



## The Legacy Of Amazing Grace: John Newton's Story Of Transformation February 1, 2026

There is something beautifully simple about a hymn.

When we hear their first few notes, there's a peace that seems to sweep over whatever room we are in. Hymns have the power to remind us of deeply rooted truths and beliefs, often without wrestling or complexity. With straightforward words and soothing progressions, they transport us to our beginnings and make what may seem complicated much easier to digest.

And yet, I wonder how often, if ever, we as believers consider the inception point of the words that ease us in melody. What experiences would truly lead a writer to pen the lines that they write? How authentic of a discovery was it for them? How true could the uncomplicated lines of a song truly be?

Could there be more power in the words when you consider the story behind them?

Take "Amazing Grace," for example. From the very start, the lyrics paint a picture of salvation that reminds us all of the gratitude we should be carrying with us—"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." What better truth could we cling to than that reality? While truly miraculous in a vacuum, I find that understanding the context of the

song makes its reality even more soberingly potent.

Born in England in 1725, John Newton spent the first 20-plus years of his life in the grips of hardship. His mother passed away when he was only six years old, leaving him troubled and fending for himself for much of his childhood. When he stepped into manhood, he joined the Royal Navy in an attempt to find purpose. Even there, he could not shake the trouble that seemed to follow him, attempting to desert his post and ultimately being abandoned by his crew and forced into aiding in the trading of slaves in West Africa.

Though he was eventually rescued, he returned to England with darkness still clinging to him. He entered into the slave trade again—this time voluntarily—where he spent years making trips back and forth between England and

Africa, enslaving hundreds and hundreds of people and showing immense cruelty towards them. He continued on this way until he was nearing the end of his twenties, when one night, on a voyage back from Africa, he became deathly ill. It was at this moment, after years of God knocking on the door of his heart, that he realized fully the weight of the way he had been living and gave his life to Christ.

Newton took several years to leave



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# Computer Grace

Just about everyone enjoys

the game always puts you back together and places you back on the runway ready to take off again.

playing computer games. One of the best is Microsoft's "Flight Simulator." In most versions of the game, you can choose a prop plane or a Lear jet, and you can also choose which of 180 airports around the country to take off from or to attempt a landing at.

That's the way it is with the Lord. He's absolutely faithful to forgive us and to restore us when we mess up and to get us back into action, hopefully a little wiser after our failures and bad decisions. (See 1 John 1:9.) With Christ we are never out of the game.

Only after acquiring landing skills after many hours of practice can a player avoid crashing the plane and land safely. It's all very realistic. You can crash into the Empire State Building in New York City, the Sears Tower in Chicago, or the Space Needle in Seattle. Your plane can break apart in midair, breaking the sound barrier over Dallas. You can nose-dive into Lake Michigan going five hundred miles per hour.

**"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" 1 Peter 5:10**

The greatest thing about "Flight Simulator," though, is that the game always restores you. No matter what happens, you can start all over again. Whenever you crash and burn, fall apart, or splash into the ocean,

Join us as we look to the "Amazing Grace" of God in our next series.

*Pastor Greg*



## The Legacy Of Amazing Grace

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the trade; however, through repentance and sanctification, he went on to become a priest and a leading voice for the abolishment of slavery. He would preach at the Church of St Mary Woolnoth in East London for the next 15 years, happily growing his congregation and publishing several books of hymns and recountings from his life. In sum, he penned over 280 hymns. And of all the words that his tumultuous life produced, the most notable lines were the ones written in 1772 that we all know to this day:

Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound!)  
That sav'd a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears reliev'd;  
How precious did that grace appear,  
The hour I first believ'd!  
Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.  
The Lord has promis'd good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be,  
As long as life endures.  
Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease;  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.  
This earth shall soon dissolve like snow,

The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who call'd me here below,  
Will be for ever mine.

Powerful words. Rooted in beautiful truths that apply to any and every one of our stories. But with the context of John Newton's life, these lines become even more compelling.

In reflection of himself—through brutality to slaves, running from God, and attempt after attempt to fill himself with the wrong things—Newton got a view of grace that could only leave him with words so striking that they still circle the globe 250 years later. He truly



saw himself correctly, full of sin and needing saving.

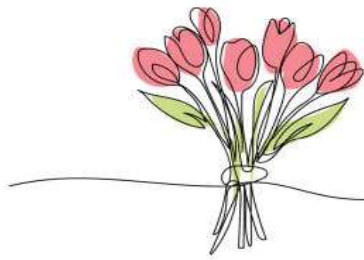
Newton used this revelation to propel him toward incredible works. He spent the rest of his life writing resources and songs for the church, leading the people of London to Christ, and fighting for the abolition of slavery, which the Parliament of England passed into law in 1833, 26 years after Newton passed away.

When I look at the life of John Newton, I am blown away by his example of humility. His story reminds me a lot of the transformation of Saul to Paul as God took him from persecuting Christians to taking that same Gospel message to the ends of the Earth. And it's stories like these that leave us all with a challenge for our own lives—to follow their example by examining our own stories, standing underneath the waterfall of miraculous grace offered to us through Calvary, and allowing that reality to catapult us into using our testimonies to point others towards that same treasure.

Because every hymn and hallelujah has a story behind it.

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Join us for

*Mother's day*

May 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:15 am



May 22<sup>nd</sup> - 1:00pm



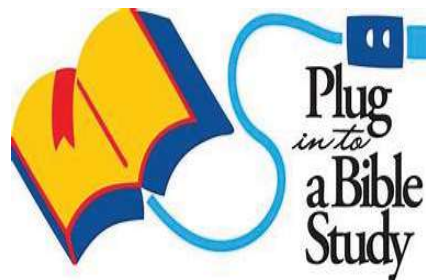
**WILL ROGERS PRESCHOOL GRADUATION**



May 26<sup>th</sup> - 6:30pm

The  
**CHOSEN**  
WEDNESDAY  
NIGHT  
**BIBLE**  
STUDY

6:30pm in the  
Food Court



*Ladies'*  
**BIBLE STUDY**

Mondays 12:30p-2:30p in the Food Court



# STREET SCHOOL GROCERIES



**4 Ways to Give**

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 1138 S. Yale Ave  
 Tulsa, Ok 74112

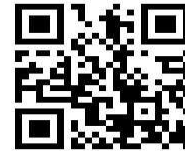
 **by mail**  
 1138 S. Yale Ave  
 Tulsa, Ok 74112

 **online**  
[willrogersumc.org](http://willrogersumc.org)

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**ONLINE GIVING**

*Scan to give!*



**GOOD NEIGHBOR DAY  
AMERICA**

**SATURDAY MAY 16TH 10AM**

**Will Rogers Church**

[www.goodneighbordayamerica.com](http://www.goodneighbordayamerica.com)

**Sunday  
May 24th  
10:15 am**



**Pentecost Sunday**  
*Celebrating The Experience!*





Will Rogers Church

# LIFELINE

1138 South Yale Tulsa, OK 74112-5395 (918) 834-0891

Return Service Requested

## May 2026

### WILL ROGERS CHURCH

WORSHIP WITH US SUNDAY @ 10:15AM

*Everyone's Welcome Nobody's Perfect Anything's Possible*

SUNDAY SCHOOL @ 9:00AM

Church website: <http://www.wrctulsa.org>

[facebook.com/Will Rogers Church Tulsa OK](https://www.facebook.com/WillRogersChurchTulsaOK)

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday  
9:00am - 4:00pm

Service times:

10:15am - Blended Worship  
Livestreaming

Find link on Facebook or [www.wrctulsa.org](http://www.wrctulsa.org)

9:00am - Sunday School

**THIS**  
IS WHAT *Still*  
**WE DO**



**Giving2026**