SING ALL!

SINGING THE FAITH PLUS

Who Breaks the Power (This is Amazing Grace)

Josh Farro, Phil Wickham, Jeremy Riddle

'This is amazing grace' began as an unpublished demo song by Josh Farro and Phil Wickham. Some years later, co-author Jeremy Riddle rewrote the verses and popularised it through use at Bethel Church in Redding, California. Of the final version, published in 2012, Wickham explains:

> 'it's all about [God's] majesty and what he has done; what he can speak into existence, and how he brings our chaos back into order … how this King of Glory with his amazing grace and his unfailing love took our place on this cross … it's the story that God has written, and he's let us all be a part of … it's a story of falling away and him reaching out for us and this redemption and renewal happening. My heart is filled with thankfulness for what God has done whenever I get to sing this song.'*

For those introducing the song for the first time, here are a few points to help us sing together.

Hear it here

Album version:

The Ascension, Phil Wickham https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFRjr_x-yxU

Guitar lesson with Phil Wickham and an acoustic example:

Phil Wickham - Instructional Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpMymE3TWQs

Orchestral version with choir and congregation foremost:

Calvary Church Choir & Orchestra https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M11uqWCkLzw

Scores // Lyrics // Chords

Online:

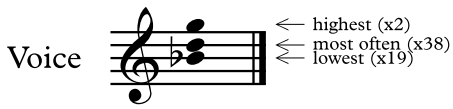
- Various, including www.musicnotes.com, www.praisecharts.com, worship.lifeway.com
  Full scores (various keys available)

Books:

- Songs of Fellowship Vol. 6, #2145 (key B♭)
  Full piano arrangement with chord symbols. Incorporates melody in right hand. Verse melody & rhythmic variations transcribed per verse.
- Mission Praise 30th Anniversary Edition, #1373 (key C)
  Essentially a piano accompaniment version with the vocal melody added to the top stave. Words fitted to melody and rhythm of first verse.
- Spring Harvest Praise 2013, #88

Range & Key

✓ (narrow, predominantly above congregational range in B♭ or C)



Range of verse & chorus (as in Songs of Fellowship)

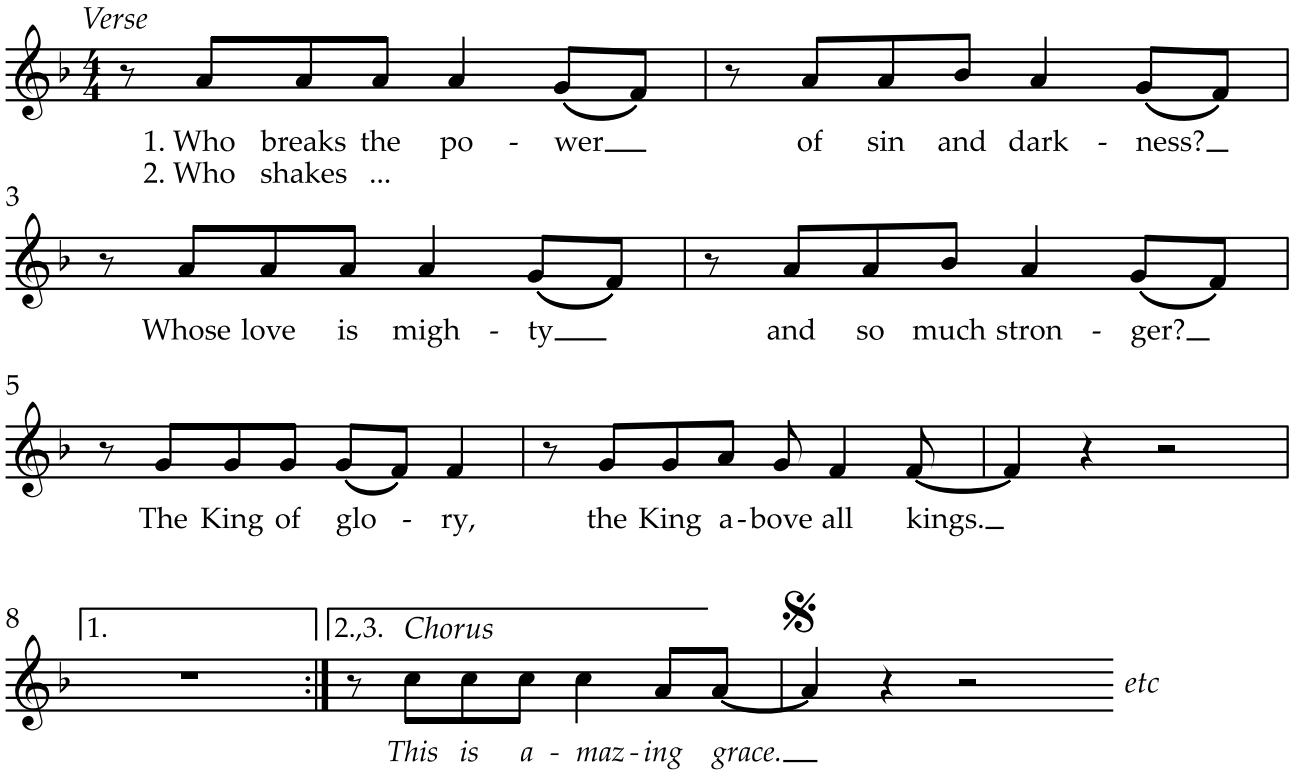
The Songs of Fellowship version is published in a key (B♭), which suited the higher male voice of its original artistes, but transposed up an octave, which thus places it outside congregational range. Mission Praise, perhaps because it incorporates an upward octave jump in the chorus, is in C and an octave lower. Given the narrow range of both verse and chorus, this leaves it a little on the low side! Fortunately, the narrow range suggests a solution. Except for two excursions to note six, the entire melody of the verse & chorus is contained within the first five notes of

* Phil Wickham - This Is Amazing Grace - Story Behind The Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZjJY91Ge7s>

the key. This means a significant transposition entirely removes the difficulty. Locate or create a version in E, E♭, or F for best results.

Regularity ✓✓ Syncopation ✓ (significant in transcribed choruses)

Whilst regular, in that each verse potentially fits the same rhythm, there are a multitude of nuanced rhythmic and melodic variations given in the different scores and solo recorded versions. It is important to avoid a leadership that models this freedom week-to-week when accompanying the same congregation; we're trying to sing <u>together</u>, and we need one version around which to unite. Integrating Wickham's instructional video and real congregational recordings results in the following draft that retains the shape of the original but is both easier to sing and more swiftly assimilated.



Learning the song

The verses have a teaching (or 'catechetical') style, in that a question, or series of questions, are asked and answered. One way of learning such a song that takes the pressure off the congregation is to divide the verse into a sung Q&A format thus:

Leader:	Who breaks the power of sin and darkness? Whose love is mighty, and so much stronger?
All:	The King of Glory, the King above all kings.
Leader:	Who shakes ...
All:	The King of Glory ...

Once sung like this on several occasions you may wish to revert to everyone singing everything, but sometimes this technique aids concentration on the text and is worth retaining.

Instrumentation and accompaniment

As popularised, the song has a driving rhythm that suits a strummed guitar accompaniment. Lone pianists may need to cultivate a busy (but light) left hand pattern or enlist a percussion section. Whilst difficult to realise effectively on solo organ, the slow chord changes mean organists can readily contribute significant depth and expression ('who shakes the whole earth with holy thunder' (v2) etc.).