

1 Timothy 1:12-17 (Part 2)

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“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Introduction

Let's open up our time with a word of prayer and come to the Lord as we look to the concept of grace once again.

Heavenly Father,

As we come before You, we give You praise. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for just the truth of Scripture and how it reveals to us Lord, that there is nothing in us that deserves anything favorable from You. And yet, Lord despite our unseemly nature, You have been gracious to us.

As we examine the concept of grace this morning Lord, I pray that Your Holy Spirit will do that work (which is impossible in us) to give us full comprehension of spiritual things. And I pray that the Word of God would speak well to us and that we would be refreshed.

And for those of us Lord that sit in this room that know we are of faith and that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation; for those of us Lord, we ask that You would convict us; to remember again with freshness and with truth, the value of being men and women that are called the children of God only by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Lord, for those of us that are uncertain, that feel as if we are on “shaky ground,” I pray for them as well. I pray that You would open up their eyes; to understand that grace is not a thing that needs to be conditioned, instead it is something to be received and that You might use Your words of Your Holy Scripture to open their hearts to salvation as well.

So Lord, as we gather around this particular portion of Scripture, we thank You that the concept of grace (as immense as it is) is so applicable to us. Help us not to miss it, Lord. Help us not to let it pass us by, but to enjoy it, to appreciate it, and to delight in it; to know our God and to know how gracious and merciful He is.

We give You the praise for Your glory.

*In Jesus name,
Amen.*

We began our journey in the concept of grace and may I say that of all the topics of Scripture to talk about, it is my distinct privilege to speak about God's grace. The reason why I say that is that of all the things that the Scriptures mention, this is by far the most remarkable. You might say, “How about the creation of the world? God literally speaks ‘Let there be light’ and there is light; ‘Let there be an expanse’ and there is an expanse. God literally speaks and things happen. His words turn into reality.” That is indeed remarkable, but the grace of God is even *more* remarkable than creation!

Think about the holiness of God and how God is an ineffable light—unapproachable by anything that is not perfect and holy. With that understanding, think about how it says in Hebrews 10 that the veil had been torn (through the offering of Jesus Christ for us) and “let us draw near to the living God” (Hebrews 10:22). This is a theologically insane concept and yet, that is exactly what the grace of God does—it allows us who should be the last to be near to the throne of God, draw near to Him. How blessed is the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week, we read through the first half of this large section (vv.12-14). Let me read the whole passage to you so that we might refresh ourselves of the context in which Paul was writing to Timothy.

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Now, when you examine how Paul constructed these verses, you can tell that it's structured in the form of praise, a giving of thanks. He begins with the giving of thanks, describing how he's thankful for the grace of our Lord and then ends with an excellent doxology praising God for the grace that we are given. Paul is pouring out from a heart of thankfulness a prayer of praise for the grace of God in his life.

Last week, we looked at the grace of God in Paul's life. We talked a little about his history and how of all the individuals who got saved in the early church, Paul was perhaps the most remarkable since he was a persecutor of the early Church. It's amazing to go from the persecutor of the Church to one of its chief evangelists. We saw how Paul was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent aggressor (to the extent that he had no regard for those who were outside what he thought was truth) and yet, because of God's excessively abundant grace, Paul was saved.

The grace of God does not just barely cover our sins, but covers *all* of our sins to the extent that we cannot even earn our sanctification or make ourselves more holy. The entire process is still by the grace of God. How excessive, super-abundant, incredible, and ridiculous that we live with a God that is so gracious! With this context in mind, we now come to vv.15-17, the portion that we will discuss this morning. We've looked at the particular grace of God in the life of Paul and now we look at the idea of the pervasive grace of God which is universal for all people who believe. Paul serves as an example of the grace all of us can enjoy in Jesus Christ.

The Pervasiveness of God's Grace (v. 15)

“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.”

“**It is a trustworthy statement**” is an interesting phrase which is used by Paul in only five instances, all of them in the Pastoral Epistles. In the Greek, it literally says *pistos logos* or “a faithful word,” which can be understood as meaning “trustworthy.” He is saying that this is an absolutely faithful, trustworthy statement. In other words, you can bank on this truth—that Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners. In every instance Paul uses this phrase (except for his discussion about the qualifications of an elder), it points to this idea of a theological truth in relation to our salvation (1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Timothy 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8), with an emphasis on the statement being trustworthy, faithful, accurate, and true. Paul is highlighting, in this particular instance, that this is a truth that was well-recognized by the entire community of believers in the early Church; things that were theological concepts or doctrinal truths the entire Church already shared.

Why is that significant? This is in contrast to what Paul had to address in the case of the false teachers/elders that had grown up in the church, who were speaking of things that were fruitless, straying from the excellent things of faith (1 Timothy 1:6). They turned aside to fruitless discussions, wanting to be teachers of the law, but they drifted off to endless genealogies and mythologies, talking about fanciful things that were not biblically based. In contrast to what those false teachers were preaching (which were not Scripture or excellent theology), Paul is saying that this statement is trustworthy, something that we should all appreciate.

“deserving full acceptance”

The idea of “**full acceptance**” is that we would and ought to receive all of that statement in its fullness; personal appropriation. Because Paul is addressing something that is so significant (which the Church theologically shared in its conclusion) we, individually, ought to drink it in and delight in it. It deserves our full appropriation and acceptance. This is in contrast to what our response should be to the endless genealogies and mythologies that were propagated by those teachers that have gone astray.

Last week, we talked a little bit about Thomas Bilney. He was at the heart of the Reformation in England. He was a scholar at Cambridge and became a fellow at Trinity Hall by the age of 25, an incredibly intelligent man. Upon reading a Greek New Testament, this particular verse struck him to the bone. This is his testimony:

“I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul—Oh, most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul—in 1 Timothy 1: *‘It is a true saying and worthy of all men to be embraced that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief and principal.’* This one sentence, through God's

instruction and inward working did so exhilarate my heart being before wounded with the guilt of my sins and being almost in despair that even immediately, I seemed unto myself, inwardly, to feel a marvelous comfort and quietness, in so much that *'my bruised bones leapt for joy'* (Psalm 51). After this the Scripture began to be more pleasant unto me than the honey of the honeycomb."

Bilney went on to become a central figure in a group of theologians that prepared England for the Reformation. He was arrested in 1527. He was forced to stop preaching, but he continued and four years later was burned at the stake. One of his converts and disciples, Hugh Latimer, was known as the one of the most prominent preachers during the time of the English reformation and referred to Thomas Bilney as "St. Bilney." Latimer, himself, was burned at the stake in 1555. These guys were martyrs because of a particular verse. The reformation in England happened around this particular phrase, *"that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."*

Paul says **"that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"** is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance. This was such a conviction to him (the idea that Christ came to save us) it transformed him and allowed him "to put his money where his mouth was" and to live a life that was in light of the grace of God. Christ came into the world to save sinners. There are two elements theologically speaking to that: 1) the Incarnation; and 2) Redemption.

- **Incarnation:** In the Incarnation, Jesus Christ *came* into this world, not *born* into the world. Do you notice that the Scriptures does not emphasize that He was born (i.e. created)?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Instead, it speaks as if He had come (literally, stepped down) from the Father's glory. Jesus talked about Himself in that light. Have you ever read the verses previous to John 3:16 and verse after?

"And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life... For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him." (John 3:13-15, 17)

The reason why Christ actually came in human form was so that He might save us. This is God's design for Christmas. We think of Christmas as a time to give gifts. All our kids look forward to Christmas for the gifts, but that's not what Christmas is about. Christmas is a marker in history that we celebrate specifically because it heralds the coming of our Savior into our world. He came to be lifted up (i.e. to die for on our behalf).

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself. But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. The multitude therefore answered Him, 'We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?'" (John 12:32-35)

Jesus had been very clear that He would be lifted up. In the early part of His ministry, He kept referring to being lifted up which is not merely a euphemism for death, but specifically, death by crucifixion. Sovereignly, even though the religious leaders (his enemies) were plotting His death, Jesus had been already prophesying that it would be the Romans who would crucify him.

What an interesting insight into his sovereignty and purpose—that He came to die, so that we might have life; that He might express the graciousness of God for our salvation. These things are commonly understood and accepted by us, yet easily forgotten because they have become so normative for us. Paul is saying "Let's not forget for it's a trustworthy statement."

- **Redemption:** It is often the Redemption of sinners where we need to remind and refresh ourselves. The key verse in all of Mark it says this:

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

On Easter Sunday, we preached out of Romans 5 which talks about how we were helpless or godless, how we were sinners, and later, how we were enemies of God. It was for these kinds of individuals (while in the midst of their sin) that Jesus Christ died on the Cross.

"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... but God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6, 8)

It is difficult for us to forgive somebody when they sin against us in the immediate context. Given time, we might be able to get over it. I think it is literally impossible for us as human beings to just forgive someone who not only sins against us, but who is glad to sin against us; who taunts us in the midst of their sin. To say, "I forgive you" is a difficult thing. The nature of the Cross (i.e. the nature of ministry of Christ to us) goes beyond that. It not only forgives, but cleanses us for all unrighteousness for all time. How is it possible that God would be so gracious that He would reach down to you, while you

are in the midst of your very rebellion? In the midst of your treachery, He pours out His love and died for your sins. That is ridiculous and marvelous and that is the grace of God.

In Romans, Paul says that God's plan of redemption is not just for His chosen people, but for any who would believe. He says very clearly that there is no distinction and that all have fallen short of the glory of God.

"even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:22-24)

Jerry Bridges writes in *Transforming Grace*:

"There is no difference then, between Jew and Gentile, between the religious and the irreligious, between the most decent, moral person and the most degenerate. There is no difference between us because we all have sinned and have fallen short of the God's glory."

Paul is trying to emphasize that there isn't a single human being that is quite good enough to earn anything. The greatest misconception of the concept of grace is that we think that grace kind of "fills the gap." This is the wrong definition of grace. Jerry Bridges mentions this as "God making up the difference between the requirements of His righteous Law and what we lack." If we see ourselves as sinful beings and God as an absolutely holy being, that is the right and proper perspective. But, if we think that God's grace is His willingness to bridge the gap of how good we are and the rest of it unto His glory—that is absolutely wrong.

What is dangerous about that kind of mentality? There are two kinds of individuals that succumb to this mode of thought: 1) Not-quite Christians and 2) Christians.

- Individuals who are almost-but-not-quite Christians enjoy the concept of salvation, but they are not surely convinced of it, nor are they willing to commit themselves to the things of Christ. They merely sit it out and wait to "clean" themselves up or to make themselves more "savable." They actually feel that they need to go a certain distance in righteousness and then God would do the rest.

Can that kind of individual be saved? Not if that individual thinks this way because grace naturally nullifies all work. Did Jesus Christ come into the world to save those that are trying really hard? No. Did Jesus Christ come into the world to save the religious or moral person? No. It says very clearly that "**Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.**" If you can count them amongst the worst of society, then those are the individuals that Christ came to save.

In fact, the term "**sinners**" in the gospel accounts is often juxtaposed with "tax-collectors." It became almost a technical concept. It was used to talk about the most degraded and degenerate individuals of society. Tax-collectors were in this group. They were individuals who were selling out God's people, who made money on usury, and who had no concern for God's plan for His people. They were considered traitors of the nation of God. They were viewed as the worst of society by their Jewish peers. Sinners also included prostitutes and all of the worst kind of people you would think of.

Jesus Christ didn't come to save those who were already halfway there or those who were cleaning themselves up to make themselves "more savable" or the religious or the moral or the already ethical. He came to save sinners, people who didn't deserve to be saved. There's no need to wait. He didn't come to save those who were savable—He came to save those who were *impossible* to save.

- Then there are also those individuals that are believers who fall into this work treadmill kind of mentality; Christians who are sitting around trying to smuggle in their own works for the sake of sanctification, legalistically trying to earn a little more favor with God.

Let me give an example. It's that attitude of thinking that "Gee, since I had my QT today, I ought to have a good day" or "Boy, since I didn't do my QT this week God is going to pour judgment upon me." Is that the way God operates in our lives? Does He think that since you had your QT and prayed for 15 minutes you deserve a good day? It's that same concept of "if I do my part, God fills in the gap." That is not grace. Grace is that God would do for us what is according to His virtuous mercy despite our undeserving nature.

C. Samuel Storms (author, pastor of Christ Community Church in Ardmore, Oklahoma) said this:

"Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to bestow it in the presence of human merit. Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it in the presence of human demerit. Grace is treating a person without the slightest reference to desert whatsoever, but solely according to the infinite goodness and sovereign purpose of God."

The nature of God's grace is so remarkable that it is literally an alien concept to us. I love the way that Dr. Storms put it. On the one hand, you could look at how you cannot earn more of His favor, His grace. As Romans 8:1 says "*There is no condemnation to those that believe,*" understand and take comfort that there is no way that God is compelled to withdraw from us because of our inability or because of our mistaking; we cannot earn because of our merit, neither can we lose from our demerit.

Does that mean that we should go on sinning so that grace may abound (Romans 7)? Of course not! An excellent thing for us to learn about the grace of God is that *it's not conditional*. There is a complete lack of pettiness in God. The grace of God is immense. It is impossible. It is ridiculous. We should find ourselves enthralled by it. Yet, we take such an excellent doctrine as this and turn it into something that we just hang our hats on. How do we walk around and forget that we have been saved by the immeasurably infinite value of the death of Jesus Christ?

Dr. Storms also says this:

“The first and possibly most fundamental characteristic of divine grace is that it presupposes sin and guilt. Grace has meaning only when men are seen as fallen, unworthy of salvation and liable to eternal wrath. God does not contemplate sinners merely as undeserving but as ill-deserving. It is not simply we do not deserve grace, we do deserve hell.”

If we can understand the holiness of God and His absolute glory plus our innate desire to live in rebellion, then you will know why we all live in condemnation. You might say “I haven’t lived in rebellion to God.” The Scriptures say otherwise. [Isaiah 53:6](#) says “all of us like sheep have gone astray. Each of us have turned to his own way.” In the end, we have all chosen to try to be our own god. You might say “No, I haven’t thought about this.” When was the last time you thought to yourself “Well, I’m not sure if this is right or wrong, but I think that this is okay for me.” As soon as you do that you have erred in the fashion of which Adam and Eve who sought to be wise and like God; to determine for them what is right and wrong. Everytime you look at a portrait the first person you look for is yourself and you delight in how wonderful you look. That is the kind of self-centeredness where there is only one god in your life—you. We live in constant rebellion and for that rebel, for that individual deserving an eternal judgment, Jesus Christ came to die.

“among whom I am foremost of all.”

This is an interesting statement from Paul. The word **“foremost”** comes from the Greek word **πρῶτος** (*prōtos*) which means “first of its kind; the only one; chief and best example.” He’s saying that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners among whom I am the first or worst.

When Paul appeared before a couple of government officials in Acts, he gives a testimony of what he did before his conversion.

“So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.” (Acts 26:9-11)

In Acts 9 before Paul was converted, Jesus asked him “Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Listen, all of us have committed sins, but very few of us can be accused of actually persecuting Jesus Christ. Paul said:

“For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10)

Paul constantly reminded himself of the fact that he, himself, is the chief of sinners. Was there a sense of great regret? I believe so, but Paul was not petrified by that regret. You often hear whether we should consider ourselves redeemed sinners or sinning saints. I can tell you what Paul thinks of himself. Paul thinks he is a sinner. Redeemed? Certainly. Saved? Absolutely. Useful unto the glory of the Lord according to God’s grace? Absolutely, but he never forgets that he is a sinner. In this particular phrase **“among whom I am foremost of all”** (not *I was* foremost of all), he doesn’t say I was chief of sinners back then, and now, I am an apostle. He says that I am still currently a sinner and any individual who says that that was me back then, but now I am worth something in the eyes of God—that’s foolishness. We are still that same sinner. We still have that ability to commit that same atrocity, save for the grace of God in us.

God’s grace doesn’t just pick us up out of the dirt and give us feet to stand on so that we might finish our work. God’s grace cleanses us through and through and gives us no basis to stand on for ourselves at all. Paul says that I am still that sinner, foremost of all—the prototype. We have to say the same thing for ourselves.

There is this attitude of works that is so prevalent in our church culture. I once heard a friend come up and mention how one of their friends said that Judas Iscariot was saved and sometimes you hear that and it boggles your mind and imagination. The Scriptures call him “the son of Perdition,” in other words, “the son of Hell.” Kind of hard to imagine how someone with that title can be saved. But I know why people want to think that because Judas felt so much remorse that he goes and kills himself. There are some among us that may think that because he felt so much remorse that he took his own life, that he made right what was wrong; life for life. And again, we become so petty to think that way; that God’s righteousness is attainable by our own means.

What was Judas trying to do? He was self-atoning; trying to be self-righteous. He was not seeking the living God, on God’s terms, by His grace alone. He was still trying to figure out how to earn, or how to make up for, or how to atone for himself. Who was his god and where was his righteousness derived? Himself, and from himself alone. Such a man cannot be saved. Paul was not such a man. Paul knows who he is. He is a redeemed sinner.

You can look at other portions of Scripture for examples of humble men, such as Isaiah who said *"Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts"* (Isaiah 6:5) or Peter told Christ in their first encounter *"depart from me for I am a sinful man, Lord"* (Luke 5:8) or the tax-collector who called himself "the sinner" in Luke 18 and it ought to be the same for us.

I think that R.C. Sproul says "self-righteousness is virtue run amuck." That's a great way to look at it. How do we cure ourselves, how do we send ourselves to hell in an express route all the while looking externally righteous? We do it by letting our virtue run amuck, by trusting ourselves for salvation; such a thing cannot be. You cannot save yourself, so what are you trying to clean? You cannot save yourselves, so what are trying to earn? Should you not fall upon the grace of God and depend upon His mercy?

The Purpose of God's Grace (v. 16)

"And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."

Paul simply says that the reason why God saved him was to establish a testimony that even the most wretched man can be saved. Do you realize what the grace of God means for us? It means that you can be forgiven for your sins. It means that you can be forgiven from the eternal weight of damnation and be wiped clean of your sins. It means that God is willing in the death of Christ to count all your iniquity upon His Son, so that you might be righteous, even though you continue to sin!

This is the most blessed doctrine. Paul says the reason why God would save the prototype of sinners (i.e. Paul) was to show and display the glory of His grace and how awesome is the wonder of His mercy. In other words, so no one in the world could look at Paul and say that he was a pretty righteous man and that's why God saved him, but instead, that everyone, no matter how desperate they are is never beyond salvation.

When the rich young ruler comes to Christ and asks him "What must I do to attain life?" Jesus said "You know the law" and he says, "I know the law and I have kept the law all my life and never broken the law." And the Lord says, "Wow, that's cool." The Lord then asks him to sell everything he had and to follow Him. This he could not do. The scriptures said that he had much property. The guy was rich and it was too much to give away. He goes away sad and the disciples come and ask Jesus why he couldn't be saved. He says it is difficult for a rich man to be saved and they reply "Then who can be saved?" Jesus answers "It is impossible for men to be saved, but that which is impossible for men is possible for God."

This is Paul's testimony of life that God can save someone as wretched as him as proof of God's grace. We might agree and say that Paul is wretched as a persecutor of the church and blasphemer of Christ, but remember that you and I are not so different. That is what the doctrine of grace reminds us—that you cannot be savable. In fact, you cannot possibly deserve a little bit of salvation from the Lord. If you try to smuggle in a little bit of your own righteousness, to say that I am a decent person because I do these things, you would be gravely mistaken; you would be hell-bound mistaken; you would be so wrong that you would be just a religionist. Do you not remember what Romans 3 tells us? There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, between the religious and irreligious. All can be saved by the grace of God.

The Praiseworthiness of God's Grace (v. 17)

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

He ends this section with a doxology—a word of praise to the glory of our God. The beauty of this particular verse is that it is probably well-known to us. He is the "eternal" king or "ruler." His rule or authority, his rulership does not end.

He is incorruptible. The word "immortal" means that He cannot fade, nor can He actually crumble or rot. He cannot be destroyed by any means. He is immortal, eternal, unbreakable.

He is "invisible" which literally means He cannot be seen; "unviewable" might be the best way to translate that word. No one has ever seen God. No one has seen God the Father. The only one we have seen is Jesus Christ, His Son.

"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." (John 1:18)

I was reading one theologian's comments about that and he was saying how even all the theophanies (the appearances of God in the Old Testament) were most likely the second Person of the Trinity. If this verse is true, the Son was the Person who appeared to Moses in the burning bush. It was the Son who came down as Yahweh walking with two angels before Sodom and Gomorrah. The Son was the One who came down and was the Captain of the guard that Joshua had met with before the conquering of Jericho. The Son was the One who met with Daniel's friends in the fiery furnace.

The idea is that no one has seen God the Father. He is the "King eternal, immortal, invisible" to us. We have no right to look upon Him. Moses, the meekest man on earth according to Isaiah 66:2 which say *"this is the one to whom I will look, he who is humble and contrite in heart,"* could only see the fading, passing glory of God's back! That's a metaphor

which represents the idea that as God's glory was fading, Moses caught a glimpse. Even so, such was the glory of God that Moses' face glowed afterwards. Moses had seen the most any human being could of God's glory.

The verse continues by describing God as **"the only God"**, the *monos theos* (μόνος θεός) or "there is no other."

"Be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

The emphasis of these four attributes are on God's transcendence—the fact that He is distant from us; that He not liken unto us.

He is not just a ruler, but the Ruler unto eternity. He is the Eternal Ruler.

He is not just the living God, but the unkillable God. Nothing fades upon God. There is no way God can actually grow old, because He cannot fade or corrupt in any way.

He is the unviewable God. It is not appropriate for the flawed creation to look upon the face of God. That is ridiculous. That is a hope that is only for those who are purely and absolutely glorified and without sin. Even then, do not even the angels who are in the throne room of God cover their faces with one of their six wings? God is not a viewable God because He is that mighty and immense and He is the One God. There is no other.

You and I are not gods. Neither can we pretend that one day we will become god. When it comes to the issue of these individuals in verse 4 of chapter 1, these certain men who taught false doctrine, what were their problem? They had decided to look for more fanciful ways and Paul is saying "Fanciful ways? Do you know who you are dealing with? The Eternal King, the incorruptible One. You are talking about Him who is unviewable, the One God. And now you are making fanciful ideas of what it might be like to find our own way to getting to the Lord? Is not the grace of God sufficient for you? Is it not incredible enough that He might save a man, like myself, like individuals like you?"

I'm telling you, we look for every sham, every selling of holy water and cloth and holy thing. That is ridiculous. Let us come back to the purity of one thing—God's grace is sufficient for life and for glory. We need nothing else.

Paul concludes by saying who is this God? He is so gracious and yet so immense, so transcendent, so praiseworthy. He closes by saying to him let there **"be honor and glory forever and ever"**.

What is the chief end of man? To give glory to God and enjoy Him forever and ever. That is the purpose for why we were created and why we were saved. We need a constant reminder of the grace of God and what that means for us. And if you are a Christian here, stop trying to earn a little bit extra from the Lord. That is not how it works. If you are an unbeliever here thinking about the grace of God, stop your striving. Accept Jesus Christ. Be willing to call Him the Lord of your life. Give Him your life. You too, will be saved. It is a simple doctrine and one that we have a hard time believing with all of our hearts, but the grace of God can still save sinners. Let's close our time in prayer.

Heavenly Father,

We thank You that as the Word might instruct us, to be reminded Lord of the grace of Your majesty; to know Lord that we can't earn favor in Your eyes for salvation and even Lord, for sanctification; Lord, that all things is because You are just good to us because Your grace goes before us.

O Lord, how sinful we are; that even we, who call ourselves Christians, fall back into this treadmill, trying to work out everything as if it all depends upon us.

And Lord, we know that even our good deeds that we might accomplish—are they not because Your grace causes us the desire to do these things?

Help us always Lord, to think greatly of your grace. What an incredible statement that "Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners" and Lord, when we search our own hearts, when we know every intention, we know every stray thought and every sinful moment that comes and creeps into the edges of our hearts which no one else can see, we know that we ourselves are the foremost of all and we ask that you would cleanse us of that unrighteousness.

Lord that there are those that need to bow their knees to the lordship of You for salvation, Lord may Your Holy Spirit convict them to do that.

What should hinder us from a grace that is so pure and excellent? May we do well Lord, in our hearts and the meditation of the grace of God and delight in it and find ourselves transformed by the power of the Spirit in the Word because Your grace is so good.

Thank You for Your love and mercy. Teach us to honor You, to give You honor and glory, forever and ever.

In Jesus Christ holy name we pray, Amen.