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April 13, 2022

Editor's Note: the following Letter of Hope was sent to us from [Virginia Scott](#) and [Joan Vogel](#). The words are powerful, but if you watch the linked video, you may need tissues, we did! L&R

Amazing Grace <https://youtu.be/PMLy3V8BGMk>

John Newton was a slave trader.
He trafficked thousands of men, women and children from Africa to the auction blocks.
In 1748 a violent storm threatened to sink his ship.
He fell to his knees and prayed for mercy.
It was that night that John Newton sensed that there is a God who hears and answers prayers...
Even for the worst of men.
Over time Newton repented,
became a preacher...
and writer of hymns.
In 1772 he wrote a hymn called...
"Faiths Review and Expectation"

A song you know as...
"Amazing Grace"

It has become perhaps the most popular song in history.
A song that with a few notes...
has become a song that inspires Hope in the wake of tragedy.
Lifts the heads of the hopeless...
and softens the hearts of the hardened.

Amazing Grace was sung by both sides of the civil war...
and was used as a requiem by the Cherokee Indians on the trail of tears.
Civil Rights protesters sang it defiantly during freedom marches...
and on that sweltering August day Dr. King shared his dream.
Amazing Grace was rang out when Nelson Mandela was released from prison...
And when the Berlin wall... came crumbling down,
and on September 11th

It has been repeated to comfort a mourning world.
Grace has the power to reform,
to right the wrongs,
and turn a man, who once traded slaves...
Into one who fought for their freedom.

Through many dangers, toils and snares, We have already come;
Tis grace that brought us safe thus far...
And grace will lead us home.
~John Newton~

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

