

THE CREED

THE SECOND ARTICLE (PART 2)

STORY

Fierce winds howled and huge waves crashed all around the small ship, rocking it violently in the North Atlantic storm. Captain John Newton lashed himself to the helm trying to hold his ship on course. Certain they would sink, he cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us.”

As the storm subsided, Newton was a new man. On that day in 1748, Newton, a blasphemer, slave trader, and godless sinner, understood God’s amazing grace in Christ Jesus. “On that Day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of deep waters,” he wrote later.

Newton spent the rest of the voyage reading the Bible. He eventually gave up the slave trade and became an abolitionist and preacher. His book, *Thoughts on the African Slave Trade*, based on his own experiences as a slave trader, influenced Britain to abolish slavery.

Newton wrote hymns for Sunday services, including these words from a very familiar one:

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear!

It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
And drives away our fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole
And calms the heart’s unrest;

’Tis manna to the hungry soul
And to the weary, rest” (LSB 524:1–2).

His most famous hymn is “Amazing Grace.”

Discuss one-on-one or in small groups the following questions.

1. John Newton wrote “Amazing Grace” based on David’s words in 1 Chronicles 17:16–17. Describe the connection. *David’s words indicate his feelings of unworthiness to be exalted by God, and Newton described God’s regard for sinners as amazing.*
2. At the end of his life, Newton said, “My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior.” How does this describe the basic tenets of our faith? *Under the Law, Newton recognized His sinfulness, and under the Gospel, Newton knew and believed in the salvation Jesus won and freely imparts to all repentant sinners.*
3. Why is God’s grace in Jesus so amazing? *God’s love and mercy for us are indeed beyond our ability to comprehend and appreciate. He sent His only Son to find and rescue us in our lost condition and to make us worthy to be His sons and daughters.*