



Anthem: Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

Words & Music by Chris Tomlin & Louie Giglio

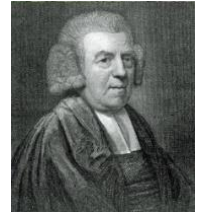
Choral Setting by Joel Raney

Amazing Grace - New Britain / Words by John Newton



Chris Tomlin (b. 1972) modified the well-loved hymn “Amazing Grace,” and in an interview he told the story behind this piece. He said a friend told him about acquaintances who were making a movie about William Wilberforce which was to be called *Amazing Grace* (2007). The producers of the film wondered if Tomlin would be willing to “do something” with the hymn of the same name for the movie.

Tomlin went on to tell of Wilberforce’s work for abolishing the slave trade in Europe. Wilberforce’s mentor was John Newton (1725-1807). It was Newton who wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace” (1779) after his conversion and then ending his career as a slave trader. Tomlin researched John Newton and reflected on the hymn’s lyrics in their context of slavery.



Newton

Tomlin said one night words “just started flowing”—my chains are gone, I’ve been set free, my God, my Savior, has ransomed me. With the word “ransom,” Tomlin was thinking of a slave’s ransom. Tomlin sent the song to the producers for consideration not “dreaming that churches would adopt this version of ‘Amazing Grace.’” <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/history-of-hymns-amazing-grace-my-chains-are-gone>

Note the juxtaposition in both the lyrics and the music of this anthem. There is a contrast of the more serious, reflective nature of the traditional hymn text and music with the joyful, exuberant nature of Tomlin’s chorus.

The chorus lyrics “My chains are gone, I’ve been set free” are dramatic, striking, and two-fold in meaning.

1. “Chains” – shackles holding one in slavery such as existed in the time when Newton wrote “Amazing Grace”  
“I’ve been set free” – freedom from the slavery also from the time of Newton’s writing “Amazing Grace”
2. “Chains” – a metaphor for whatever holds one from a relationship with God and fellow human beings  
“I’ve been set free” – free from the slavery of sin for all mankind through God’s grace and love

**Prayer: God Almighty---In sin, I was lost and blind; but through Your unending love and amazing grace, I am securely in your hands. You give me hope and good things for which I am grateful. Amen**

**Anthem Text**

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Chorus: My chains are gone, I’ve been set free. My God, my Savior has ransomed me,  
And like a flood, his mercy reigns; unending love, amazing grace.

The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Chorus: My chains are gone, I’ve been set free. My God, my Savior has ransomed me,  
And like a flood, his mercy reigns; unending love, amazing grace.