

INDIFFERENCE of the spectators who came to see some blood.

John Newton, who wrote Amazing Grace, came to Christ from a life of drunkenness and being a slave trader. He wrote another song about standing in front of the cross and seeing Jesus look straight at Him. He said of this "look":

"It seemed to charge me with His death  
Though not a word He spoke / A second look He  
gave which said, / I freely all forgive /  
This blood is for thy ransom paid  
I die that thou might live."

## PEACE FROM THE CROSS

Isaiah 53:5-6

**"He was wounded for our transgressions, / He was  
bruised for our iniquities / With His stripes we are  
healed / The Lord hath laid on Him  
the iniquity of us all."**

After we become Christians, God slowly shows us the horrible depths of evil inside. He does it as the Great Physician so he can heal us, one sin at a time. Often, however, this self-knowledge causes us doubt our salvation. We ask, how can a person like me be a true Christian? For a year in seminary, I was trapped in the living hell of believing I was not saved. The more I tried to be and do better, the worse I got. It was like trying to mop a dirt floor. The harder I worked the dirtier I got.

In the middle of the night, on my knees begging God for peace, I read Isaiah 52:12 - Ch. 53. It says Jesus did not look like a human being (52:12). He was hideous and horrible looking. It said, **"With His stripes we are healed"** (53:5); and **"The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"** (53:6).

In the nearest thing to a vision I have ever had, I saw Jesus on the cross looking like a piece of butchered meat. I saw my sins making those stripes and my sins "laid on Him" and not me. I saw them ***lifted off of me and put on Him***. When I doubt my salvation, I just go to the cross and say:

Jesus paid it all / All to Him I owe  
Sin had left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow.

## FORGIVENESS AT THE CROSS

Luke 23:42-43

**"Lord - remember me when you  
come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said,  
"Today you will be with me in Paradise with  
me."**

If any group of people *deserved* hell it was the howling, hissing mob at the feet of Jesus who would not let him die in peace. In front of His weeping mother, they mocked His prayers (Mt. 27:49); turned up their noses at Him (Mt. 27:39); taunted Him to save Himself, if He was the Messiah (Mt. 27:42).

The worst ones there were the thieves beside Him. Matthew says they joined in with the crowd (27:44). These who suffered with Him added to his pain. They deserved hell but one didn't go there. He prayed to be a member of Jesus' kingdom and ***instantly*** he was on his way to heaven.

It didn't take long. That morning, when the sun rose, he was a child of the devil. Before it set that night, he was a child of God. That morning, he hurled insults at the Son of God. That night he sang praises to His name on Hallelujah Avenue.

The same can be true for you. Heaven for you is only a prayer away. If you get alone, pray and give Jesus your sins to forgive and your life to change, your name will go to heaven. The hymn says:

The vilest offender, who truly believes  
That ***moment***, from Jesus a pardon receives  
I received my pardon, have you received yours?

A young man repeatedly came home drunk and one day he passed out on the sofa. When the father came in, he saw the mother kneeling beside him praying. She looked up and said, **"He just won't let us love him, will he!"** That is the awful epitaph of anyone who dies unforgiven. If songs could come out of heaven, one would be, **"Jesus paid it all. / All to Him I owe / Sin had left a crimson stain / He washed it white as snow."** If songs could come out of hell, one would be,

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen  
The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"