

# Mercy to Sinners

by John Newton

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*The sermon emphasizes the mercy of God to sinners and the hope of eternal life through salvation, highlighting the transformative power of God's grace.*

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 18:32, John 1:5, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 5:8

**Topics:** "Repentance And Mercy", "Salvation In Christ"

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## Description

John Newton preaches about the spiritual revolution that takes place in a person's life when they encounter the light of Christ, comparing it to the dawn of a new day after a long night of darkness. He reflects on his past life of sin and ignorance, acknowledging his role in leading others astray, but also expressing gratitude for God's mercy and grace in saving him. Newton emphasizes the importance of choosing life in Christ and the urgency of repentance, highlighting the solemn reality that those who reject salvation do so by their own choice.

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## Transcript

October 27, 1778.

My dear Friend,

I have been witness to a great and important revolution this morning, which took place while the greatest part of the world was asleep. Like many state-revolutions, its first beginnings were almost undiscernible; but the progress, though gradual, was steady, and the event decisive. A while ago darkness reigned. Had a man then dropped, for the first time, into our world, he might have thought himself banished into a hopeless dungeon. How could he expect light to rise out of such a state? And when he saw the first glimmering of dawn in the east, how could he promise himself that it was the forerunner of such a glorious sun as has since arisen! With what wonder would such a new-comer observe the bounds of his view enlarging, and the distinctness of objects increasing from one minute to another; and how well content would he be to part with the twinklings of the stars, when he had the broad day all around him in exchange! I cannot say this revolution is extraordinary, because it happens every morning; but surely it is astonishing, or rather it would be so, if man was not astonishingly stupid.

Such strangers once were we. Darkness, gross darkness, covered us. How confined were our views! And even the things which were within our reach we could not distinguish. Little did we then think what a glorious day we were appointed to see; what an unbounded prospect would ere long open before us! We

knew not that there was a Sun of Righteousness, and that he would dawn, and rise, and shine upon our hearts. And as the idea of what we see now was then hidden from us, so at present we are almost equally at a loss how to form any conception of the stronger light and brighter prospects which we wait and hope for. Comparatively we are in the dark still: at the most, we have but a dim twilight, and see nothing clearly; but it is the dawn of immortality, and a sure presage and earnest of glory.

Thus, at times, it seems a darkness that may be felt broods over your natural spirits; but when the day-star rises upon your heart, you see and rejoice in his light. You have days as well as nights; and after a few more vicissitudes, you will take your flight to the regions of everlasting light, where your sun will go down no more. Happy you, and happy I, if I shall meet you there, as I trust I shall. How shall we love, and sing, and wonder, and praise the Saviour's name!

Last Sunday a young man died here of extreme old age, at twenty-five. He laboured hard to ruin a good constitution, and unhappily succeeded; yet amused himself with the hopes of recovery almost to the last. We have a sad knot of such poor creatures in this place, who labour to stifle each other's convictions, and to ruin themselves and associates, soul and body. How industriously is Satan served! I was formerly one of his most active under-tempters. Not content with running the broad way myself, I was indefatigable in enticing others; and, had my influence been equal to my wishes, I would have carried all the human race with me. And doubtless some have perished, to whose destruction I was greatly instrumental, by tempting them to sin, and by poisoning and hardening them with principles of infidelity; and yet I was spared. When I think of the most with whom I spent my unhappy days of ignorance, I am ready to say, "I only am escaped alive to tell thee." Surely I have not half the activity and zeal in the service of Him who snatched me as a brand out of the burning, as I had in the service of his enemy. Then the whole stream of my endeavours and affections went one way; now my best desires are continually crossed, counteracted, and spoiled, by the sin which dwelleth in me: then the tide of a corrupt nature bore me along; now I have to strive and swim against it. The Lord cut me short of opportunities, and placed me where I could do but little mischief; but had my abilities and occasions been equal to my heart, I should have been a Voltaire and a Tiberius in one character, a monster of profaneness and licentiousness. "O to grace how great a debtor!" A common drunkard or profligate is a petty sinner to what I was. I had the ambition of a Caesar or an Alexander, and wanted to rank in wickedness among the foremost of the human race.

When you have read this, praise the Lord for his mercy to the chief of sinners, and pray that I may have grace to be faithful. But I have rambled. I meant to tell you, that on Sunday afternoon I preached from Why will ye die? Ezek. 32:10,11. I endeavoured to shew poor sinners, that if they died, it was because they would, and if they would, they must. I was much affected for a time: I could hardly speak for weeping, and some wept with me. From some, alas! I can no more draw a tear or a relenting thought, than from a millstone.

I am, &c.

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