janke

Many times, throughout my life, I have reflected after a significant event and know that Jesus was with me, no if ands or buts, He was there. That's exactly what was on Zach Williams's mind when he wrote the current mega-Contemporary Christian hit song, "There Was Jesus."

He spoke of the times throughout his life that he had tried to make it on his own and thinking he could do it by himself. He tells us that in times when he tried to stand, he stumbled and started to fall, that there was Jesus. Much like the times when we have stumbled, Jesus was not only there but he helped us up. Williams's speaks of the lonely roads that he had traveled and the sense that he was all alone, that there was Jesus. In thinking of those times in our lives where we thought we were all alone, we were not alone and as a matter of fact we accompanied by our Lord and Savior.

Williams talks of the life that he had built, the lives that we had built, and the times that it came crashing to the ground and friends were nowhere to be found and we felt as though we were by ourselves, that there was Jesus. He tells us on the mountains and in the valleys, there was Jesus. In the good times and the bad times, Jesus is with us. It's easy to think we got on top of the mountain by ourselves and we often lose sight of the fact in the valley that he was there, but He was there in both places. What about the times that we face our greatest fears, will Jesus be with you? Williams reminds us that Jesus is in the shadows of the alleys. You know, those places that you wouldn't go, a dark alley, but reassures us that Jesus is there, in the times that we must face our greatest fear, Jesus is there.

And Williams makes it personal when he reminds us that in the waiting, in the searching, in the healing, in the hurting, there was Jesus. In times that we face insurmountable pain from the loss of a loved one, or times that we have been hurt and we begin that slow healing process, Jesus is there. In times that we are searching or waiting for answers, He is there. He is there for every minute, every moment, from where you've been or where you are going, even in times when you didn't know it or couldn't see it, there was Jesus.

And so the first time that I heard this song, I texted a friend and said you have to hear this song as it captures that exact thought that God is there and was there in so many of the things that have occurred in our lives. In looking back at our lives, we can see clearly now that He was in fact there just as it was promised in the scriptures. But what about the times that you didn't feel His presence or instances where there was unspeakable pain or suffering and you questioned where was He? In thinking about the major news events recently, catastrophic wildfires burning out west or severe flooding from Hurricane Sally, Williams tells us that in the fire and in the flood, that Jesus was there. Now, that is often a tough one for us in thinking that with all that destruction and devastation that Jesus would be there, but He was and he continues to be with those affected. He continues to be a source of comfort and strength for those living out the nightmare and certainly with the helpers trying to help then put their lives back together.

We are reminded in the teaching from the book of Matthew that He will indeed be with us for every minute and every moment. Amen.

Matthew 28:20 "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Bringing God's Word to All...

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:30-32

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

Psalm 25:1-9

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

²O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.

³Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.

⁵Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

⁶Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.

⁷Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

⁸Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

⁹He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-8

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death —
even death on a cross.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:28-32

²⁸What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.



Hymn of the Week

Amazing Grace

Excerpt taken from "Then Sings My Soul" by

Robert J. Morgan

1779

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Ephesians 1:7

Amazing Grace

John Newton, 1779 (1725-1807)

It's hard to shake off a mother's influence. John Newton's earliest memories were of his godly mother, who, despite fragile health, devoted herself to nurturing his soul. At her knee he memorized Bible passages and hymns. Though she died when he was about seven, he later recalled her tearful prayers for him.

After her death, John alternated between boarding school and the high seas, wanting to live a good life but nonetheless falling deeper and deeper into sin. Pressed into service with the British Navy, he deserted, was captured, and after two days of suspense, was flogged. His subsequent thoughts vacillated between murder and suicide. "I was capable of anything," he recalled.

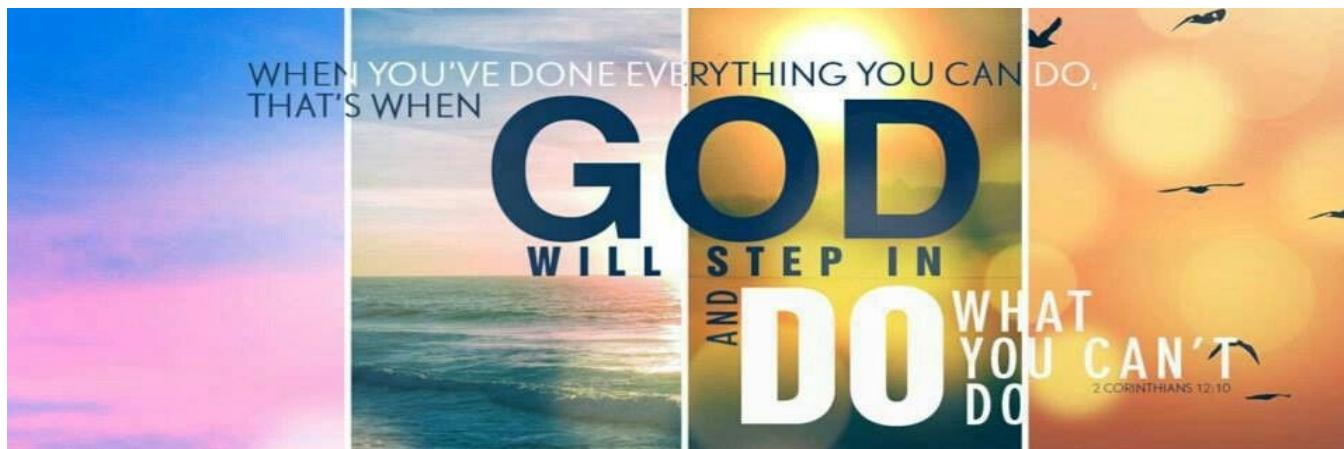
More voyages, dangers, toils, and snares followed. It was a life unrivaled in fiction. Then, on the night of March 9, 1748, John, twenty-three, was jolted awake by a brutal storm that descended too suddenly for the crew to foresee. The next day, in great peril, he cried to the Lord. He later wrote, "That tenth of March is a day much remembered by me; and I have never suffered it to pass unnoticed since the year 1748—the Lord came from on high and delivered me out of deep waters."

The next several years saw slow, halting spiritual growth in John, but in the end he became one of the most powerful evangelical preachers in British history, a powerful foe of slavery, and the author of hundreds of hymns.

Here are some things you may not know about Newton's most famous hymn. His title for it wasn't originally "Amazing Grace" but "Faith's Review and Expectation." It is based in Newton's study of 1 Chronicles 17:16–17: "King David . . . said: 'Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet . . . You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree . . .'"

And here's a nearly forgotten verse that Newton added near the end of "Amazing Grace." Try singing it for yourself:

*The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine;
But God, Who called me here below, shall be forever mine.*



Joke of the Week

God's Left Hand

Little Bobby was spending the weekend with his grandmother. His grandmother decided to take him to the park on Saturday morning. It had been snowing all night and everything was beautiful. His grandmother remarked, "Doesn't it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God painted this just for you?"

Bobby said, "Yes, God did it and he did it left-handed."

This confused his grandmother a bit, and she asked him, "What makes you say God did this with his left-hand?"

"Well," said Bobby, "We learned at Sunday School last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand!"

EVERY
MINUTE

EVERY
MOMENT

THERE
WAS JESUS

For those who are watching from home you may still send in your offerings to the church each week.
For FPC please send to 104 N. Illinois St. and for NHL please send to P.O. Box 869.

And SURELY
I AM with you
always
TO THE very end
OF the age
MATTHEW 28:20