

Some people don't believe they've sinned, and others think they've sinned too much to ever be saved. Once we acknowledge we've sinner, and next step is to realize that God's redemption is free. We can't earn it or work for it. If we could, it wouldn't be free – and wouldn't be by grace.

John Newton – The author of “Amazing Grace” wrote in his now-famous song that grace had saved a “wretch” like him. That word is so offensive to our modern sensibilities that many people replace it with another, less negative, term when they sing “Amazing Grace.” But Newton knew from his own experience that he was a wretch when God saved him. Indeed, all men are wretches in that they are lost in sin. That is the biblical truth. But Newton knew that truth first-hand. A dictionary definition of “wretch” includes these words: “a miserable person....profoundly unhappy....sunk in vice or degradation....a vile person.” John Newton would have said, “That was me, to the letter!”

John Newton eventually found great hope in the apostle Paul's words that he was, among sinner, “chief” (I Tim 1:15). Since Paul had attacked and persecuted Christians, yet had been saved by grace, he thought there must be hope for him as well. It was John Newton's recognition of sin in his own life that awakened him to the grace of God.

- I. Prelude to Grace – Rom 3:10-20
 - A. The prelude to grace is an understanding that we need grace, and we only understand that we need grace when we see our own sin.
 - B. Paul did not attempt to ignore sin in his life. The older he got, the more realistically he dealt with it. In I Cor 15:9 he called himself the “least of the Apostles.” Also see Eph 3:8
- II. Principles of Grace – Rom 3:21-25
 - A. Grace – Apart from Works vs 21
 - 1. This is what sets Christianity apart from all the world's religions. Christianity is a religion of divine accomplishment; the rest are religions of human achievement. See II Tim 1:9 & Titus 3:5
 - B. Grace – Accepted by Faith vs 22
 - 1. Faith is the channel through which the grace of God comes to us
 - 2. “Faith is believing that Christ is what He is said to be, and that he will do what He has promised to do, and then to expect this of Him.” – Charles Spurgeon
 - C. Grace – Available to all who believe vs 22-23
 - 1. You can be a rebid sinner or an occasional sinner – it makes no difference as far as God's grace is concerned. All are lost – there is none righteous

More next week, Happy Studying