

## GRACE AT THE CROSS

**"By grace have you been saved through faith."  
(Ephesians 2:8-10)**

"Grace" means a "gift we do not deserve" and none of us deserves Jesus, God's Son, suffering and dying for us so we can go to heaven. A little boy put out a flyer that read, "Lost Dog! He has three legs, a big sore on his back, one ear chewed off and is half blind. He answers to the name- '*Lucky*'. John Newton, as a wild, drunken man and former slave trader, knew the guilt and shame of sin. But he found Christ and wrote:

I saw One hanging on a tree, in agony and blood.  
/ He fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His cross I stood. / My conscience felt  
and owned the guilt, and plunged me in despair.  
/ I saw my sins His blood had spilt, / And  
helped to nail Him there. / A second look He  
gave which said, "I freely all forgive. This blood  
is for thy ransom paid, / I died that thou may'st  
live."

## WHERE OUR LOVING COMES FROM

**"Live a life of love as Christ Jesus loved us  
and gave Himself up *for us* as pleasing  
sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:1)**

On the list of people hard to love; the hardest would be those who are cruel to us. Jacob De Shazer was one of General Jimmy Doolittle's flyers who bombed Tokyo in World War II. His plane was shot down and he spent 32 months in a Japanese concentration camp. He saw three of his friends shot and he himself was cruelly tortured.

His worst tormentor was a captain named Kato. He grew to hate Kato and vowed that if he survived, he would come back to Japan and kill him with his bare hands. In that cell he was given a New Testament. Reading it, he found the Lord. De Shazer was released, married his hometown sweetheart and later returned to Japan as a preacher of the gospel.

One night he gave the invitation and suddenly he saw, coming down the aisle, the monster Kato. Quickly he went to the aisle to meet the murderer

of his friends; not to kill him, but to embrace him as a Christian brother.

Our love for and willingness to forgive people who hurt us, comes from Jesus' love for and willingness to forgive us. The verse that brought me salvation is in Luke 23 where Jesus forgave the people who crucified him. I went to the cross in my mind and said,

"Jesus, if you forgave people like this, I believe you will forgive me. I accept your forgiveness by faith and ask you to help me be the kind of person you want me to be. Amen

And God's forgiveness is *still going on* in my life and yours. We have all done wrong and treated people wrong after we became Christians and Jesus forgives us. These sins are worse than what we did before salvation. Hebrews 6:6 says we "crucify the Son of God. Warren Wiersbe said:

**When you forgive others you are treating  
them the way Jesus treats you."**

## HEAVEN'S DOOR AT DEATH'S DOOR

**"Father, forgive them!" / "Lord. Remember me  
when you come in your kingdom." (Luke 23)]**

The criminal beside Jesus, like me, heard Jesus offer of forgiveness; asked for it and received it. At death's door he found heaven's door. This is called "deathbed repentance". In 60 years of preaching, I have seen only one or two examples of true conversion when a person is dying. If you are thinking about waiting to accept Christ when you are dying, you had better think again.

A man died in the hospital and his little grandson went out in the hall and cried. His pastor walked over and said, Don't be sad, your granddaddy is in heaven. The little boy said, How far is it to heaven. The pastor told him to put his hand over his heart and tell him what he felt. The boy said, "I feel my heart beating." The pastor said, Son, heaven is only one heartbeat away. Sadly, so is hell.

**Matthew Henry said, "There is one example of  
deathbed repentance in the Bible so no one  
should despair. There is only one so none  
should presume."**