

Amazing Indeed

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[0 : 00] Well, when Pastor mentioned that I was born on May the 30th, 1933, I'm sure it didn't take many of you very long to realize he's a real old man.

In fact, 90 years old. And I've been to many places since I've turned 90. And for some reason, Pastor, everywhere I go and I've been before, Pastors say something like this, Brother Sisk, we want to have you one more time.

And I always think, one more time before what? And I know exactly what they're thinking. And it is a joy to be here at Vision Baptist Church for many, many reasons.

And I thank God for what you dear folks are doing. I want you to open your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2.

And I'm going to read the first 10 verses. And if you're able and would like to honor God's word by standing, you do that, would you? If you're not able to do that, don't worry about it.

[1 : 33] Ephesians chapter 2. And I want you to realize that in the first two or three verses here, that Paul did not have too many good things to say about us before we got saved.

Okay. In fact, he had a lot of bad things to say about us. And you hath he quickened, who were dead, not sick, not needing a little help, no.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin. Wherein time passed, you walked according to the course of this world. According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also you had your conversation in times past, in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desire of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

That was us before we got saved. But then you have a wonderful statement in verse 4. But God.

By the way, that appears many times in the scripture. And when God gets involved in your life, everything changes.

[3 : 08] Amen. But God, who is rich in mercy, or his grace, great love, wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ.

By grace are you saved. And hath raised us up together. And made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

That in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace. And his kindness toward us. Toward us.

Through Christ Jesus. For by grace are you saved through faith. And that not of yourself. It is a gift of God.

Not of works. Lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

[4 : 13] Dear Lord, I thank you for the opportunity to proclaim your word this morning. You have said in your word the great promise when my word goes forth.

It shall not return to me void. You have a purpose for what you've laid on my heart for this church this morning. Now I pray that you would anoint my mind this morning so I could think right.

I pray you would anoint my lips, my tongue so that I could speak right. But Lord, more than anything, I pray you would anoint my heart that I'd be right.

Bless the message of your word. Use it to help people today. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. You may be seated.

Several years ago I was in Southern California and preached for a young preacher. And after the message he said, Brother Sis, that was an awesome message.

[5 : 24] And I felt pretty good about that. And after the service we went to a hamburger place called In-N-Out.

And if you've ever been to California, you've been to In-N-Out. And you want to go again. Amen. And we had ordered that double-double or whatever it was.

And we were eating that hamburger. And that young preacher said, Brother Sis, this is an awesome hamburger. And I thought, yeah, something like my message.

Amen. And I've often thought the word awesome is not a bad word. But I like a word rather than awesome.

The word amazing. Now they mean practically the same thing. Okay. But amazing. Amazing. And tonight I'd like, or today, it's morning, isn't it?

[6 : 35] It feels like night to me. You would not believe last night. We had no power for about six hours. Okay. No electricity.

But this morning, I want to just talk about the simple phrase, amazing indeed. Amazing indeed.

Amazing indeed. And the Bible talks about all that we were not. And then it says, but God. And then in verse 8, he said, for by grace are you saved through faith.

So let's think first of all about the amazing grace of God. The amazing grace of God.

It's a wonderful thing. And then it says, it's a wonderful thing to realize that the apostle Paul, before he met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, was Saul of Tarsus.

[7 : 42] And he had the idea that it was his job to wipe out the name of Jesus Christ and what he would think about the cult that is following him.

And the amazing thing is, the person that tried to destroy the name of Jesus, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul, Saul of Tarsus at that time, on the road to Damascus.

And for the only time after the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, he appeared to one person.

I don't think he appeared to anybody else after the ascension. Bodily. But he appeared to who? Saul of Tarsus.

Isn't that amazing? The amazing grace of God. John Newton was one of the worst sinners that ever lived. He left home at the age of 16, got on a boat as a worker, eventually became a slave trader, and lived one of the most wicked lives that you could think about.

[9 : 07] But one night during the storm, he remembered that his mother, before she died, had given him her Bible. And he got that Bible out and he started reading it.

And little by little, he understood how wicked he was and how good God was. By the way, that's what we in the Bible do for you. Amen. It shows what we are and it shows what God is.

Amen. And eventually he got saved. Went back to England. Became one of the worst, one of the people that helped to abolish slavery in England.

Did some wonderful things. Went to Bible college. Started a church here. Went to a church in Arleny. And while he was there, he wrote the song, 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.

[10 : 10] Great song. Amen. I've been to over 90 different countries around the world and I've never been to a place where the song, Amazing Grace, was not translated into that language.

Would you like to sing one verse? Now, please, don't let me sing all by myself. That would ruin the service and he would all want to leave.

But let's sing one verse of that song, okay? 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. We had our European field conference in England one time.

[11 : 22] And I never will forget going to Arleny and being in the church there. Not the church service, but the building where John Newton was.

Then all of us went out to his grave and stood there and sang that song and it meant some amazing grace. As was mentioned, I was born May the 30th, 1933.

And none of you are that old, I don't think. I'm looking at it. Some of you look at old, but I don't think you're that old. But it's hard to believe in those days.

My dad was a coal miner and made practically no money. And everything that we think is absolutely necessary for life, we had none of those things.

For instance, we didn't have wall-to-wall carpet. We didn't even have wall-to-wall flooring. I could look through the cracks and see the dirt. We had no radio. We had no telephone.

[12 : 27] We had no automobile. You say, how do you live? I don't know, but we did. Things were so bad.

I mean, you think about it, no radio, no telephone, no iPad, no iPod, no computer. Those things were even unknown of.

In fact, it was so bad, we had to watch television in the dark. You'll get that eventually. My dad was a coal miner.

All week long, he was very easy to get along with. But every weekend, he got drunk. Every weekend. Saturday, most of the time on Sunday.

And when he got drunk, everything changed. He was a beast. So I was raised in a very dysfunctional home.

[13 : 30] But by the grace of God, when I was 16 years old, Bill Welch said to me, Don, we're having a Youth for Christ meeting on Saturday night.

I'd like for you to be my guest. And I didn't have anywhere to go, no money, no nothing. Okay, Bill, I'll go with you. And then I got to thinking, Youth for Christ. Youth, I'm 16 years old, so I can meet that.

Okay. For Christ, I'm not a Christian. My family's not a Christian. And I tried to look for reasons to break my promise to Bill, but I couldn't find any good.

And Sunday morning, or Saturday morning, I woke up, and I thought, I'm done. I need whatever those Christians have. I don't know what they do after they preach and have that song and people go forward, but I'm going to go to church tonight.

I'm going to do that. I didn't know what they did, but I said, I'm going to do that. In other words, I went to church to get saved. I don't have any idea what the preacher preached. I don't know who he was, but I wanted him to quit so I could go forward.

[14 : 43] And eventually, like all preachers, he eventually quit. Okay. And when he did, I stepped out in the aisle and started forward and a Baptist preacher followed me down the aisle. And I kneeled there at the altar that night when I was 16 years old and realizing I was a sinner on my way to hell, I could not save myself.

I'd heard enough preaching and so forth to know that I was a sinner, that Jesus died for sinners, and that I needed to get saved. And I don't remember all the things that Gifford Berry told me that night, but we prayed.

And I just simply, in simple childlike faith, prayed and asked the Lord to save me. And by the way, he did. Okay. He always will.

I got up from the altar that night and I didn't feel any liquid love running up and down my spine. I didn't see any lights flashing, but I had a peace that I'd never had before in my life.

And I always think I went to church on my way to hell. I went home on my way to heaven. I went to church.

[15 : 58] I had a physical life, but I had no spiritual life. I went home and I had spiritual life also. In fact, I knew it the next morning because the first thought I had on Sunday morning was, I'm going to church today.

Not I'm going to play basketball. Not I'm going to take a hike. Not I'm going to go. No, no. I'm going to church. And I went to church and guess what? Church had changed. I mean, everything was different.

I even enjoyed the preaching. You know. And really, the church hadn't changed. I had. I never will forget going to school on Monday morning after I got saved.

And the same geometry class as Bill asked me to go to church. And everything Mr. Gladish asked that morning. Any question. I always had that answer.

And I remember her saying, Don, you seem to be extremely bright this morning. And I thought, man, getting saved makes you smarter. By the way, it really does.

[17 : 04] I'm not going to promise straight A's if you get saved. The amazing grace of God. My dad got saved when he was 57 years old.

That was a wonderful thing. God's amazing grace. Listen to it from the Bible. For when we were yet without strength in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.

And aren't we glad of that little prefix, ungodly. ungodly. Because if he would have said, Christ died for the godly, that would have left all of us out.

But isn't it wonderful? He said, he died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man would one die. Yet preadventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God. And there it is again. But God commendeth his love toward us. And then while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[18 : 16] the amazing grace of God. Look at Romans 6.23 in your Bible. Many of you can quote it, I know.

But just look at it for just a minute. Romans 6.23. For the wages of sin is death. Now all of us know what the word wages mean.

We work for a company. They promise to pay us so much per hour or whatever. And when they pay us that, that's our wages. That's what we deserve.

And God's amazing mercy is that he withholds from us what we deserve. What do we deserve?

We deserve hell. We deserve to die and spend eternity in hell because we are sinners. We deserve to die.

[19 : 16] But God, but God, okay, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Now think with me about this. God's mercy keeps from us what we deserve. God's grace gives us, to us, what we do not and could not ever deserve.

God's amazing grace. Then think with me about this thing. God's amazing plan.

Sunday morning after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Some ladies got together and several of them and they decided that we're going to the tomb and we're going to take the spices and so forth and we're going to prepare the body of Jesus for burial.

And for the life of me, and I know some of you are good theologians and maybe you can help me, but do it after the service, okay? Not all I'm trying to preach.

[20 : 39] They all got together and they're on their way to the tomb and all of them are thinking about the same thing. You know, we're women, we don't have a lot of strength.

How in the world can we roll that stone away? Now for the life of me, I don't know why those women thought it was necessary to do that.

After all, Nicodemus and Joseph of Amarta prepared the body of Jesus, okay? And for the life of me, I have no idea how these women decided they had to do that.

Except for one thing. They probably thought, you know, men can't do anything right. And by the way, they were probably right. Okay, men can't do anything right.

So we're going to go away and we're going to do it right. Now I know that's not very theological, but anyway, I think that's what happened. And they were wondering, how are we going to roll that big stone away?

[21 : 48] And when they got there, to their amazement, the stone had been rolled away. And by the way, it wasn't rolled away so he could get out.

He walked through doors. He could have walked through that rock. It was rolled away so we could see inside that it was empty. I remember a Jewish guide at the tomb one day when we were in Israel saying there's a controversy of which tomb he was buried in.

But then he said, now think about it, a Jewish guide. He said, it doesn't make any difference because he's not in either one of them. Amen? Thank God for a living Savior.

We serve a living Savior. He's in the world today. Every false religion serves a dead God. Everyone.

But we as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ serve a living Savior. And when they got to the tomb and saw that stone rolled away, the angel said to him, why seek ye the living among the dead?

[23 : 13] He's not here. He's not here. He's risen. Thank God for that. And then listen to what he said to them. Go tell his disciples to meet him at Galilee.

Okay? The ladies are on the way to find the disciples so they can tell them to meet Jesus at Galilee. And on the way, they meet Jesus.

They worship him and thank God we have worshiped him this morning. But can you imagine the worship when we see him face to face? They saw the Lord and Jesus said to them, go tell my brethren, same people, to meet me at Galilee.

Wow. The angel said, go tell the disciples to meet him at Galilee. Jesus said, you meet me at Galilee. And in Matthew 28, we read about that meeting.

Listen to it. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth.

[24 : 52] Look at the first part of that there. And Jesus speaking to him, saying, all power. And by the way, if verse 17 was not in the Bible, verses 18 and 19 would have been a literal impossibility.

Brother Cornwell, aren't you glad God didn't say to you, now, you're going to become the pastor of Vision Baptist Church. just do the best you can.

And the best he could have done would have been a total failure. I'm sure glad God didn't say to me, okay, Don, go around Japan and do the best you can. The best I could have done would have been a horrible failure.

In fact, I well remember for the first time seeing a Japanese Bible after I had already committed my life called Japan as a missionary. And I looked in that Bible.

There was nothing in that Bible that resembled a word. It looked like chickens had been out in a muddy field and got their feet all wet and then stepped on some paper and they put all that paper together.

[26 : 15] And I looked at that Bible and all I could think about was, Lord, I'm from Kentucky. We have a difficult time with English and you expect me to learn a language like that.

And I was petrified to think about learning Japanese. We got to Japan, got in language school. About two or three months in, I got to thinking all of my fears were justified.

God. It was just as difficult as I had ever thought about it. But God, by the grace of God, after a year and a half of language school and a lot of studying, a lot of weeping, crying, I was able to preach and teach in the Japanese language and we saw God do some great things.

Jesus said, all power is given to me. I have power over demons. I have power over nature. I have power over disease. I have all power.

power. And then he said, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. I understand your weakness.

[27 : 45] I know how little you can do. In fact, bottom line is, without the Lord, we can do absolutely nothing. Jesus said, I'm the vine and you're the branches.

He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me you can do nothing. Nothing.

And that's a simple illustration. You take a branch away from the vine, break it off, lay it up, do whatever you can, plant it, doctor it up, it doesn't make any difference.

That branch can do nothing. And after he said, all power is given to me, then he said, go you therefore. God's amazing plan.

He says to his disciples, now I've done everything that needs to be done in order for mankind to be saved. Now, it is your responsibility.

[28 : 48] Go you therefore and teach all nations and the word nations come from the word ethnos, all ethnic groups. Teach them.

In other words, make disciples of them, evangelize them, teach them the word of God, baptize them, get them ready to go and do your amazing plan.

Hey, by the way, who did he give that to? His disciples. What are you if you've been saved by the grace of God?

You are a learner, a follower, you are a disciple of Jesus. And I believe from the depth of my heart, it is as much your responsibility and your responsibility and yours and yours and mine as it was those early disciples.

And aren't you glad they didn't fail? Had they failed, we would have never heard the gospel. God's amazing plan.

- [30 : 02] Now, one other thing. Our amazing opportunity and responsibility. Think about it.
- Sometimes we have, look at all the problems that's going on, all the things that are happening, not only in our country, but all over the world and we think, these are horrible times.
- Hey, by the way, I believe in the depth of my heart. You and I that have the privilege of living in 2024, and I never thought I would get to the year 20 anything, but God, amen.
- we have the greatest opportunity of any group of people that have ever had. For instance, we have more trained leaders in Bible-believing fundamental churches today than at any time in the history of mankind.
- Now, the sad thing is all of them want to serve in the same place, but we have more trained leaders. we have more money than any other generation has ever had.
- [31 : 19] We have more technology. I mean, when I was a boy, I had a Dick Tracy watch. Now I have a smart watch. Dick Tracy watch, the only people could hear me when I talked into it, was those close to me.
- But somebody had an idea, you could use that thing and talk to people all over the world. I can use my smart watch and by the way, it tells me when to stand, when to breathe.
- It tells me everything. I mean, everything I need to know, my smart watch tells me. But I can take a smart watch and call it anywhere in the world.
- We have more technology. We have more people to preach to, to evangelize than any other generation has ever had.
- as of October the 15th, 2023, the world population reached 8 billion people.
- [32 : 27] That's hard to put your mind around here. 8 billion people. The sad thing, at least one half of them and maybe two thirds of them have never heard a clear presentation of the gospel message.
- Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. Some have not the knowledge of God. I speak that to your shame. I wonder what he would say to us in the 21st century.
- Millions, billions have never heard I speak that to your shame. Our amazing opportunity.
- More technology, more people, more money. so many opportunities. So let's think about three simple questions this morning before we are over.
- Question number one. Hey, by the way, take it personally. Take world evangelization personally.
- [33 : 47] I mean, after all, every believer ought to be involved in world evangelization. Every believer. So with that in mind, think about this question.
- What are you doing personally? Now, not what your church is doing. I know what your church corporately are doing. But individually, what are you doing to fulfill the great commission?
- Think on that of me. What am I doing to get the gospel to every person on face of their, and by the way, that's exactly what Jesus said to me. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.
- What are you doing personally? Are you witnessing where you are? What are you giving in order to evangelize the world?
- What are your plans for the future? Are there in the hands of God so you would go wherever God wants you to go and do whatever God wants you to do?
- [35 : 08] What are you doing personally? And when you stop and think about that you might say, well, I'm not willing to do, I'm not doing very much.

I'm not doing what I ought to do. Okay, second question. What are you willing to do? Knowing the great need and the great opportunity we have, what are you willing to do?

the last question is, what are you waiting for? Oh, I'm going to do this. No, no, no.

What are you waiting for? Today is the day of salvation. Look on the fields, they're white already to harvest. The harvest truly is plentiful, the laborers are few.

Let me ask you, personally, take it personally, what am I doing? What am I willing to do?

[36 : 14] What am I waiting for? People that are going to do something later, usually they never do it. If God did it with your heart today about being a missionary, you ought to come today and make that commitment.

If you're not giving the faith promise missions, you ought to begin doing that today. If you are doing it, you probably ought to increase, amen?

What are you giving? I've had some great experiences recently. I was in a church and maybe they had 200 people, something like that.

But the pastor had prayed for a good while that their church would be reached where they would give at least a million dollars a year for missions. And last year their commitments was a million one hundred thousand dollars.

One man in that church gave over a hundred thousand dollars. What are you doing?

[37 : 22] Well, I'm doing something. Now, too many people prayed, dear Lord, how little can I give? And be honest.

Not much, but I'll answer that question for you. But what will it be praying? God, how much would you give through me? I'm going to give you the testimony of a pastor.

And he told his church this when I was there. He said, I learned to give the faith promise when Brother Sis came to my church when I was 16 years old. And he said, now give everybody a commitment card, every man, every woman, every boy, every girl.

That's what the Bible teaches. Every man according to his purpose in his heart. And he said, I promise to give five dollars a week. I was working at a fast food store.

Now, I don't know how old he is now, probably 60 years old. But he said, I've raised my faith promise giving every year. And I've done that too since 1968.

[38 : 28] And he said, last year, my wife and I gave \$65,000 to Missy. How much am I doing?

Maybe we should begin to think like Mary. You know, she was, had the opportunity to have Jesus in her home in Bethany.

Mary, Martha, Lazarus were there, Simon was there, the disciples were there. And Mary got to thinking, this is a wonderful time.

Now, over in Jerusalem, they were met together to see how they could kill Jesus. By the way, if I'd been living in, I hope I'd have been in Bethany, not in Jerusalem.

She got to think, she looked at Simon. I remember when Simon was a leper. And look at him, he's clean. She looked at her brother, and she thought, Lazarus, I remember when Lazarus was dead.

[39 : 33] Jesus got there after he died, and died, and Martha and I both told Jesus he was too late. Isn't it amazing we think we know more than he does?

By the way, Jesus was never one minute late, and I think, and he never got in a hurry, but he was never one minute late.

Now, we stay in a hurry, and we're always late, but Jesus was never late. And he said, let's go out to the tomb. Okay, they went out to the tomb.

And they got there, and they began to weep, and so forth, last as they did. And the amazing thing is, the Bible says, and Jesus wept.

Sometimes when you don't know of any verse, when somebody asks you to quote a verse of Scripture, you can't think of any, oh, you say, yes, Jesus wept. Hey, he knew what he was going to do.

[40 : 38] But the other people were weeping, his friends were weeping, and he wept. aren't we glad we serve a compassionate Christ? Anything that bothers you, bothers him.

A compassionate Christ. Then Jesus said to some men, hey, roll away that stone from Lazarus tomb.

Mary Martha protested, don't do that, Lord. he's been dead four days. He's stinking. Yeah, he's stinking.

And by the way, after you've been dead four days, it's all right to stink, okay? Just don't stink while you're living, okay? Don't do that.

And then Jesus said, Lazarus! He did it with a loud voice, Lazarus! Come forth! And somebody as well said, it's a good thing he said Lazarus.

[41 : 49] Because if he had just said come forth, everybody in those tombs would have got up and walked out. Lazarus, come forth. And Mary got to thinking, I was a wicked woman.

man, I met Jesus, and he saved me. Then she thought, I got to do something for him.

She had spent time at the feet of Jesus, and she knew that he was going to be crucified real soon. I've got to do something for him. And she had this alabaster box, very expensive perfume.

Judas said it could have been sold for 300 pence. That's close to a year's salary. Very expensive. And she broke that alabaster box, and she anointed Jesus.

And she didn't say, I could sell this in today's economy for something like \$50,000. Wow. She didn't buy that at Walmart, amen.

[43 : 01] I could buy a new car with this. I could make a big down payment on a new house. No. She didn't ask how much.

She just realized, I've got to do something for him. And she did. And can you imagine the aroma in that house? It's been over 2,000 years, and I think I can still smell it a little bit.

that's extravagant giving. Isn't it about time that we as God's people realize that we can do a whole lot more in our giving than we are?

Isn't it about time we realize that my life does not belong to myself? You're not your own. You're bought with a price.

I belong to Jesus Christ. It's not me to figure out where I live and what I do and all of those things. No, no, no. I belong to Christ.

[44 : 09] And whatever Christ wants from me, I'm ready to do it. Paul said it like this. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto him.

what are you doing? What are you waiting to do? What are you waiting for?