

*The Hymns Of Charles Wesley*  
*“And Can It Be!”*  
*1 Timothy 1:12-15*

**Introduction:**

1. Tonight - We Are Going To:
  - Look At Another Great Hymn:
    - Written By One Of The Most Famous & Prolific Hymn-Writers Of The English Language:
      - Charles Wesley!
  - And Even Though:
    - Much Of What He Wrote:
      - Reflected The Distinctive Theology:
        - Of What Would Become:
          - The Methodist & Wesleyan Movement!
    - Some Of His Hymns:
      - Have Been Adopted By Christians:
        - In Every Age & Denomination:
          - Because Of Their Deep & Rich Theology That Is Focused:
            - On Jesus Christ!
2. And - This Is Especially True Of The Hymn:
  - That We Know As:
    - “And Can It Be!”
  - And - As We Read Through:
    - Just The First Stanza:
      - You Get The Overall Impression That:
        - Charles Wesley Was Absolutely Amazed:
          - At The Salvation That God Had Wrought In His Life!
    - Just Listen To These Words!
      - And Can It Be, That I Should Gain  
An Interest In The Saviour’s Blood!  
Died He For Me? Who Caused His Pain!  
For Me? Who Him To Death Pursued.  
Amazing Love! How Can It Be  
That Thou, My God, Should’s Die For Me!
  - Did You Notice How:
    - The First Two Lines Were Written By Wesley:
      - As An Exclamation?
    - And Then - The Next Two:
      - Have The Questions:
        - Died He For Me? For Me?
    - Which Then - In The Last Two Lines:
      - He Moves Back To Exclamation!
        - Introduced With Those Powerful Words:
          - “Amazing Love!”
3. So - It Is Clear From The Outset:
  - That Wesley’s Salvation Experience:
    - Moved Him To The Point:
      - Of Absolute Awe & Amazement!
    - That The Same God:
      - Who Created Him:
        - Would Also Suffer & Bleed & Die For Him!
  - Is This How You Feel:
    - About Your Own Salvation:
      - Tonight?
    - Have You Forgotten:
      - All That It Took & All That It Means:
        - To Have “An Interest In The Savior’s Blood?”
  - My Prayer Is That:

- The Message Of Wesley's Hymn:
    - Will Stir Our Hearts Tonight:
      - So That We Might Never Get Over The Salvation:
        - That God Has Wrought In Those Who Simply Believe & Trust In:
          - The Lord Jesus Christ!
3. And - I Think That:
  - The Message Of This Hymn:
    - Reflects The Heart Of The Apostle Paul!
  - Because - It Is Clear That:
    - The Apostle Paul:
      - Was Also One:
        - Who Never Got Over:
          - The Amazing Grace & Love:
            - That Brought Him To Salvation Through Faith In Jesus Christ!
  - In Fact - We Can Get This Sense:
    - From The Several Places In The New Testament:
      - Where Paul Shares His Own Testimony:
        - Of How Jesus Met Him On The Road To Damascus:
          - In The Book Of Acts!
    - And - One Of Those Places Is:
      - In 1 Timothy 1! So - Let's Turn In Our Bibles There!
  - 1 Timothy 1:12-15 - Where Paul Writes:
    - "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; / Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. / And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. / This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief!"
4. It Is Clear That Paul:
  - Never Got Over:
    - His Salvation!
  - He Never Got Over:
    - His Great Need:
      - Of Salvation!
    - In That He Always Remembered That:
      - He Was Not Just "Any" Sinner - But:
        - The "Chief" Of Sinners! (1:15)
          - That Is To Say - The Leader Of The Pack! Even - The Worst Of Sinners!
    - And - He Even Lists:
      - What Some Of Those Sins Were!
        - 1:13 - He Was A "Blasphemer, And A Persecutor, And Injurious!"
    - So - Toward God:
      - He Was A "Blasphemer!"
        - Which Means That:
          - He Lied About God & Slandered His Holy Name!
      - So - The God He Thought He Served:
        - He Didn't Even Know!
          - Because He Rejected The Full Revelation Of God:
            - In Jesus!
    - But Also - Toward Men:
      - He Was A "Persecutor!"
        - Which Means That:
          - He Pursued After Those Who Had It Right About God!
            - Even God's Own People!
      - So - Paul Was Acting Unjustly:
        - Toward Those Whom God Had Justified:
          - Through Faith In His Son!
      - And - It Was All Because - In Himself:
        - Paul Was "Injurious!"

- Which Means That:
    - He Was Full Of Pride & Insolence & Took It Out On God's People In Cruel & Malicious Ways!
  - Paul Needed To Be Saved!
    - Even Though - At The Time:
      - He Didn't Even Understand:
        - The Kind Of Sinner He Was!
    - But - Once Jesus Confronted Him:
      - And Exposed Paul To The Truth:
        - About His Sin:
          - He Never Got Over It!
  - Also - He Never Got Over:
    - The Great Nature:
      - Of His Salvation!
    - In That It Came About:
      - From Nothing But:
        - The Mercy & Grace Of God!
    - In 1:13 - Paul Talks About:
      - God's Mercy - And How:
        - In Spite Of His Sins:
          - He "Obtained Mercy!"
      - Which Means That:
        - God Took Great Pity On Paul:
          - Because Of His Ignorance & Unbelief!
      - This Does Not Mean That:
        - God Excused His Sinful Conduct & Character!
      - But That God Expressed His Own Character:
        - As - "A God Ready To Pardon, Gracious And Merciful, Slow To Anger, And Of Great Kindness!" (Nehemiah 9:17)
    - And Then - In 1:14 - Paul Further Describes:
      - God's Grace - And How:
        - God Even Gave To Paul:
          - All That He Needed:
            - In Order To Be Saved!
      - "And The Grace Of Our Lord Was Exceeding Abundant!"
        - So That Both:
          - The Faith He Lacked:
            - In Christ! And:
          - The Love He Needed:
            - For Christ!
          - The Lord Provided To Him:
            - For No Other Reason Than Grace!
    - So - When Paul Needed To Be Saved:
      - God Did Not Wait For:
        - Paul To Come To Him!
        - No - He Went To Paul!
      - To Once Again Prove The Truth:
        - That - 1:15 - "Christ Jesus Came Into The World To Save Sinners!"
  - And - Paul Never Got Over That!
    - And - As We Will See From Our Hymn Tonight:
      - Neither Did Charles Wesley! And So:
        - Neither Should We!
        - Neither Should You!
    - Have We Forgotten:
      - All That It Took & All That It Means:
        - To Have "An Interest In The Savior's Blood?"
5. Of Course - We Just Read:
- The First Stanza Of Wesley's Hymn:

- Which Shows The Kind Of Wonder:
  - That Every True Christian Should Have:
    - When It Comes To:
      - Their Salvation!
- And So - The Theme Of:
  - Not Only The First Stanza - But:
    - Of The Whole Hymn Is:

### 1. ***The Great Mercy Of Salvation!***

- In Fact - The Title That Wesley Himself Gave:
  - To His Hymn Was:
    - "Free Grace!"
  - Now - Even Though:
    - Mercy & Grace Are:
      - Two Different Words With Two Different Meanings:
        - They Really Are Two Sides Of The Same Coin!
  - And So - They Are Often Used Interchangeably:
    - To Reflect The Unmerited & Unmeritable Love & Favor:
      - Of God Toward Undeserving Sinners!
        - Which - Once Again - Charles Wesley Never Got Over!
- You See - Wesley Was A Bit Like Paul:
  - In That - He Thought He Was Serving The Lord:
    - When - In Truth:
      - He Didn't Even Know The Lord!
    - And - This Was True:
      - For Both Charles & His Brother John!
    - They Had Even Gone To Georgia:
      - To Be Missionaries:
        - To The Colonists & The Indians In The New World!
  - But - Even Though:
    - Unlike Paul - They Preached & Proclaimed:
      - Faith In Christ:
        - They Did Not Yet Have:
          - That Faith Themselves!
    - They Thought That:
      - Their Labor For Christ:
        - Could Gain The Love Of Christ!
- But - According To His Own Testimony:
  - One Day - When He Was Back In England:
    - On His Sick Bed:
      - Thinking About His Own Mortality & Relationship With God:
        - He Was Convicted & Convinced That He Did Not Have The Faith:
          - That He Preached!
  - You Probably Remember The Story:
    - That We Learned Earlier:
      - How - On May 21, 1738 - He Thought He Dreamed These Words:
        - "In The Name Of Jesus Of Nazareth, Arise, And Believe, And Thou Shalt Be Healed Of All Thy Infirmities!"
  - Of Course - It Was Not A Dream:
    - It Was The Godly Sister Of The Godly Man:
      - In Whose Home He Was Staying!
    - But - God Used Those Words:
      - To Stir His Heart To True, Saving Faith:
        - In Christ!
      - No Longer Relying Upon:
        - His Own Works & Endeavors:
          - To Please God!
  - His Brother, John, Also Experienced:

- Saving Faith - Just A Few Days Later:
  - On May 24, 1738:
    - When He Also Felt His Heart:
      - “Strangely Warmed” As He Heard About The Gospel Afresh:
        - From Martin Luther’s Commentary On The Book Of Romans!
- Well - In Between Those Days:
  - Charles Wrote Two Poems:
    - That Expressed His Wonder:
      - At The Mercy Of:
        - God’s Salvation!
    - The First Poem Begins With The Words:
      - “Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin?”
  - In Itself - It Is A Powerful Hymn:
    - About All The Goodness & Love & Grace:
      - Wesley Personally Experienced:
        - By Having All Of His Sin Forgiven:
          - Through Faith Alone!
- However - Just A Day Or Two Later:
  - He Wrote A Second Hymn!
    - Which Is The Hymn:
      - That We Are Looking At Tonight!
  - And - He Started *This* Hymn With The Words:
    - “And Can It Be That I Should Gain An Interest In The Savior’s Blood?”
      - Now - Starting A Hymn Like This:
        - With “And” - Is An Unusual Way To Start!
    - But - Not If Its Part 2:
      - Of The First Hymn He Wrote!
        - As If To Say - There Was So Much More To His Salvation:
          - Than He Could Express In Just One Poem!
- And So - Just A Few Days After:
  - *Both* Charles & John’s Salvation Experiences:
    - They Sang This Song Together:
      - At A Meeting - To Share Their Wonder:
        - In The Great Mercy Of God’s Salvation!
- Never Forget:
  - The Mercy Of Your Salvation!
    - Even If You Can’t Write A Hymn About It:
      - Like Charles Wesley Could!
  - Now - When It Comes To:
    - The Second Stanza:
      - The Theme Is All About:

## 2.

### ***The Great Mystery Of Salvation!***

- 'Tis Mystery All! The Immortal Dies!  
Who Can Explore His Strange Design?  
In Vain The First-Born Seraph Tries  
To Sound The Depths Of Love Divine.  
'Tis Mercy All! Let Earth Adore;  
Let Angel Minds Enquire No More!
- These Words Reflect What We Find In:
  - 1 Corinthians 2:7 - “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory!”
- Now - A “Mystery” In The New Testament:
  - Is Not Something That:
    - Is Still Hidden From Us!
  - Instead - It Is Something:
    - That Has Been Revealed:
      - Through Jesus & His Gospel!

- And So - The Things That:
  - *Were* Hidden In The Past:
    - Have *Now* Been Brought To Plain Sight:
      - In Christ!
- And - Wesley Describes Some Of Those Mysteries Here!
  - Like The Mystery Of How:
    - “The Immortal Dies!”
      - How God - Who Is Life:
        - Could Lose His Life:
          - Through Death!
    - We Find The Answer To This Mystery:
      - In Jesus & His Death & Resurrection!
  - Or - Like The Mystery Of:
    - “The Depths Of Love Divine!”
      - How God Could Love:
        - Those Who Are Filled With Sin & Hate Toward Him?
    - But - The Mystery Of This Love:
      - Is Also Found In Christ!
        - As We Are Told In Romans 5:8 - “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!”
- So - Even Though The Mystery Of The Gospel:
  - Is A Mystery No More:
    - It Still Ought To Mystify Us:
      - And Cause Us To Never:
        - Lose Our Awe & Wonder:
          - In Christ’s Love & Death For Us!
  - In The Third Stanza:
    - The Theme Is All About:

### 3. ***The Great Manner Of Salvation!***

- He Left His Father’s Throne Above,  
(So Free, So Infinite His Grace!)  
Emptied Himself Of All But Love,  
And Bled For Adam’s Helpless Race:  
‘This Mercy All, Immense And Free!  
For O My God! It Found Out Me!
- These Words Reflect What Paul Writes In:
  - Philippians 2:6-8 - How Jesus:
    - “Being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: / But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: / And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!”
- Now - The Line Where Wesley Says That Jesus:
  - “Emptied Himself Of All But Love” - Has Sparked:
    - Quite A Bit Of Controversy:
      - About The Nature Of Christ:
        - In This World!
    - Is This True?
      - Did Jesus “Empty Himself Of All But Love?”
        - Well - It Is Clear That He Was & Is:
          - Much More Than Just Love!
      - Though He May Have:
        - Veiled Some Of His Attributes Of Glory:
          - When He Came To This World:
            - He Never Lost Them!
    - After All:
      - Jesus Was Still Holy!
        - Just Consider His Life!

- Though He Was Tempted Like We Are:
  - He Was Still Without Sin! (Hebrews 4:15)
- Jesus Was Still Omnipotent!
  - Just Consider His Miracles!
    - To Whom Even The Wind & The Waves Yielded & Obeyed! (Mark 4:41)
- And - Jesus Was Still Eternal!
  - Just Consider What He Said About:
    - Where He Came From & Where He Was Going To!
      - Heaven! Which Was His Eternal Home!
- So - Even Though This Phrase Is:
  - Not As Precise As It Could Be - Either:
    - Scripturally Or Theologically!
  - I Don't Think Wesley Intended:
    - To Convey That Jesus Was Anything Less:
      - Than God In The Flesh!
- Instead - He Wanted To Emphasize:
  - The Depth & Strength Of Christ's Love:
    - In As Great A Way As Possible!
      - And So - He Used Some Poetic License To Do So!
  - Which - Sadly:
    - Makes This Line:
      - The Weakest Link:
        - In The Golden Chain Of Gospel Truths We Find In This Hymn!
- But Still - The Manner Of Salvation:
  - Was All Based On:
    - The Infinite Love Of God:
      - Displayed To Us In Christ!
        - Infinite In Time!
        - And - Infinite In Degree!
  - And - Wesley Just Could Not Get Over:
    - The Fact That God's Grace / God's Love / God's Mercy:
      - "Found Out Me!"
  - Does The Manner Of Your Salvation:
    - Still Move You:
      - As It Once Did?
        - As It Did For Wesley?
  - Then - When We Come To The Fourth Stanza:
    - The Theme Is All About:

#### 4. ***The Great Meaning Of Salvation!***

- Long My Imprisoned Spirit Lay,  
Fast Bound In Sin And Nature's Night;  
Thine Eye Diffused A Quickening Ray;  
I Woke; The Dungeon Flamed With Light;  
My Chains Fell Off, My Heart Was Free,  
I Rose, Went Forth, And Followed Thee!
- With These Words:
  - Wesley Uses The Experience:
    - Of The Apostle Peter:
      - When God Delivered Him:
        - From Prison!
  - In Acts 2:7-8 - We Are Told That:
    - "Behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me!"
- Now - Even Though:
  - What Happened To Peter:

- Took Place *After*:
  - He Was Saved & *Because*:
    - He Was Witnessing For Christ!
- Charles Wesley:
  - Saw Himself:
    - In Peter's Experience!
- And So - It Became:
  - A Moving Parable:
    - Of His Own Salvation!
  - Because He Was So Overwhelmed:
    - By All That Jesus Did For Him!
- Consider Some Of The Contrasts:
  - That He Uses In This Stanza:
    - From Laying & Languishing:
      - In Prison - It Was Jesus:
        - Who Freed Him - So That He Might "Rise, Go Forth, And Follow Him!"
    - From The Darkness Of The Dungeon Of Sin:
      - It Was Jesus Who:
        - Shined His Light:
          - Upon His Heart!
- Now - The Background Behind The Third Line Of This Stanza:
  - Is Also Interesting - Though:
    - Not As Controversial As The Third Line:
      - In The Last Stanza!
  - Because - It Is Drawn From:
    - Another Poem Written By Alexander Pope (1717)!
      - That Poem Was Written As A Love Poem:
        - Between A Woman Named Eloisa To A Man Named Abelard!
  - And - Its Focus Was On Human Love:
    - In Which Eloisa Said To Her Lover:
      - "Thy Eyes Diffused A Reconciling Ray / And Gleams Of Glory Brightened All The Day!"
  - But - Wesley Knew That:
    - God's Love Was Greater Than:
      - Any Human Love!
    - And So - He Knew That:
      - The Only Way To Be Saved:
        - Was If God's "Eye Diffused" Not Just A "Reconciling Ray" But A "Quickening Ray!"
          - To Bring Him To Life!
- This Is The Great Meaning:
  - Of Your Salvation!
    - Never Forget What:
      - God Saved You From & What
      - God Saved You To!
  - Now - Most Hymnals Don't Have:
    - The Fifth Stanza Of Wesley's Hymn Anymore:
      - And - It May Have Been Wesley Himself:
        - Who Approved Of Its Absence!
    - In The 1780 Edition:
      - Of The Wesleyan Hymnbook:
        - This Stanza Is Missing!
      - Which Was Still During:
        - Charles' Lifetime!
  - But - In Its Original Form:
    - It Spoke About:

**5.      *The Great Medicine Of Salvation!***



- Still The Small Inward Voice I Hear,  
That Whispers All My Sins Forgiven;  
Still The Atoning Blood Is Near,  
That Quenched The Wrath Of Hostile Heaven:  
I Feel The Life His Wounds Impart;  
I Feel My Savior In My Heart!  
  - It Is Clear That These Words:
    - Are Very Personal!
  - But - They Also Show That:
    - The Gospel That Saves:
      - Is Also A Gospel That Soothes:
        - A Heart That Still Struggles With Sin & Shame!
  - How Many Times:
    - Do You Need To:
      - As Its Been Said:
        - “Preach The Gospel” To Yourself?
- Never Forget That:
  - “Still The Atoning Blood Is Near!”
    - Which Is Why 1 John 1:9:
      - Is Such A Precious Verse For Us!  
- “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!”
  - This Theme - Of The:
    - Great Medicine Of Salvation:
      - Seems To Be Something:
        - That Wesley Himself Needed!
  - In The Hymn We Looked At:
    - Last Week - “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus!”
      - He Prayed:
        - “From Our Fears And Sins *Relieve* Us, Let Us Find Our *Rest* In Thee!”
  - And - In The Hymn That We Will Look At:
    - Next Week - “Arise, My Soul, Arise!”
      - He Begins With These Words:
        - “Arise, My Soul, Arise, Shake Off Thy Guilty Fears! The Bleeding Sacrifice In My Behalf Appears!”
  - The Gospel Is Always The Greatest Medicine:
    - For A Troubled Soul!
  - Especially Because Of How:
    - Wesley Ends His Hymn!  
- With A Focus On:

## 6. ***The Great Motivation Of Salvation!***

- No Condemnation Now I Dread,  
Jesus, And All In Him, Is Mine:  
Alive In Him, My Living Head,  
And Clothed In Righteousness Divine,  
Bold I Approach The Eternal Throne,  
And Claim The Crown, Through Christ, My Own!  
  - Every Line Of This Stanza:
    - Is Rooted In Scripture!
  - But - The First Line Reminds Us Of:
    - Romans 8:1:
      - “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit!”
  - And Now - Because:
    - In Christ - There Is:
      - No Condemnation:
        - You Can Take Courage:

- To "Approach The Eternal Throne!"  
- In Life & At Death!

- So - Let This Great Salvation:
  - Motivate You:
    - To Approach The God's Throne Of Grace:
      - Boldly!
  - Especially:
    - To Praise & To Thank Him:
      - For What He Has Done For You!

**Conclusion:**

1. Never Get Over:
  - Your Salvation!
    - And Use This Hymn:
      - To Remind You:
        - Of Just How Great It Is!
  - Let's Pray!
2. Let's Stand To Sing:
  - This Hymn About God's "Free Grace!"
    - Though This Hymn Has Been Sung:
      - To Many Tunes - There Are Only Two:
        - That Are The Most Well Known!
    - A Tune Called - "Filmore" Was Popular:
      - In The 1800's - Until The Tune Called:
        - "Sagina" Took Over In The 1900's:
          - Even Until Today!

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