



"Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.5, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

11/14/07

Program 9 – "House Of The Rising Sun" and "Amazing Grace"

Many assume "House of the Rising Sun" was authored by a British group, The Animals, who charted a huge hit with the song in 1964. However, it is an American folk song that was recorded in 1934 by a fellow who said he "learned it from his grandfather". It has been recorded by several artists since then (source: Wikipedia). The compelling tune and chord structure has been used as a backdrop for lyrics to other songs – most notably, John Newton's classic hymn, "Amazing Grace". Today's program features the same tune twice – in "House of the Rising Sun" by the Animals, and then for "Amazing Grace" by the Five Blind Boys from Alabama. We compare and contrast their messages, and then review the Biblical account of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), who left home, squandered all of his wealth in wild living, became destitute, repented, and was received back to his father's household by grace and with open arms. These are stories of choices...

There is a house in New Orleans
They call the Rising Sun
And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy
And God I know I'm one

My mother was a tailor
She sewed my new bluejeans
My father was a gamblin' man
Down in New Orleans

Now the only thing a gambler needs
Is a suitcase and trunk
And the only time he's satisfied
Is when he's on a drunk

Oh mother tell your children
Not to do what I have done
Spend your lives in sin and misery
In the House of the Rising Sun

Well, I got one foot on the platform
The other foot on the train
I'm goin' back to New Orleans
To wear that ball and chain

There is a house in New Orleans
They call the Rising Sun
And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy
And God I know I'm one

- Each recognizes lost condition
- One's father is a gambling drunk; the other's is compassionate
- One goes back to life of misery; the other is en route home to glory
- One simply warns of perils; the other highlights God as shield thru perils
- One holds no hope; the other anticipates joy and peace
- "...And so we will be with the Lord forever." 1 Thess. 4:17

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

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.

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

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;..."
-- Isaiah 53:6

Discussion Points: Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)

- We can deliberately walk away from God and live for self

"... the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living." v. 13

- We can feel forsaken and find ourselves without all we knew and enjoyed with God

"After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything." v. 14-16

- We can realize what a terrible decision we have made

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'" v. 17-19

- We can come home to our Heavenly Father

"So he got up and went to his father." v. 20a

- When we do so, God is waiting and looking for us

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him..." v. 20b

- God receives our return with warmth, care and great joy

"...and [the father] was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." v. 20c

- We may feel unworthy of restoration

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son'" v. 21

- But we will be received royally!

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.'" v. 22-23

- We pass from death to life

"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" v. 24a

Final thought... Come home! The Father is waiting with open arms!

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