

LEGACY

William Wilberforce

Scriptures quoted: Gen. 1:26-28; Micah 6:8; John 15:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:8-10; Gal. 3:28; Heb. 10:23-25.

1. John Newton, ex slave trader, author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*, declared, 'Only God's amazing grace could and would take a rude, irreverent, slave trading sailor and transform him into a child of God.' What might this tell us about God's nature? In which way was this similar to Paul's testimony? (see 1 Cor. 15:8-10).
2. John Newton, as Wilberforce's vicar, advised him not to leave politics, saying, "God has raised you up for the good of the church and the good of the nation, maintain your friendship with Pitt, continue in Parliament, who knows that but for such a time as this God has brought you into public life and has a purpose for you." Was this good or bad advice when Wilberforce was experiencing such inner turmoil about being in politics? In which ways might his advice challenge us today?
3. William Wilberforce underwent a radical change from his pre-Christian life. Before his conversion he was a self-indulgent pleasure-seeker; after his conversion, he became a man on a mission with a deep sense of purpose. Share your experience of "before" and "after" conversion. What were the more significant changes to your life?
4. Steve spoke about the gospel message bringing about a change from the "inside out" not from the "outside in". What did he mean? How did the pig story help explain this?
5. The African slave trade of the 18th century was a grotesque injustice. What present day injustices make your blood boil? What is our response to them? In which ways might we be a "voice for the voiceless" in society?
6. St. Augustine's once said: "Pray as if the entire outcome depends on God and work as if the entire outcome depends on you." Thoughts?
7. Read Genesis 1:26-28. C. S. Lewis wrote, "There are no ordinary people. You have never met a mere mortal." What point was he making? Why is this so important to us?
8. In which ways was Wilberforce an astonishing example of perseverance? What factors helped him to be so resilient? What might be the lesson for us? (John 15:4-5; Heb. 10:23-25)

Take some time to pray for those suffering injustice in our world.