

He's Still Astonishing

By Jeff Noblit

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Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Well, let's take our Bibles together as we make sure all of our electronic devices are turned off, and let's go to Luke 2.

I, I thought I might do this and I want to say this before I do this, that, um, if you don't want to participate, this is your business. You don't have to participate in any way, okay, uh, because I'm gonna talk about your health a little bit, but I just wondered just in our congregation on Sunday morning, if all of you folks in the balcony were down here, we'd be pretty full, to be honest. Um, I wonder how many of you have either know for certain you've had this COVID virus, you've had a test, you were positive, or you had, um, clearly the symptoms, maybe it wasn't severe so you didn't get a test but you're sure you've had it, or thirdly, you've had at least one of the vaccination shots, or you got a blood test along the way and you have the antibodies that you had it, alright? Can you remember all those four? And I just wonder for us, just curious. If one of those four is true about you, would you raise your hand right now? Well, mercy, we've reached herd immunity. That had to be 75%.

I just, I just was curious. You know, we, we kept up very closely in the office, we wanted to stay on top of who might have needs and who might have the sickness, and praise the Lord for the overwhelming majority it was not very serious. For those that it was, of course, our hearts go out to them and their families and we love them so dearly, um, but that's, um, I don't know, it's been, um, it's been a curious year to be a senior pastor. You just, you just week to week, you just strain about what's the right approach and what's the right thing to do, but, um, that showing of hands, if that's typical for our area and for our country, maybe the scientist from Johns Hopkins was right when he said by April we ought to be about done with this. You know, the liberals tell us to listen to the scientists, we just don't know which one to listen to you sometimes. They sometimes aren't saying the same thing. But I am encouraged and I want to be encouraged regardless of the outward circumstances but I'm definitely encouraged.

Luke 2. We'll begin in verse 41 to get the context, though we will look more closely at verses 48 through 52. Luke 2, the Bible says,

41 Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the
Passover. 42 And when He became twelve, they went up there according

to the custom of the Feast; 43 and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, 44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. 46 Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. [Wouldn't that be amazing to have seen Jesus at age 12?] 47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. [Of course they were, he wrote the law they were studying.] 48 When they [that's his mom and dad, Joseph and Mary] When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." 49 And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. 51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

I want to center on that phrase where the text says "they were astonished." Jesus astonished his mom and dad, and I submit to you this morning, he is still astonishing.

Miriam Webster in their dictionary defines the word "astonish" or "astonishment" as "to be stricken or to strike with a sudden and great wonder or surprise." I didn't look up the etymology of the English word but perhaps the reason for that is because it comes from the Greek word that's used in our text that's translated "astonished," because the Greek word here comes from two other words that mean simply "to go out by striking." I've got an old compact tractor that I play on and, uh, there are pins that hold various implements on it and sometimes I have to take a hammer and just pound that pin and knock it out. Well, that's the picture this word gives us. It's to drive out by striking. It has the idea of to be struck out of your mind, something happens and it's just so unusual, it's just so out of the ordinary or opposite of what you expected that it just kicks your mind out of gear for a minute. It fills you with wonder. Struck out of your mind. I like to call it this way: your brain is knocked out of gear and your tongue is all tied just for a moment, and that's what the picture of this word gives us here.

Now the same Greek word that's translated "astonished" here is sometimes translated "amazed," and it's the same idea. For example, in Matthew 7, the Bible says, "They were amazed at His teaching." A different word but the same idea. And Matthew 8 says, "They were amazed that the wind and the sea obeyed Him." In Matthew 9, "They were amazed at His power over demons and disease." In Matthew 27, "They were amazed at His silence before His accusers." Jesus is amazing and in our text, as it says, he is astonishing, and by the way, he's still astonishing.

Just a challenge, we'll come back to this, does he astonish you? Have you dumbed Jesus down in your thinking and in your emotions to where you've kind of got him in a comfortable box? Or do you still open the text and have your quiet time or when you study your Bible or when the man of God preaches the word and the truth of Christ comes forward, do you not find yourself sometimes astonished again at Jesus?

I. In our text, notice distraught parents and the Savior at peace. Mary and Joseph are distraught but Jesus, if I might could say it this way, is quite chill about the whole thing. In verse 48, "When they saw Him, they were astonished." Now you've got to understand in this culture it's almost always the father, the man, who speaks for the family but here his mother speaks. You know why? She's overwhelmed with emotion because women do that about their babies. God made women to do that about their babies. Amen for that. Thank God, God didn't just give babies daddies. We need moms. We need ladies with that deep feeling of compassion.

So his mom speaks up, verse 48, and says, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." Now so what's she's done, she's just rebuked the Son of God, maybe not a strong rebuke, an understandable rebuke, but she has. I guess the memories of the Lord's nativity have become dim to her. Mary is now cast into the realm of a typical loving parent who's worried to death over her missing child. This points out the infirmity and the limitations of fallen humanity, how we all quickly forget the Lord's previous provisions and his unfailing promises when a crisis occurs. Mary is here marked by anxiety and fretting but Jesus is marked by heavenly tranquility.

There's really an application here for us. Let's be reminded by this very setting that there is never a moment when he is fretting. Can I say that again in the midst of what we're living in in our country today and the world today? There's never a moment when the King of glory is fretting. There is never a moment when the King of glory is worried. There is never a moment when the King of glory is anxious or even concerned. No matter your present trial or trouble, heaven is at peace and rest. Think about that. I think that's one of the things the Lord's teaching his parents right now, "You can only see Me through the limitation of humanity but I've got to start preparing you that I'm not really just your son. I function according to a higher standard that you cannot yet see." Child of heaven, be reminded that your outcome rests with the powers of heaven. God has not been caught off-guard by any crisis that has come upon you. Heaven knows all about it and even before the crisis came, heaven had a hand in it. Amen. Go ahead. Shout it out.

It's, it's funny, I'm not gonna say that.

Divine providence. She loves it, doesn't she? Or he loves it.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us God's works of providence are his most wholly wise and powerful preserving and governing of all his creatures and of all his actions. God, God's invincible power created all that is, also that same power directs all events to their appointed ends. His hand may be hidden but his rule is absolute.

Some, some verse that remind us of divine providence and everything's under control because that's part of what Jesus is teaching Joseph and Mary. "Yes, you're tormented and you're anxious and you are worried to death, but heaven's not, and I walk according to heaven's edicts." Ephesians 1:11 reminds us that he "works all things after the counsel of His will." Genesis 50:20, Joseph tells his evil brothers, "As for you, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive." Acts 2:23, Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, "this Man," referring to Jesus, "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." You're responsible for this evil you did to Jesus but God was behind it all as God was redeeming the children through his death. Romans 8:28 reminds us, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

You see, the doctrine of the providence of God is as practical as it is powerful. In other words, in our practical daily lives, the providence of God is practically applicable. It helps us. I know I'm walking on holy ground here so I walk with some reverence but, uh, when our dear brother Keith Gladney had his automobile accident and I think he had a heart attack is what they determined and I met the family in the intensive care waiting room over at the Florence Hospital, I think maybe we had prayed together, they were troubled, of course, but the grace of God seemed to be holding them up and Gary, Keith's son-in-law, looked to me and said, "Pastor, you've preached to us the truth of the sovereignty of God in all things and that everything that happens is for God's glory and for our good, and we're standing in that right now."

The providence of God is as practical as it is powerful. That's part of what Jesus is teaching his parents. God's providence, God's will is what matters here. Even Mary, his dear human mother, you might say, had every reason to be emotionally distraught and worried but even in that she must submit to the dictates of heaven and call her emotions back in line to the will of God for this special son that she has a limited stewardship over but who never really belonged to her.

So we see distraught parents and a Savior at rest. Secondly, let's notice preparing the parents for his messianic mission. We've hit on this but let's explore it a little bit more. That's what he's doing, he's beginning to, to bring them over to understand, "I've got a calling from My heavenly Father that you've got to begin to grasp and accept." In verse 49, Jesus is answering back to Joseph and Mary, "And He said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?'" Very interesting statement. It's, it's as if Jesus is saying, "Why does this surprise you? Do you not remember who I am, what the Father sent Me here for?" Mary and Joseph should have known this but like us, her faith was not always awake. Wow, that's a good thing to think on. We have faith but don't we find ourselves sometimes running slam into something that jars us and realize we'd better stir our faith up? We weren't fully faith awake. Well, that's where Joseph and Mary were.

He says here in verse 49 to Joseph and Mary, "I had to be." Very powerful emphatic phrase, "I had to be about My Father's business." Jesus was God-centered. His life and purpose was to the glory and honor of his heavenly Father and to obey his heavenly Father fully. John 6:38, later in his ministry he said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." And notice the contrast here. In verse 48, Mary says, "Your father and I," in effect, "have been worried to death about You." In verse 49, Jesus said, "No, I had to be at My Father's house. Mom, you've got to remember whose My, who My Father really is." Jesus in effect is saying, "My Father was not seeking Me, I'm always with Him." Now the angel had told Mary in chapter 1, verse 32, that her child in her womb was the Son of the Most High, but now publicly and formally this is set as a seal. His true identity is unfolding, revealing itself, and his mother must not interfere with his work. It is her role to fully submit to the heavenly Father's will.

And he said, "I had to be, did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" Here Jesus is undoubtedly continuing the preparation of his parents that he must answer to one who is above them, and that he would not be looking to them for guidance like he did before. Perfect righteousness would be fulfilled as he sought the Father's will, and he could not err nor stray from this divine guidance.

Now look at verse 50, "But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them." We find that kind of interesting because they had had significant preparation. Can I ask you a question? Do I preach the word to you on Sunday sometimes loud and sometimes forceful and hopefully always with, with Spirit-wrought conviction, and yet Sunday night doesn't roll around until you kind of miss and forget what we talked about that morning. Well, we can sympathize with Joseph and Mary. They had plenty of help to understand this, plenty of, of, if you will, intervention from heaven. They were just not yet able to comprehend the dawning of the messianic consciousness in their son. I mean, Jesus had said, in effect, "God is My Father and I must be in His house." So while Mary rebuked Jesus earlier when she says, "Where have You been? What are You doing? We're anxiously worried about You." Jesus turns around and gives a mild rebuke back to his mother and said, "You knew where I had to be. I had to be in My Father's house."

So this is a transition from Jesus being the son of Mary to showing to her, them and ultimately the whole world, "I am the Son of God." He gave another, if you might even say a completion to this training to his parents in John 2, uh, it's the wedding and they're running out of wine and his mom, perhaps she understood he had a, a special anointing and a blessing on his life at least, and she's talks about him, "Can You do something about the wine?" And here's the way Jesus responded back to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you?" Wow. How many of you would like your son to come up and say to you, how many of you moms, "Woman, what do I have to do with you?" My friends called my mother Sergeant Geraldine. I don't know what she would have done but whatever she grabbed would have been appropriate for my corporal discipline at the moment. But I'm not Jesus. Jesus is not trying to be hurtful or disrespectful, I think he's using a firm, manly jarring to say, "Dear mother, you've got to accept who I am and what I'm sent to do."

Well, not only this distraught set of parents and a Savior at rest, not only is he preparing the parents for his messianic mission, let's notice, thirdly, our astonishing Lord. I couldn't get away from that phrase up there in the text, the, the, "they were astonished at Him," in verse 48. And then we come down to verse 51 and the Bible says he left with them and continued. It means to habitually continue on. He continued in subjection to them. That's kind of astonishing to me. He makes this strong forceful statement that, "I had to be about My Father's will. I'm doing My Father's work. I'm not your son the way you would view a regular son." And then at the same time, he turns right around and he goes back home and submits to them like any 12 year old boy should submit to his parents. Astonishing. That's just not the way you would figure it was going to work. That's not what I expected, what, two or three verses later.

So his heart drew him to Jerusalem to his Father's house but he knew his duty was to go to Galilee and stay under the authority of his parents, his human parents, his earthly parents, I should say, Joseph and Mary. This subjection to Joseph and Mary was, indeed, obedience to the fifth commandment which tells us very simply, "Children, honor your father and mother." And is there not here a lesson for all of us as we're raising children and maybe you're a child trying to grow up today? One writer said it this way, "As He undertook to fulfill all righteousness, He faithfully and cheerfully obeyed the fifth commandment. Let us mark the force and the obligation of His example. Joseph was only His supposed father, still He was subject to him. And though Jesus was considerably advanced in life and strong and wise, still he was subject to His parents. Though He was the Son of God whose name was Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, still He was subject to His parents on earth. When all this is considered, how can any child plead exemption from obedience to the fifth commandment?" Powerful truth and that has an astounding element to it that the Son of God honored the commandments of God, particularly honoring his father and his mother. So for you young people here, Jesus was not exempt and you're not exempt either. Parents should rule with loving authority over their children and children should submit, obey and honor their father and their mother just like Jesus did.

Well, in all of this thing again, I come back to this word in verse 48, this was astonishing to Mary and Joseph as all this is playing out. And again, that word "astonish" means "to go out by striking." It has the idea that they were struck out of their minds, they were thrown into a daze, if you will. Their mind was knocked out of gear and their tongues were tied. "We don't know how to respond to what He's just told us. We'll have to respond to what He's just done." It's the idea of, "I don't know what to think."

I remember on the old, uh, Matlock program, I think they may still do some of those reruns where Matlock is the old country, uh, lawyer but he's practicing in Atlanta and he's a swamp fox, you know, he's, he knows how to get the truth and win a case even though he looks like he doesn't have enough sense to compete with the big city lawyers. On one occasion, there was a guy on the stand who was just completely lied and deceived and everything that he had told Matlock he believed and he saw, and after that, that case was over and he's walking out of the court and they say, "What do you think about your

witness and what he did?" And Matlock said, "It's, it wasn't the darnedest thing I've ever seen but it was close to it." And his point was, "I don't know what to say. That's so, that's so far out there, I don't know what to say about it."

That's where Joseph and Mary are, and by the way, that's where we should be because that's the way Jesus is. He's astonishing, and I would say to you, church, this morning, if he's not regularly astonishing you, then you're not getting to know the true Christ. He's, he's not, he's not fitting to what we're looking for most of the time, or I should say much of the time. So many in the professing church, so many in the Evangelical or Baptist church, and certainly so many in our world have embraced a Jesus that is far from astonishing. He's just kind of typical and ordinary and he's sweet and precious and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. Let me tell you who Jesus is, Jesus is who he is. And ladies, you get your emotions in line and believe what the book says about him. And men, you get your hearts and minds in line and you agree with what the book says about him even though he's going to astonish you from time to time, shock you from time to time.

Joseph and Mary, of course, had known Jesus like no other for the last 12 years, and not just that, they knew he was no typical child. The angel had spoken to both of them, Joseph and Mary, the angel had it made it even aware to Elizabeth and Zacharias. God had made it known through the shepherds to them, the wise men, Simeon and Anna. I mean, they had had a lot of information from heaven about what was going on and who this baby was. They had all of this to prepare them for this extraordinary child, this holy being, and his divine mission, and yet they're still astonished. Jesus rightly known is the most astonishing human of all time. You know why? Listen to me: he does not fit the conclusions of the natural mind and he does not fit the sentiment of the natural emotions. Every time you think you're in line with Jesus, you'll study something new and all of a sudden say, "Uh-oh, He's not along that line anymore. I, I, I was astonished at how different He is than what I thought." As a young pastor, I can't tell you, and even to this day, I can't tell you the time after time after time after time I had to throw away my definition or concept of who Jesus was and agree with the book against me.

He's astonishing and then after a while you begin to love him because he's astonishing, you love him because he's holy, he transcends anything we could think or feel. He's glorious beyond our comprehension. You remember years ago when everybody started wearing the little bracelets WWJD? It stood for what would Jesus do. I believe there was some sincere sentiment in that. I don't think I ever wore one but you may have worn one and I'm not saying that's evil or wrong but it's not a very wise thing because you have no idea what Jesus would do. Every time we see, a, a, a text and a, a narrative on Jesus confronting an issue, he most of the time doesn't do what you think he would do. You don't know what Jesus would do. I don't know what Jesus would do. Again, this comes back to this simplistic dumbing down of Jesus to this natural, uh, viewpoint of what we think he would be like which is nothing but idolatry. I'm gonna tell you, the true Jesus is astonishing. Just when you figure him out, he'll astonish you again.

I've used it many times but I like to use these illustrations because I want them to stick with you. In C. S. Lewis' book "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," he has the

character of the lion, Aslan, the lion who represents Jesus Christ, and at the end of the book they're all celebrating and partying and Aslan's won the day and all of a sudden one of them sees Aslan going his own way, away from the celebration. And one of the less mature characters of the book says, "Where is he going? What's he doing that? Why is he doing that? Why is he leaving?" And one of the more mature characters said, "He's wild. He's not a tame lion. He's not safe but he is good." Astounding, and that's what C. S. Lewis wanted to get to. He's not the Jesus of your human intellect or your human sentiments. He's the Jesus sent from God. He's not a tame lion.

He is the regularly astounding Jesus. So here in our text, Jesus is at the temple sitting at the feet of the Jewish authorities, by the way, which was the custom of all boys his age in Israel. They had to go to the temple and be taught by the rabbis. Then he turns right around after telling Joseph and Mary that he had to be about his Father's business and he submits to them fully, the Bible says. That, by the way, was one of the astonishing things to me as a young Christian was to learn God's lines of authority. I thought when I came to new, to know Christ and I was learning God's word, then I could be just my free moral agent out here, I could be independent because I was wise now. Then I was taught very thoroughly about God's structures of authority that told me, no, I still was to submit to my parents, and I was still to submit to my pastors and those in authority over me. And that's what I did. That was astounding to me when I learned that. It's astounding that God can guide a young person through their parents and their church leadership. It's a great safe place to be. I, I gloried in it but I was astounded by it when I first learned it.

In John 12, for example, we have the woman pouring the costly perfume on Jesus' feet. One, one text says it was costly to the extent that it would take a, an annual wage of an average working man to pay for that. And Judas Iscariot, the hypocrite and the phony, steps up and said, "Why, we could have taken the money for that perfume and, and helped the poor." And then Jesus does something astonishing, he says, "The poor you have with you always. She's preparing Me for My death." Among other things, Jesus was saying certainly Christians care about those who are hurting around us, but nothing takes the place of our primary ministry of the gospel and getting spiritual therapy to their sin-destroyed and ruined hearts and lives. What good does it do to feed a man and send him to hell healthy?

Jesus astonishes us. He doesn't say what you think he would say in these settings. In Matthew 15, a Gentile woman comes to Jesus and she's imploring Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter, and right out of the gate, our Lord looks at this desperate woman, pitiful woman, and says, "I can't give the children's bread to the dogs." It's not what I was expecting him to say. The Jews viewed Gentiles as Gentile dogs outside of the kingdom of God. Dogs were an unclean and vile, uh, uh, animal to, in the Jewish understanding. Jesus says to that desperate woman, "I can't give the children's bread to the dogs." Of course, there's a lot going on there. I can't unpack all of it but among other things Jesus was saying, "You're all Gentile dogs. You're all vile sinners who need a Savior." Then he turned around and showed compassion and healed her daughter. Astonishing. That's not what I would have done. That's not what I would have thought he would have done. He just keeps astonishing us.

In Matthew 11, there's a lack of support for Jesus, especially among the religious leadership of the day and they were rejecting him, and in Matthew 11:25 and 26, "At that time Jesus said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.'" That's not what our natural mind, our natural emotions would think Christ would say. He says, "I thank You that You've hidden this from some and they can't see it or come to Me, and I thank You that You've revealed it to others and they will see it and come to Me, and You doing it this way is well-pleasing to You." Astounding. Kind of knocks your brain out of gear for a while. There's only one way to joy in this Jesus, that's bow before him and say, "Yes, Lord, what You say is right and everything I feel or think that may contradict it is wrong." The astounding Jesus.

In Revelation 20, Revelation 19, we see Jesus returning this, not this time as the lamb slain but as the lion of the tribe of Judah. He comes crashing down to heaven, or from heaven to earth in the most violent, wrathful vengeance and retribution you can ever imagine. Matter of fact, it's beyond imagination. A bloodbath as Christ destroys the earth and destroys those who do not know him and who are his enemies. Ask the typical liberal pastor or liberal theologian, they, they, they reject it. You know why? They don't want an astounding Jesus, they want a little pet Jesus. They want a tame lion. He's astounding.

And then we don't have time, there's so many we could look at but I can't stop without this one and that's the glories of our salvation. It's so astounding the wisdom, the power, the beauty of our salvation, that Jesus came to the office of Savior Messiah, he became fully man yet remained fully of God, he fulfilled the law in his life and he fulfilled the law that was against us in his death, taking our retribution and our judgment we deserve as transgressors of the law, buried, rose again for our justification and now is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. That's astounding. If you don't find that astounding, you're not a child of God, can't know that and just pass that off casually.

The regeneration of our souls by the preaching of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, the justification that whereby we stand justified the moment we believe on Jesus Christ, it's a standing that can never change, yet at the same time, we continue on in this earthly pilgrimage in a sanctification of growing in Christ, and then one day whether he returns first or he takes us to heaven through death to be with him, we'll be changed to be glorified like him, that's glorification. On these truths, you could preach on them endlessly.

That's astounding, but in back of all of that, there's that perhaps most astounding truth of all and that's the truth of grace. How astounding is grace? Just one verse about it, Romans 5:20, "but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Now for you sinners, you ought to be grateful for that, and if you're not a sinner, I don't have anything for you. But for us sinners, that's powerful. The much more abound there has the idea of super-abounding. It's super-powerful. You see, sin came into the human race from the original Adam and the sin principle and sin pollution became viral and spread to all the

descendants of Adam, multiplying exceedingly and rapidly in each, each generation. Sin is powerful. It stains and poisons throughout the entire human family, plunging all men into ruin, condemnation and despair. But where the first Adam brought in sin, the second Adam brought in grace. Jesus is the second Adam and he brings in grace, and not just, you know, grace means special favor. He brought in this unique special devotion and favor to his children, his church, and the text doesn't just leave it there, it's not just grace, it's super-abounding grace. "I don't just favor you, I really really greatly deeply favor you while there's nothing in you to earn it or deserve it or to merit it."

That's astounding. Grace places us as holy and blameless before God, but grace does not just take us back to the state of the original Adam before he sinned. No, this is such a super-abundant favor of grace, it lifts us beyond that and places us in the very righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ. We in the new creation receive back a standing with God super-abounding above what the original Adam had. Grace. That's why we sing "Amazing Grace," the same idea because it's astounding.

I guess as a preacher of the word of God and your pastor, nothing would thrill my soul more than to know that all of you marvel and are astounded over Christ. You can forget me and I mean that genuinely, but you must not cease to be astounded by him. Maybe, maybe I'll see you on your deathbed, maybe I won't, but in your last thought, in your last strength to verbalize, it would be wonderful to hear you say, "I'm still astounded with Jesus. I'm still amazed by Jesus." Not I lived a good life. Not I tried hard. Not I went to church and I gave a tithe. But, "I'm amazed with Him."

Well, when I gave you the glories of salvation, then I said but maybe even more astounding behind all of that is this grace. One last thing, but in back of all of that there is this astonishing love, an astounding love. You see, grace flows out of this love he has for his children even though they're depraved, even though they're offensive, even though they're unlovely, yet he has this abounding, powerful, unquenchable, unthwartable, neverending love for us which the grace flows out of in favor for us. That's astounding. And by the way, he forevermore even all eternity will be astounding to us. Heaven will be a place where Jesus' redeemed ones will experience the deep, glorious joy of being with the astounding one face-to-face and for all eternity they will experience the neverending pleasures of learning more and more of the infinite wonders of the astounding King of kings and Lord of lords. You get to heaven and you roll up on the Apostle Paul or Peter or somebody who's been there a couple thousand years and say, "What's heaven like to you?" And he says, "I'm, I'm astounded. I'm just astounded. I just keep learning more about the infinite wonders and glories and love and grace of Christ. And to be honest, I'm more amazed every day."

So get in on the experience early. Strive and pray that Christ would be more astounding to you every day.