



February 26, 2023

Lenten Reflection

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see

What is it about the song “Amazing Grace” that makes it so beloved?
Why do the words and melody resonate with us on such a deep level?
What is it that our hearts “hear” in this song?

In this world that is overflowing with chaos and noise, the sweet sound of grace tends to be quelled. But grace is at every moment in the air all around us, full of possibility, waiting for us to stop and hear. We ourselves must make the choice to stop, and to listen. Even when we are distracted in our lives, because of Christ we are found by this sweet but mighty roar of love. Eyes are no longer blind to what God is doing, for grace opens our hearts to hear and receive. We are no longer lost to the shadows but found standing in the light. In Christ, the Word, we hear the sound of redemption: the saving voice of God singing in our own lives, every day.

(from “How Sweet the Sound” by Sarah Hart)

The third line in this stanza is adapted from Luke 15:32 in Jesus’ Parable of the Prodigal Son: “This brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.” The fourth line is adapted from John 9:25: “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

Psalm 32

Blessed are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

**² Blessed are those whom the LORD does not hold guilty,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

³ When I did not declare my sin, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

**⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.**

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;

**I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”;
then you forgave the guilt of my sin.**

⁶ Therefore let those who are godly
offer prayer to you;

**at a time of distress, the rush of great waters,
shall not reach him.**

⁷ You are a hiding place for me,
you preserve me from trouble;
you encompass me with deliverance.

**⁸ I will instruct you and teach you
the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.**

⁹ Do not be like an unruly horse or a mule, without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle.

**¹⁰ Many are the pangs of the wicked;
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.**

**¹¹ Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,
shout for joy, all you upright in heart!**

Romans 5: 12 - 19

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— ¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. ¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

¹⁸ Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

St Matthew 4: 1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

⁵ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

⁷ Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.