

Grace, *Gratitude* and Faithfulness

At a Mothers Union Service in West Newcastle the vicar focussed on three aspects of our relationship with God. The hymns chosen to illustrate are worthy of circulation.

Amazing Grace. We have a most gracious God. God is grace itself and gives us grace for our journey through the changing scenes of life. John Newton knew that grace through the shame of having been a slave trader. When his heart and mind and his way of life changed, he was moved to write the hymn 'Amazing Grace'.

'Amazing grace... that saved a wretch like me'.

As we journey from Christmas to Easter, it may be a good plan to appreciate the grace we have received in our own lives. Which brings us to another aspect of our Christian life...

Gratitude. Horatio Spafford penned the hymn "It Is Well with My Soul" after experiencing the tragic death of his children in a shipwreck over the Atlantic Ocean. His wife survived – found floating semi-conscious on a piece of broken planking. As Spafford was sailing to meet his grieving wife, his ship passed near where his daughters had drowned. The experience inspired him to write the hymn: 'It is well with my soul' wrought out of words of scripture: such as '*Give thanks in all circumstances*'... the most challenging of commandments! Yet also: '*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*'. John 14.27

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

God's Faithfulness: *"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" Lamentations 3:22-23*

Thomas Chisholm was a Kentucky clergyman, who suffered much ill health, wrote many poems, including 'Great is thy faithfulness' in 1923 – extolling God's faithfulness in his own life. Its popularity rose when Billy Graham incorporated it into his mission programme.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not; Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

*All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

May the grace of the Lord Jesus,
the love of God and the faithfulness
of the Holy Spirit be your
companion on your journey.

