

# But for the Grace of God-Preaching in Prison

by John Newton

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*The sermon emphasizes the power of God's grace to transform lives and overcome even the most difficult trials.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:18

**Topics:** "Divine Mercy", "Redemption"

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## Description

John Newton reflects on his time in London, expressing gratitude for the kindness and mercies he has received but longing to return home to his dear people. He encourages the recipient to find hope in God despite the troubles of an evil world, emphasizing that the Lord provides healing for every wound and comfort for every care, with the ultimate goal of removing sin and granting eternal life in glory. Newton recounts preaching at Westminster Bridewell, a prison, to a congregation of criminals and lost souls, sharing his own story and shedding tears as he witnessed hearts being moved by the message of grace and redemption.

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## Transcript

September 16, 1775.

When you receive this, I hope it will give you pleasure to think that, if the Lord be pleased to favour us with health, we shall all meet again in a few days. I have met with much kindness at London, and many comforts and mercies: however, I shall be glad to return home.

There my heart lives, let my body be where it will. I long to see all my dear people, and I shall be glad to see you. I steal a little time to write another line or two, more to satisfy you, than for anything particular I have to say. I thank you for your letter. I doubt not but the Lord is bringing you forward, and that you have a good right to say to your soul, "Why art thou cast down and disquieted? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him." An evil heart, an evil temper, and the many crosses we meet with in passing through an evil world, will cut us out trouble: but the Lord has provided a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care; the fruit of all is to take away sin, and the end of all will be eternal life in glory. Think of these words; put them in the balance of the sanctuary; and then throw all your trials into the opposite scale, and you will find there is no proportion between them. Say then, "Though He slay me, I will trust in Him; for when He has fully tried me, I shall come forth like gold."

You would have liked to have been with me last Wednesday. I preached at Westminster Bridewell. It is a prison and house of correction. The bulk of my congregation were housebreakers, highwaymen,

pickpockets, and poor unhappy women, such as infest the streets of the city, sunk in sin and lost to shame. I had a hundred or more of these before me. I preached from I Tim. 1:5, and began with telling them my own story: this gained their attention more than I expected. I spoke to them near an hour and a half. I shed many tears myself, and saw some of them shed tears likewise. Ah! had you seen their present condition, and could you hear the history of some of them, it would make you sing, "O to grace how great a debtor!" By nature they were no worse than the most sober and modest people. And there was doubtless a time when many of them little thought what they should live to do and suffer. I might have been, like them, in chains, and one of them have come to preach to me, had the Lord so pleased.

I am, &c.

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