



# Links Players

## Amazing Grace - The Ultimate Mulligan

*...when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 3:3-6, ESV)*

Watch any interview with a tour player, and you will notice they use the first-person, singular pronoun “I” almost exclusively: “I hit a nice bunker shot on five.” “I drove it beautifully all day.” Customarily, we wouldn’t expect them to say, “We hit it nicely today.”

One phrase that’s become fashionable is, “I just need to believe in myself.” Depending on who says it, this sentence can mean entirely different things.

The player who views life through the grid of Scripture means something like, “I want to steward God’s gift for his glory.” The other view might assume, as John Lennon once sang, “Imagine there’s no heaven; it’s easy if you try. No hell below us, above us only sky.” In this view, “I just need to believe in myself” is embedded in a conflicting story about the nature of reality.

Humans are a storied people. We live inside stories, and these large narratives, consciously or unconsciously, guide our lives.

Over the last few decades, academic radicals have denounced the idea of a metanarrative—or one true story of the world—altogether. Ironically, their version of reality has become “the story” currently shaping America. Their belief proclaims with Lennon—“Above us only sky!”

In their version of reality, there is no God “up there” who will judge us. According to these intellectuals, God is a fictional character we mortals have imagined in order to cope with the horrors of this world. In their interpretation of life, we’re born, we live, and we die—full stop.

Today’s devotional text presupposes a far more realistic story. In this story, God created and declared this world “good” and even “very good.” In this story, we are told mankind has rebelled against their Maker. The Creator, being a just and righteous God, must judge humanity for their treason and lawlessness.

However, the true story of the whole world doesn’t end with only judgment. In this account, the Creator of all enters the story by sending his only Son to forgive, redeem, restore, and even improve our original relationship and mission.

In today’s verse, there is no first person, singular “I.” Only the singular “he” and “his” is used. Salvation is of the Lord; grace is, indeed, the ultimate mulligan:

*when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

Glory to God for such a great salvation! The Father planned it, the Son accomplished it, and the Holy Spirit applies it.

### Prayer – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thank you for your Amazing Grace!

#### READING - Titus 3: 3-8; Ephesians 2: 1-10

**OPENING QUESTIONS:** Golfers love a good story. What is your favorite golf story? Bobby Jones at \_\_\_\_\_? Jack at \_\_\_\_\_? Hogan at \_\_\_\_\_? I/We at \_\_\_\_\_?

1. Paul outlines *salvation by grace* in **Titus 3:3-8**. From what are we saved (vs. 3)? Who is taking the initiative in this passage (vss. 4-6)? What action(s) are taken by him (vss. 4-6)? What two benefits occur for the believer (vs.7)? Do good works precede or follow grace (vs.8)? Discuss the significance of each section. Contrast this understanding with what other religions teach.

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2. Again, Paul outlines *salvation by grace* in **Ephesians 2:1-10**. In what condition(s) do we find ourselves prior to Christ (vss.1-3). What two motivations does God have for saving us (vs. 4)? What are the outcomes of this graced-salvation (vss. 5-6)? What was God’s purpose (vs. 7). How does Paul clarify salvation by grace (vss. 8-9)? In what way are “good works” involved (vs.10).

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