

So, really, the only way it could all be fixed was if someone owned up to it all and took whatever God decided was the punishment that fitted the crime, which incidentally just happened to be the death penalty (Ro 6:23). God deals in **absolutes**, not in **maybes** or **almosts** or "**but I tried really hard**". No, clearly I either had to die as the just punishment for all the times I'd ignored God, or somebody had to step in for me. Now while I have some good friends who'd do a lot for me, none of them are that good! Besides, it couldn't be just anybody who got me off the biggest of all hooks, it had to be somebody who could swap me a life lived in perfect obedience to everything (and that means everything) God asked - not just the big things, but all the little things too. Not just somebody who "tried" to be good, but somebody who **really WAS good**, all the time, even when nobody else was looking.

And then it struck me - God had already done that. More than that, he'd already offered it, free of charge, before I'd even asked (Ro 5:8). All I had to do was accept I needed it, and needed nothing more and nothing less. It wasn't because I was a nice person, or because I'd tried really hard, or any one of a hundred other reasons - it was simply because God chose to give it free of charge (Eph 2:8-10).

I wasn't going to get salvation because of the good things I tried to do, but only as a free gift: the work of another. Jesus bluntly made the point that it's not the good fruit that makes the tree itself good but rather the good tree that makes the good fruit (Lk 7:43).

At that point, **the penny finally dropped**. God chose to offer salvation to me, and he chose to let me accept it. The Son of God died on the cross 2000 years ago to save me having to suffer the same fate in a few short years. And God rose him again three days later so that I could rise again too some day soon after being found completely blameless of all crimes against him. Now when God looks at me, he doesn't see me as someone "trying" to be "good" - instead, the king of the universe sees me as someone who is perfectly good, all the time. Even better, no one can take that away from me, and, I can't lose it because I never had to earn it. There's no benchmark I have to make to get it or keep it, I just get it, forever.

Absolutely free! Suddenly "Grace" became one of the greatest words I'll ever hear that means more than I could ever hope to express.

That's why now whenever I hear the words of Amazing Grace, I can think of nothing but God's free choice to save me from myself, from a just and certain death. The words aren't just a song, they're words that shout unearned, unspeakable freedom. A certain freedom, and one which can never be stolen.

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