

Life Changing Grace
(Rev. Rob Heffernan)

“Amazing Grace” is a Christian hymn written by John Newton and published in 1779. This hymn is known worldwide being sung in almost every setting in different renditions but with the same familiar and soul penetrating words. Most recently, President Barack Obama sang it at the memorial service for Clementa Pinckney, one of the victims of the 2015 Charleston church shooting. If you tried, you can probably start to sing the hymn yourself. “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a.....”

Grace is one of the most important concepts in Christianity, and I would argue for the world to embrace. Without it we become inhumane, and fast. Just read a history book covering the events of the last century to support that point. In the Bible, grace is God’s unconditional love bestowed upon underserving people. It is most clearly expressed in the life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth who forgave greedy rich people, the sexually promiscuous, religious zealots, etc. He taught that everyone needs it from God and should receive it through faith in Him, and by extension everyone is asked then to extend that grace received to others. Grace is the balm that can heal us, all of us, because at its heart is forgiveness.

To forgive someone is to extend grace to them. It implies that even though they wronged you, and perhaps unjustly so, that you are willing to release them from blame or judgment and put it in God’s hands. When you forgive you start to see that you are no better than them, just as imperfect and broken as they are. \

And as you forgive, you are set free. You don’t have to be the judge you never were; you are able to live again. By forgiving, you can love your neighbour instead of living in fear of them and the intolerance that stems from it.