

MOVING SPIRIT

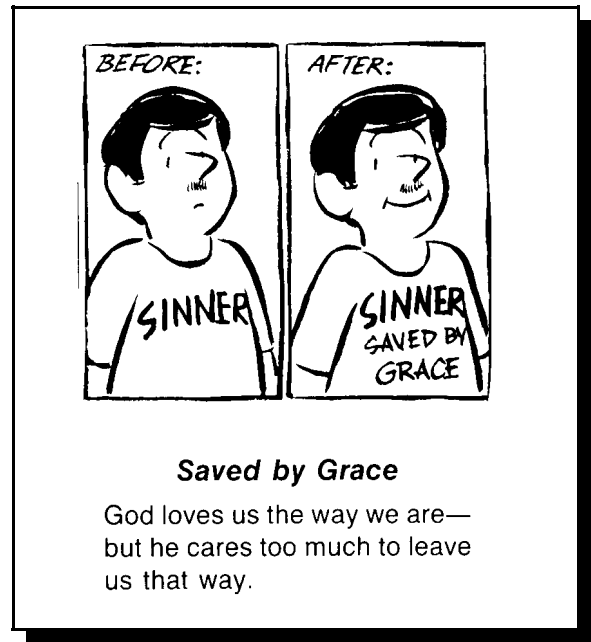
April, 1998

Eskaton Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

John Newton, although instructed in the Christian faith early in life by his dear mother, went to sea at age 11 and became an infidel with a blasphemous lifestyle. After years of sinful living, he entered the shameful slave-trade. God, in loving grace, allowed him to survive a severe fever in Africa, and later spared his ship from almost sinking in a storm. At reading some passages in Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, he began to reflect on his mother's early instruction. In true repentance, turning from his sins, he asked Christ into his heart and was powerfully converted. Later, he became a minister and wrote many famous hymns. Many, who do not know John Newton's story, do know his testimony of faith in the words of "Amazing Grace" (see page 4).

Though God loves us as are, He loves us too much to leave us that way. Just as Newton's life was raised up from the depths of sin by God's amazing grace, so we each need that same "resurrection." That is really what Easter is all about. The hope instilled in us through the fact of Christ's resurrection is not just for a future life in Heaven. It is the source of transformation in our present lives.



God's "amazing grace" through the death and resurrection of Christ is our strength for our life-long spiritual journey.

My prayer is that all at Eskaton experience the life-changing "amazing grace" that John Newton and so many other great saints have told about. God bless you! --Pastor David

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Parish Proclamations

Easter Church Service

During our Easter Sunday service, we will celebrate Holy Communion, observed usually on the 4th Sunday of each month. The Eucharist reminds us of Easter throughout the year, as we

remember Christ's crucifixion for our sins and His resurrection to life.

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Church Committee Meeting

Monday, May 11th, at 3:00 P.M. is our tri-annual church committee meeting. For those who come, try to gather a list of favorite hymns and choruses for our list to draw from for Sunday worship.

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People's Pulpit

Epiphany-Lent Meditation

"Christmas is over," I said to myself,
"over and done and put away."
And then a whimsey, I added in thought.
"Four months only to grow Him up,
learn or His life, hail Him again,
---and crucify."

Then I was stopped, struck by this thought:
Lent is really another Advent--
preparation for His joyful coming.
Palm Sunday is Christmas all over again--
Again the greens and songs of praise;
Then all too briefly if at all we pause
to remember His crucifixion
In all our preparation for Easter Day.
(Do we ever stop to remember
the slaughter of the Holy Innocents
in the midst of our Christmas-New Year joy?)
Now, instead of a tree and gifts,
it's clothes and cards and eggs we do.

On Christmas we greeted a baby sweet--
(how *nice* of God to send His Son)--
No demands were made of us--
No commitment was asked just then
But the Babe, grown up, confronts us now:
Holy Week was a time of decision.
Oh yes indeed we became involved--
--we crucified our Lord.

But God cannot be stopped;
He rose again on Easter morn.
He came once more in love.
Forty days He stayed with us
to help us understand.
Then God-in-Man we saw no more---
and we waited, lost in fear.
An then on Pentecost in flame
He came with power divine;
He entered every waiting heart,
and God was manifest again
as at Epiphany.

And through the ages ever since,
as each of us makes the choice,
God comes once more to live with us.
--Dear Lord, be manifest in me!
--Betty Meagher (Epiphany, 1981)
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Pithy Pieces

10 Searching Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. Am I doing anything that I would condemn in others?
2. Am I faultfinding in other people?
3. Am I faithful to church and God?
4. Do I have control of my tongue and the things I say?
5. Do I waste time - my own or others?
6. Am I reliable? Can people count on me?
7. Am I loving and patient with my family?
8. Do I spend quality time alone with God?
9. Is my body in good shape?
10. Am I improving my mind and learning new things regularly?

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Praise's Portion

The greatest honor you can give Almighty God, greater than all your sacrifices and mortifications, is to live gladly because of the knowledge of His love. --Julian of Norwich

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Psalm 71 Paraphrased
(A Prayer for the Aging)

You are my trust from my youth.
You have upheld me from birth;
You took me out of my mother's womb.
My praise shall be of You.
Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
do not forsake me when my strength fails.
Do not be far from me;
O my God, help me!
O God, You have taught me from my
youth; I declare Your wondrous works.
Now when I am old and gray headed,
O God, do not forsake me until I declare
You to this generation.
O God, who is like you?
You, who have shown me severe troubles,
shall revive me again.
You shall comfort me on every side.
I will praise You and your faithfulness!
To You I will sing, O Holy One of Israel.
My lips rejoice when I sing to You, and my
soul, which You have redeemed. Amen.

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Prayer's Priorities

God, when I am afraid of the unknown,
instill in me that you will always love
me and watch over me. Reinforce my
faith so that my fears are dissipated.

Thank you. Amen.

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Keep us, O God, from pettiness: Let us
be large in thought, in word, in deed.
Grant that we may realize it is the little
things that created differences; that in
the big things of life we are at one.

And may we strive to touch and to
know the great common human heart of
us all. Amen, amen.

---Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots (in
prison before her beheading)

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Soar Like an Eagle

Oh dear Lord, give me the voice of Your
angels on high to sing to You praises.
You have filled me with Your Spirit, You
have eased my troubled heart and heard
my tormented cries in the darkness.
Were I an eagle I would soar up to
heaven on high and circle heaven's gates
in tribute to Your holy name. With You
I am at peace and my heart flows to
overflowing with love for You.

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Sometimes the Answer's "No!"

We often ask for selfish things
that we don't really need,
But God has never promised
He would satisfy our greed.
We can't all be rich or famous
and live in luxury.
Someone must wash the dishes
and plant the apple tree.
Everybody loves the winner
who captures first place,
But no one can remember
the others in the race.
Sometimes the things we pray for
were never meant to be,
And because we don't receive them,

we doubt His love, you see.
God hears every prayer we utter
 wherever we may go,
And if He does not answer
it could mean the answer's "No!"
 -- Clay Harrison

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Poetry's Place

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand
 years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sin God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

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A Tribute to Mothers

God made the fragrance of a flower,
 The majesty of a tree,
The gentleness of morning dew,
 The calm of a quiet sea,
The beauty of the twilight hour,
 The soul of a starry night,

The laughter of a rippling brook,
The grace of a bird in flight,
The tender care of an angel,
The faith of a mustard seed,
 The patience of eternity,
The depth of a family's need,
Then God fashioned from these things
 A creation like no other,
And when His masterpiece was
 through,
He called it simply . . . MOTHER.

--Anonymous

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Pearls of Prudence

Christianity has not been tried and
found wanting; it has been found
difficult and not tried.

-- G.K. Chesterton

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Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they
 sometimes will,
When the road you are trudging seems
 all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts
 are high,
And you want to smile but you have to
 sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must—but don't you quit!

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometime learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck
 it out;
Don't give up, though the pace seems
 slow—

You might succeed with another
blow....

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Pleasant words are as a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul, and health to the
bones. -- Proverbs 16:24

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If somehow or other we could continue
to let spiritual power loose in this
world, this would be the golden age of
humanity. --Norman V. Peale

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The future belongs to those who believe
in the beauty of their dreams.

-- Eleanor Roosevelt

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Pleasurable Pastime

A Baptist pastor and a Lutheran pastor
were overheard discussing the different
ways their churches baptized people:
total immersion and sprinkling on the
head.

Lutheran pastor: "Well, just how much
water do you need? Up to the knees?"

Baptist pastor: "More."

Luth. pastor: "Up to the shoulders?"

Baptist pastor: "More."

Luth. pastor: "Up to the chin?"

Baptist pastor: "More."

Luth. pastor: "Over the head?"

Baptist pastor: "That's right."

Luth. pastor: "That's where we put it."

--Ronald E. Leese

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Ministerial pride: altar ego.

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My father used to say, "You must have
a terrible conscience if you can't sleep

in church." --George Goldtrap

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Precious Principles

Every limitation I have is an invitation
by God to do for me what I cannot do
for myself.

--Stephen Osterburn

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The largest room in the world is the
room for improvement.

--Mamie McCullough

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When we are in the presence of another
person, we're on Holy Ground; God is
at work in that person, too. --Eugene

Peterson

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A good rule for going through life is to
keep the heart a little softer than the
head. -- *Changing Times*

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All our progress is an unfolding, like
the vegetable bud. You have first an
instinct, then an opinion, then a
knowledge, as the plant has root, bud,
and fruit. Trust the instinct to the end,
though you can render no reason. --

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.

To weep is to risk appearing
sentimental.

To reach for another is to risk
involvement.

To expose your feelings is to risk
exposing your true self.

To place your ideas, your dreams,
before a crowd is to risk their loss.

To love is to risk not being loved in return.

To live is to risk dying.

To believe is to risk despair.

To try is to risk failure.

But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The people who risk nothing, do nothing, have nothing, are nothing. They may avoid suffering and sorrow, but they cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, live.

Chained by their attitudes they are slaves; they have forfeited their freedom.

Only a person who risks is free.

--*President's Newsletter*, 1982, Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Indiana.

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When to Stop Giving

"Must I be giving, again and again?"

"Oh, no," said the Master piecing me through; "You may stop giving

When I stop giving to you."

We cannot control the wind,

But we can adjust our sails.

--Our Daily Bread

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"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." --Isaiah 30:15

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Pastor's Postscript

There is only one Shepherd. A minister is an under-shepherd of that "one Shepherd." In fact, the pastor is really just one of the sheep. This is clear from everyone's ability to claim Psa. 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd."

But it works two ways. If the minister is only a sheep, then all sheep can be ministers! Yes, and this is why, until the day we depart this life, all of us are to be the Lord's servants. The word *minister* means "servant." All of the sheep are under the command to obey Jesus, Who said, "Follow Me." Since He was our Servant, then following Him means that we will be the servants of others. So, we are all called to service, that is, to *ministry*.

"But," you may ask, "What is my ministry?" I don't exactly know. I know told me to be a pastor. But He didn't intend that pastors serve alone. Pastors are to equip and lead the flock in serving others.

My prayer is, first, for God to instill in all at EVCC that each has a ministry, and second, for each to seek God to discover what that ministry is. I pray that He guides me in helping our church to be a community of servants for others at Eskaton Village. I hope, over the next several months, to be preaching on this theme. Pray with me about this...

--*Pastor David*