



# Forest Home Church

Forest Home Church  
1751 Old Natchez Trace  
Franklin, TN 37069

[www.ForestHomeChurch.org](http://www.ForestHomeChurch.org)

April 10th, 2011

"Sharing, Loving & Exploring Life in Christ"

Send announcements, praises, and prayer requests to: [newsletter@foresthomechurch.org](mailto:newsletter@foresthomechurch.org)

## Amazing Grace that saved a Wretch? Like me?

The famous hymn, *Amazing Grace*, can be heard in many churches including Forest Home. It was written by converted slave-ship captain John Newton and begins with words familiar to believers and even non-believers: *Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.* Not everyone sings the song as written, however, for the gleeful expectations of grace and a culture club of self-esteem choke on the word "WRETCH." Not surprisingly, some folks have even rewritten the hymn as: "That saved and strengthened me", "saved a soul like me", or "that saved and set me free". Anything to avoid the word: "wretch."

And if the "nicer" alternate words are missing, one always has the option to just not sing it. This was how Mark McMinn handled the song for years. McMinn is Professor of Psychology at Wheaton and recently finished a book on sin called *Why Sin Matters: the Surprising Relationship between God's Grace and our Sin* (Tyndale, 2004). In what follows here, I relate parts of a chapter where McMinn's struggle with sin brings him back to singing the old hymn in its original intent. McMinn working to be faithful as a trained psychologist and a Christian is exemplary and among the most helpful (and painful) devotions I read for Lent each year. LH

In this broken world, we have two options.

First, we can deny our complicity and blame others for messing up the world. In doing this, we put ourselves in the role of moral spectators, critics, or victims. In Jesus' parable of the two men praying in the temple, the religious leader says, "I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income." This is the path of self-deception.

The second option is to dare to believe that God is gracious and to admit our sin. In Jesus' parable, the tax collector does not even risk raising his eyes to heaven, but beats his chest and cries out, "O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner" (Luke 18:13). This is the path of hope, the journey of Lent that leads toward Easter.

We are sorely tempted to take the first option. I do sometimes. I am usually nice to my students, treat my colleagues fairly, deeply love those in my family, pay my taxes, provide psychological help to pastors in crisis, go to church and tithe. I don't steal, commit adultery, use illegal drugs, or swear. And I floss regularly. When I was younger, I would gladly sing, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound" and then remain uncomfortably silent for the next six words. I was no wretch, that was for sure.

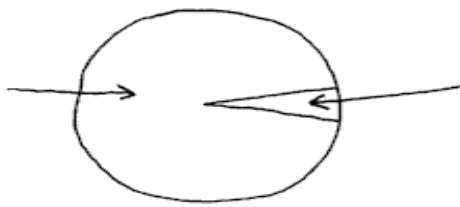
But when I look at myself honestly, I see my sin. I micromanage, consume more than my share of resources, and harbor bitterness from past losses. I hoard my time and resent others for intruding on it. I am vain and consumed with how others perceive me. I wrestle with my sexuality and have strayed away from Lisa, my wife, with my eyes and my heart. I have learned how to pretend to listen without really listening. I think more about being great than about being good. I act more spiritual than I am. I am a mess—broken in every way—and my only hope is in God's mercy.

I have been socialized in a therapeutic language that proclaims "I'm okay, you're okay." Our culture is fascinated with the cult of self-esteem, as if this is the path to self-acceptance and the ultimate experience of love. Many have become adept at polishing the steel of the defensive armor, but the inner self still longs for love more than self-love, for grace more than impression management, for authenticity more than admiration. Beneath the armor of our pride, we live as vulnerable men and women longing to be loved and known. Our hope is found in cautiously shedding the armor and clinging to the possibility of amazing grace. . . . .

Seeing our sin occurs over a lifetime of pursuing God. Our vision is seldom restored in a single burst of light but with countless rays streaming into our darkened eyes over many years—and always in the midst of amazing grace. At the end of his life Newton said to his friends, "My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior."

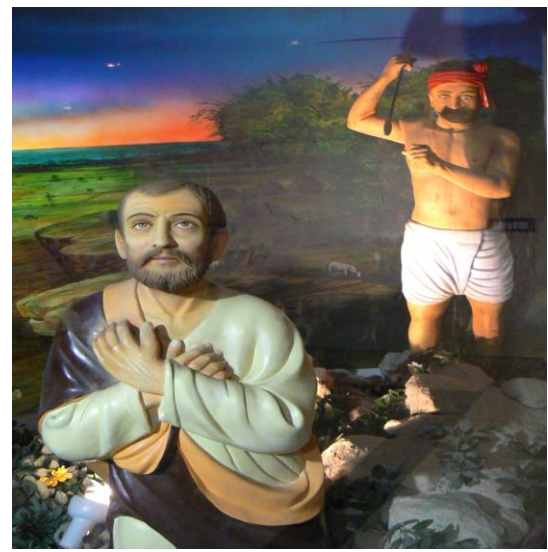
"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." Now I sing it out—the whole line.

THAT  
WHICH  
UNITES  
US



THAT  
WHICH  
UNTIES  
US

CartoonChurch.com



This missionary apostle is reported to have been executed while praying in India by an angry Hindu Brahmin. Do you know who he is? His confession of Jesus was, "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28).

**PRAYERS & PRAISES**

- Our brothers/sisters in Africa: Jac Agak, Charles Ngoje, Jacob Randiek, and your orphan(s)
- Lisa Grimenstein in her time of Pregnancy and the health of the baby
- Guidance and grace for those in job transition
- Thank You Lord for Tommy ministering to many in need
- Lord thank You for Jim McAlister's writing work
- Thank You Lord for Frank's prison & neighborhood work
- Thank You Lord for Azad's ministry to Muslims
- Lord bring healing for those in the body suffering
- Thank You for so many Yes answers to prayer
- We pray for all suffering from Japan's earthquake
- Great Shepherd's leading for His under-shepherds at FH
- Lord mercy & help on a nation dying for lack of knowledge
- Thank You Lord for joy in the grace of giving
- Bless the work of Ann and Karen in counseling ministry
- Healing for Dawn Costello's recently married father
- May our straying loved ones come home to Your love
- Living God, Keep our hearts from false gods
- Great Shepherd may your sheep hear your voice

**Quotables**

"It's the great contradiction: the average person believes he is a better person than the average person." (polling expert)

"[My] sin was all the more incurable because I did not judge myself to be a sinner." Augustine

Our pride demonstrates how much we want to be like God. Meanwhile, God—the eternal and majestic Creator, filled with all power, knowledge, and goodness—empties himself in the form of Jesus, even to the point of a violent and horrific death on trumped-up charges. Humans are puffed up in pride as God is emptied in humility. (Mark McMinn relating Karl Barth)

Our **belief** helps us cope when we get no **relief**. David Boyd

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1).

It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace (Hebrews 13:9).

**Lent** for 2011 is March 9 – April 23. Ash Wednesday on March 9 starts this 40 week day season of self examination, repentance and reflecting on Jesus in preparation for celebrating Jesus' Resurrection on Easter (April 24). We plan to avail ourselves of Lent this year as a spiritual exercise. Please consider participating. More later...

**CLASSES AND WORSHIP SCHEDULE @ FOREST HOME:**

**Classes begin at 9 am. Worship begins at 10 am.**

Grades and ages break down as follow:

Pre-K – Kindergarten

1<sup>st</sup> grade – 4<sup>th</sup> grade

5<sup>th</sup> grade and up

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.  
<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy  
shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



**Announcement:**  
*Tenebrae Service of Reflection on Jesus  
at Forest Home  
Thursday April 21 at 7:30 pm*

Prayer is the News! Time of Prayer at FH church  
Monday and Thursday 5:30 p.m. to 5:50 p.m.

**2011 Calendar**

EACH MON+THURS 5:30-5:50PM @ the church Intercessory prayer for anyone  
EACH TUES 6:30 am @ the church, Men's Ministry  
EACH WED 5:00 pm @ the church, Women's Bible Study  
Apr 21 Tenebrae Service of Reflection @ FH at 7:30pm  
Mar 9-Apr 23 Lent

DATE	NURSERY (Infants-2 yrs old) During sermon only	LORD'S SUPPER PREPARATION	WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER
Apr 10	Pat Gil	Apr/May Grimensteins  (Sub-Grimensteins) See Jim Grim with questions.	Apr 13
Apr 17	Sam Lamborn		Apr 20
Apr 24	Linda Boyd		Apr 27
May 1	Leah Hickerson		May 4
			Ocie/Shannon Pat/Karen Sarah/Kathleen Lisa/Liz