



SMALL GROUP



CATCHING UP

- Has anything new or exciting happened in your life since the last time we gathered?
- What was one blessing you experienced this week?
- What was one trial you experienced this week?

SCRIPTURE

Romans 3: 21-26

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in^[a] Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 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. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

STORY BEHIND THE HYMN

Amazing Grace was written by an Englishman who in the early part of his life was an outspoken atheist, libertine, and slave trader. John Newton was born in London in 1725, the son of a Puritan mother and a stern ship commander father who took him to sea when he was 11 (“I am persuaded that he loved me but he seemed not willing that I should know it,” he later wrote). By

1745, Newton was enlisted in the slave trade, running captured slaves from Africa to Charleston, S.C. After he rode out a storm at sea in 1748, he found his faith. He was ordained an Anglican priest in 1764 and became an important voice in the English abolitionist movement. At that time he wrote the autobiographical Amazing Grace.

DIVING DEEP

- How close have you come to getting in trouble with the law? How did you feel?
- “I once was lost but now am found” was a common theme in Jesus’ parables. How many can you name?
- How does this scripture break down barriers between Jews and Gentiles? What is the “righteousness FROM God”? v. 21-22
- What would you say is the concept of this passage?
- It was a storm at sea that transformed John Newton’s faith. What was it about being in a storm that might have been a part of that transformation?
- Martin Luther, John Wesley, Karl Barth – This passage changed their lives...and world history. How is the message of God’s grace impacting your life?

CONCLUSION

- What are some things we can be doing for each other in this upcoming week - prayer requests or actual things?