



Amazing Grace

Issue 11 SPRING
2022

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On Sunday's we have been looking at Amazing Grace.

The song itself showing how powerful the truth of God's grace by Jesus Christ has been and how central His amazing grace is in our lives.

Preston Sprinkle wrote a book called Charis, which is all about the Amazing Grace of God in the Old Testament. In this book he unpacks that Jesus transformed what grace meant.

The Greek translation of grace is Charis which literally means "gift". Before Jesus' time on this Earth charis' were gifts given by wealthy people to others who they believed deserved a gift, those who were worthy of a gift.

Jesus came along and changed all that. His charis, his gift, the grace of God was available for all. No one had to be worthy enough for the love and forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ. This was a gift for all, no matter what they have done. No one was worthy enough for this gift, for this grace, so it is given to everyone, no matter who they are or what they have done.

Who can you share this gift with? Or do you need the love and acceptance and forgiveness of Jesus? He is always for you. Just open yourself to Him. That's His gift. His love, forever.

Pastor Steve

There are two main themes in this issue.
Amazing Grace and **Ukraine**.



The appalling news of the evil invasion of Ukraine reminded me of an article written for another publication I once produced by my friend Celia Humphreys. Celia died on 6th April 2 years ago and some of you may have known her.

She titled the article **SAND** and it is on page 4. It is a word of encouragement to all God's people reminding us that in spite of satanic evil, Christ is with His people in the furnace.

I was five years old when the 2nd World War started, living with my Dad, Mum and elder sisters in South East London. We experienced the horror of being bombed by the German air force and later by the Doodlebugs (flying bombs) and a V2 rocket. By the end of the five year war, 50% of the time I had been an evacuee.

Therefore memories of being bombed are still very much with me to this day and I find the news of what Ukrainian families are experiencing heartbreaking.

I gave my life to Jesus when I was fourteen and soon realised my parent's prayers had been answered. We had lived on a crossroad and every building on the other three corners had been destroyed by the bombing and our house remained standing!

I don't believe in coincidences but I do believe in the **POWER of PRAYER**.

Lex the Ed

THE POWER of PRAYER

Give Thanks for ANSWERED PRAYER



The day after she buried her eight-year-old son, Praba was full of questions and unimaginable grief.

As she was crying out to God she received a vision.

"Jesus was holding Peter in his hands."

She remembers.

**"That is where Peter is,
and that is where I will go someday."**

It is three years since suicide bombers attacked multiple sites across Sri Lanka on 21st April 2019, Easter Sunday.

Three churches were among those targeted including Zion Church in Batticaloa where 31 believers including Peter lost their lives.

Praba's vision gives her hope and it's what kept her going these past three years and that of your prayers.

"For about six months after I lost Peter, I could not pray." Praba shares.

"Whenever I sat down to pray, 'Jesus' was all I could manage to say. I could only cry." For the first two years, Praba, her husband and their fifteen year old daughter Anne, couldn't pray together.

It was here You (Open Door's readers) stepped in.

"People who had never seen us were praying for us when we could not. It is because of their prayers that we have been able to stay strong in our faith. Thank you for upholding our family in prayer during this time."

"Last year on Peter's birthday we prayed together that morning," Praba shares.

"He is not with us anymore but we cannot forget the gift Jesus gave us. It was only after Peter died the I fully committed my life to Jesus. I used to go to church only on Sundays and spent most of my time caring for my family. Now everything else comes second. I am putting God first now. That is what we are called to do and I have started my ministry again teaching at Sunday School. My relationship with Jesus has grown deeper.



Above
The family will never forget Peter

SAND



What a grain of sand will go through to be a blessing?

Take some SAND then mix it with mud and clay and shape it. Then fire it in a furnace at 900-1200 degrees C and you have bricks to build a house or a high tower.

Take some SAND and mix it with flint, soda ash and limestone: heat it in a furnace at between 1,500 and 2,500 degrees C until it melts, then mould it and you have glass as clear as crystal.

Take some SAND and wash the grains. After processing, dry and grind it in a ball mill. Mix it with carbon, heat it in an electric arc furnace over 2,000 degrees C until all the carbon dioxide is given off. After further purification at 300 degrees C and 1,100 degrees C, crystallize the liquid. Slice into wafers, polish with an abrasive and etch with acid. The silicon chip is used in building computers to process information and aid communication and the sharing of knowledge and wisdom throughout the world.

Genesis 22 15-18

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the SAND on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Charles Spurgeon said,

*"As sure as God puts His children in the furnace.
He will be in the furnace with them"*

Celia Humphreys



| How easy it is to be Deceived |



People are trying to deceive us all the time. We've all had the phone calls telling us that large sums of money have been taken from our bank account and if we give them our bank account details they will reimburse us. It is of course a complete lie and we would have our account emptied if we did.

The biggest deceivers can usually be found on the Internet telling us that the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts He gives us are not for today.

If we believe in Jesus, then we believe that Jesus is who He says He is, and that He can do what He says He can. Nothing can change that

Let's look at John 14 vs 6. Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me".

So, no one can come to the Father except through Jesus. But millions believe that they can get to heaven without Jesus. Millions of people today are being deceived by our enemy Satan.

John the Baptist told us that Jesus would baptise us with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that He would send the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. We need Him more now than ever. If Jesus said it, it is true. He is God and He cannot lie but our enemy, Satan, is full of lies and he will use even Christians to try and deceive us. Believe the Bible the Word of God, and ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit so that He can guide you and not let you be deceived.

Blessings

Mike and Jan Parkes

| Be Self-Controlled and Alert |

Archie, my cat, is sitting peacefully on the window-sill looking at the world outside. I am thinking how pretty he is, how soft his fur and how lovely to stroke him. As I sit admiring him, he sees a bird on a tree outside the window and suddenly his body tenses, his eyes grow black, every nerve and muscle is on the alert as his total focus is on his prey. In an instant he has changed from a cuddly pet into a potential murderer and it is frightening to witness. The realisation brings me up sharp as I grasp what he really is.

God reminds me that this depicts the devil, his evil intentions often veiled behind apparent goodness. His attacks are so subtle, his sole aim to destroy us as he spends the whole time prowling around seeking someone to destroy. We cannot afford to give him a foothold, and we must always be on the alert against his wily schemes.

"The devil masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:4)

Josie Edwards

Pray for Ukraine



This is taken from one of the 24-7 Prayer Guides and is a great tool and guide to help us pray for situations like we are seeing in Ukraine at the moment or other times when we need to pray into a crisis or hard situation.

Please spend time over each section.

P - Pause R - Rejoice and reflect A – Ask Y – Yield

PAUSE

Be still and welcome God's presence – take some deep breaths and say a few lines like 'God, I welcome your presence' or 'Come, Holy Spirit'.

Pray through Psalm 46 – read it out loud once or twice, pray over any specific words or phrases that stand out to you.

REJOICE AND REFLECT

Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of moments of God's love, faithfulness and goodness.

Maybe listen to a favourite worship song declaring praise to God.

Write down a prayer of thanks.

Reflect on the qualities of God from the Bible. For example,

God is our protector (Psalm 5:11)

God is our strength (Psalm 28:7)

God is our rock (Psalm 18:2)

God is our refuge (Psalm 46:1)

God is our redeemer (Psalm 19:14)

Pray for Ukraine

ASK

This will depend on the situation you are praying into. Below are some ideas for praying specifically into the Ukraine situation.

Peace – pray for peace talks, a cease fire, peace for those who are afraid. Ask the Holy Spirit to prompt and guide your prayers on anything else to pray for. To help you focus more you could light a candle and focus on the light of Christ and the peace that Jesus brings, speak that peace out over the crisis in Ukraine. Use any Bible verses that come to mind about peace and declare them for Ukraine.

People – to be really creative you can cut out a paper chain in the form of people and use that as a focus to pray for all of the people affected by the crisis, for example, refugees, those helping refugees, those staying in the country, those facing war, the Ukrainian Christians and church. You could write a prayer or specific group of people onto each person on your paper chain and pray for unity across them all. Have this somewhere as a reminder to keep praying for the people affected, whether Ukraine, Russia and anywhere else.

Presence – pray for God's presence in Ukraine, declare God's strength and goodness over the people in that country and those affected.

Protection – pray Psalm 91:1-2, 'Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."' If you want to be more creative with this idea you could cast a shadow onto a piece of paper and in that shadow write the people and places you want to pray protection over, that they might rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

YIELD

Invite God's kingdom to come and His will to be done, praying for God's mercy.

| Flooding Support in Bewdley |



Another year passes and once again the flood waters feel higher than ever before and they were projected to break all records this year. Again the town braced itself.

Neighbour supported neighbour and at Riverside we asked the question we've been repeatedly asking our community,

“What can we do?”

Worcester County Council reached out and once again we became the centre of the 24/7 bronze cell centre of emergency services for flooding in Bewdley. The church doors were open 24/7 as we gave the emergency services a base of operations where they could work whenever and however they needed to support Bewdley. The people of Riverside stepped up in praying and feeding these people too and the emergency services were able to support the town easier from this central location.

We shared many conversations about faith, prayer and the churches love for the community and others because of Jesus Christ and many of the emergency services teams commented that they had not received this level of support or care before in other areas.

Jesus used Riverside to help make a way for these key workers to support and love this town and He continued to be at work in and through us in all of our conversations as we demonstrated the love of Christ to all. What an opportunity and privilege to serve and support with the love of Christ.





Ambulance Service Headquarters

Waterfront Way
Brierley Hill
West Midlands
DY5 1LX

website: www.wmas.nhs.uk

Pastor Steve Robinson
Riverside Elim
Dog Lane
Bewdley
DY12 2EF

25th February 2022

Dear Pastor Robinson,

As you know, the staff at West Midlands Ambulance Service have been working with other emergency services and our partner agencies to support the management and resolution of the terrible flooding situation in Bewdley. On 24th February 2022 I visited the 'bronze operational cell' which had been set up at your Church on Dog Lane. All of the emergency service staff I met with mentioned to me how fantastic the Church had been in providing facilities and support, even providing hot food and drinks. They could not speak highly enough of you all. These acts of kindness cannot be underestimated, and I would like to personally thank you all for the support that you have given my staff, and our partner agencies. Please pass on my thanks to all at the Church who have been involved.

Kindest regards,

Professor Anthony Marsh
Chief Executive Officer

Trust us to care.

OFFICIAL - Business data that is not intended for public consumption. However, this can be shared with external partners, as required.



Amazing Grace Devotion

Why don't you spend a week praying into amazing grace?

Below are some scriptures for each day, a prayer to pray and in italics something you can do off the back of the prayer.

Day 1 – Read 2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

God thank you that even when I am weak, you are strong. Thank you that your grace is enough for me. Please Lord even when I get it wrong help me not to forget that I can turn to you, repent and you will always draw near, forgive and love me. Amen.

Why don't you spend some time bringing the areas of your life where you feel weak and ask God to show you how He will meet you in those weaknesses today.

Day 2 – Read Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

God, thank you that there is nothing I can do which can make you love me any more than you already do. Thank you that I am saved by my faith and not by my works. I believe in you God. Help me to follow you more today. Amen.

Why don't you put this in your phone as a reminder three times today and remind yourself throughout the day that nothing you can do will make God love you any more than He already does.

Day 3 – Read Hebrews 4:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are— yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus, thank you that you understand completely what I am going through and in that you did not sin. Please, Lord, break in, step in, please show me your mercy, grace and help! I trust in you! Amen

Remind yourself of some of the characteristics of Christ today and revisit these characteristics throughout the day, asking Jesus each time to help you to be more like Him.

Amazing Grace Devotion

Day 4 –Read Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God, wow. This truth blows me away. Even though I get it wrong. Even as a sinner you still completely love me. Help me Lord to know your love more today. Amen.

Why don't you spend some time repenting today for whatever you have gotten wrong, but after each act of repentance also thank God for His love for us that never changes.

Day 5 – Read Titus 2:11

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

Lord, forgive me for forgetting that your salvation is for all people. Help me to love all people, even the ones I struggle with. Lead me in showing your love and grace to them today. Amen.

Who do you need to contact today to show some love, care and the grace of God to off the back of this prayer today?

Day 6 – Read Romans 3:24-25

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Lord Jesus, thank you! Thank you that even though I fall short when I repent I am made right in the eyes of God again. Thank you that this is only possible because of what you did for me on the cross. Amen.

Put in some time simply for you to stop today. Just a couple of stops of 10 minutes. In each time, simply stop and give thanks to Jesus for what He has done for all of us.

Day 7 – Read 2 Timothy 2:1

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

God, I'm not strong enough to do all this on my own. But I thank you that your grace can strengthen me and because of your grace I don't have to do it alone, but because of your grace I can keep going as you are with me. Amen.

Whenever you are struggling today stop and ask God to give you the strength you need. Remind yourself of this verse, give thanks to God and then keep going! He is with you!!!

Church Walking Group

The walking group has been running for around 5yrs, its a great way to get away from the normal pressures of life for a few hours in an environment that's quiet and peaceful, It's a good time for fellowship and to get to know each other better, for anybody who is struggling it's a good time to talk and maybe get help or just a listening ear and pray for them, we all get low at times and I feel closer to God in the country without the distractions of everyday life. The group will always try and cater for everyone.

Covid interrupted the walking group with reduced numbers but this year is starting to pickup nicely with turnouts of around 6 to 10, there's no pressure to turn up if weather is bad or you have something else on just turn up or phone if you need a lift, all detail are sent out a week before.

The Walking groups day for going out is at present the third or fourth Saturday in the Month, start 9.30am and we cover around 4 to 4.5 miles easy walking slow pace and a stop for a bite to eat, you are back before you know it. The walks are over differing terrain and therefore boots or stout shoes with good grip are advisable but not essential (particularly in winter) as the ground can be muddy and slippery. I do try and identify routes that offer good walking underfoot and not too hard .

Come along and try it we would love to see you.

Many Thanks

Phil Reid. My Mobile : 07704 121240



Worcestershire Beacon is the highest of the Malvern Hills.
We have a special day there once a year.



In Psalm 63 David proclaims,
“My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you”
(Psalm 63:1 NLT).

I love David’s heart in this Psalm! That even in a land of physical lack, a

“parched and weary land where there is no water” (Psalm 63:1 NLT)

He declares that he longs for the presence of God with his whole being. He could be forgiven for thinking about food and drink in this situation (I certainly would be!)

Yet there is only one thing on his mind, one desire. He even declares to God

“Your unfailing love is better than life itself” (Psalm 63:3 NLT).

It reminds me of what Jesus said when he rebuked Satan in the wilderness in Matthew 4:3-4. Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights and *“became very hungry”* yet when Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into loaves of bread Jesus quoted from the scriptures

“People do not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Deut 8:3 NLT).

He also told his disciples,

*“My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me,
and from finishing his work”* (John 4:34 NLT).

We live in a physical world, and clearly need food and drink among other things to be sustained and to live, however I do believe we need to have a spiritual hunger for God above all else.

Jesus himself told us to

*“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously,
and he will give you everything you need”* (Matt 6:33 NLT).

You may be in a place of need right now, and we are blessed that as the body of Christ we can support one another in our practical needs but others cannot cultivate a spiritual hunger in us. Only God and a heart that is fully surrendered to Him can do that. What do we desire most?

“You satisfy me more than the richest feast” (Psalm 63:5 NLT)

“The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need” (Psalm 23:1 NLT)

If you are in a wilderness season, there is a song I heard recently that I recommend listening to called “Honey In The Rock” by Brooke Ligertwood/Brandon Lake. I hope it is an encouragement! God is our provider, sustainer and all that we need and He wants us to seek Him wholeheartedly.

God bless!

Dan Beadle

Goliath Must Fall



Recently we finished the second run of the discipleship course “Goliath Must Fall”.

We ran a course in the day before Christmas and on a Tuesday evening after Christmas. The purpose of this course? To equip us in recognizing our giants and dealing with them. The course dealt with such giants as rejection, anger, comfort, fear and addiction. A great resource by Louie Giglio for all of us.

One of my biggest take aways was this...we are not called to be David in the story of David and Goliath. We are not the giant killers of our story. Jesus is the giant killer. David was the example of Christ. It's not us who slays our giants, Jesus does. The challenge is will we take our giants to Jesus once we recognize them and allow Him to slay them, not only so our lives become better, but so He can be glorified too.

Are we ready to not only allow Jesus to slay our giants but to also publicly give Jesus the credit and the glory when He does?

Just Love @ Clementines



Our Opening Hours:

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	9:30am-4pm
Wednesday	9:30am-4pm
Thursday	9:30am-4pm
Friday	9:30am-4pm
Saturday	9:30am-4pm
Sunday	Closed



We are delighted when Merle Balcon joined our team and take over kitchen duties.

In this photo Merle is preparing a carrot cake.

Kids Work at Riverside

We are very blessed with amazing families at Riverside. The children bring life and joy to the church.

At Riverside we are passionate about their growth and development in God and for them to start or continue their walk with Jesus.

On a Sunday children age 6 to 11 years can join us in **Riverkids**, children age 2-6 can join **Tweenies** which is headed up by Rachel or **Creche** where parents can stay with their children under the age of 2 with Joanna.

The children are registered in the back room of the church and the Riverkids are then taken over to St George' hall where we have our session.

This includes looking at God's word and learning about Him through bible stories, games, crafts and prayer. There is always a snack and drink too!

The Tweenies and Riverkids are using a resource called **Heartshaper** which is designed to help the children find God through His word and shape their lives.

In the week Riverside also runs a group for babies on a Friday called **Riverbabes**. This is for parents and carers of babies who are not yet walking. Eloise heads up this group which meets 10-11:30 am

A thank you goes out to all the kids work team for all their input into this ministry

Anyone who is interested in getting involved please let Debbie or Rachel know

Thank you

Debbie Beadle



In 1981

- Prince Charles got married.
- Liverpool were crowned soccer Champions of Europe.
- Australia lost the Ashes.
- The Pope died.

In 2005

- Prince Charles got married.
- Liverpool were crowned soccer Champions of Europe.
- Australia won the Ashes.
- The Pope died.

Lesson to be learnt

The next time Prince Charles gets married, someone should tell the Pope!

Church Notice Howlers

- Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Evening massage - 6pm.
- The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.
- The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.
- Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet at 7.00 to 8.30 pm. Please use the back door.
- Ushers will eat latecomers.
- The third verse of Blessed Assurance will be sung without musical accomplishment.
- The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.
- The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the congregation.

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