

## 1 Timothy 1:12-20

### "Why Christ Came"

As we enter back into 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, Paul has been urging Timothy to endure. Tough times have come upon him & he wants to tap out, toss in the towel & get out of town. Paul says "Don't do it; don't give up, don't stop now, it's too soon to quit, there's still a need you're where God has placed you for a reason. **God has a plan for you Timothy & you are to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of you.**" How many of you know that as a believer, times can be tough? That sometimes you want to tap out? Sometimes you wanna give up & get out?

But how many of you know that there is a reason for which Christ has laid hold of your life? That salvation wasn't the end for you it was only the beginning?

You & I both know that Jesus never said that serving Him was going to be a walk in the park, a stroll down ez street. As a matter of fact He said, **"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."**<sup>1</sup> He said, **"...narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."**<sup>2</sup> It's easy to take the broad path, the follow the crowd, go w/the flow route. But if you wanna lead your life set apart to J.C. it's not going to be easy. He said things like, "Foxes have holes, birds of the air have their nests, I don't have anywhere to lay My head at night." Meaning, "If you wanna follow Me there's no promise of a plush life, it may be a life of poverty, uncertainty, living day to day, toil & labor." People might come against you, want to somehow hurt you or do damage to you (be it physically, emotionally, perhaps cut down your character, any # of things).

But here's the hook, **"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."**<sup>3</sup> You are more than a conqueror through Him who has loved you. **The word of God urges us to endure, to not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap *if* we don't lose heart, don't give up & don't give in. As long as there's an unsaved person on this planet, we've got work to do... Of course that seems like an awfully tall order so lets narrow the scope.** As long as there's an unsaved person in this city, we have work to do, we can't quit, somebody's soul is weighing in the balance & we're not going to turn a blind eye *to* it or walk away *from* it, but rather we're gonna fight *for* it; amen?

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 15:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 7:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Jn 4:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The charge to Timothy was to safeguard sound doctrine; teach the word of God, the gospel of J.C. in truth... It's what was committed to *his* trust, it's what's been committed to *your* trust, Paul says that it's what's been committed to *his* trust, (Vs 11) "...according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."

### Vs 12-14

There are a # of things that Paul draws our attention to as we survey this section. 1<sup>st</sup> of all as it pertained to his message & his ministry he says that #1 he was *Entrusted*, #2 he was *Enabled* & #3 he was *Enlisted* to do the work.

#1 We've spoken of a bit, the gospel was committed to his trust, it's committed to your trust. He *had* been, we *have* been entrusted w/the message of the gospel.

#2 He says, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has *enabled* me." Now this is important. It was *Jesus* who *enabled* (or *empowered*) him to do the work. Perhaps you've heard something to the effect of, "God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called." God really isn't interested in what *we* bring to the table, the skillset that we have to offer. There's really only 1 ability that God is interested in & that's *availability*. Beyond that *He* is the One who will *enable* us to do the work. That's why we're often so shocked to see the people that God places in various and sundry positions or to accomplish certain tasks. Because He doesn't typically choose as we would choose. *Israel* chose *Saul* to be there king; tall handsome kingly lookin fella. He all but brought the nation to it's knees. God chose *David*, a little unassuming redheaded boy who learned to have a shepherd's heart by taking care of his father's sheep. David didn't bring anything to the table, but God took him, enabled him & made the greatest king of him that Israel has ever known.

God is the One who enables us. Jesus said it like this, "*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*"<sup>4</sup> You see, *He* is the vine, *we* are the branches, how much fruit can a branch bring forth that's disconnected from the vine? "0" If we're not abiding *in* Him, than we aren't being enabled *by* Him. Of course through Christ, the sky is the limit, right? Paul said, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*"<sup>5</sup>

Jesus is the One who enables us to do the work to which He calls us. He will not *call* you w/out *equipping* you.

Now, here's another key; "...because He counted me faithful."

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 15:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 4:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We spoke a little bit last week of the fact that Paul was an apostle of J.C. by the command of God. He considered himself a soldier who'd received his marching orders, He wasn't afforded a choice (as it were) he was under orders. **But how many of you realize that in Christ that same truth applies to you? How many of you realize that you are not your own, but that you were bought at a price? The price of the shed blood of J.C. therefore you're to glorify God in your body & in your spirit which *are His*. You're no longer to be a slave to sin, but a slave to righteousness, right? Rom 6:18, "And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."** You are no longer your own, you are a servant of the Most High God. You have been entrusted w/the gospel, you are a steward of the gospel. Now what is required of stewards? **"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."**<sup>6</sup> You & me, we are to be good & faithful servants.

**Often times we perceive Christian service as a matter of volunteering. Let me tell you something. As it pertains to the church of J.C. we are not volunteers, we are blood bought slaves, we are duty bound servants of J.C. & faithfulness is expected of you & me.**

Paul's faithfulness made him "usable" by God. Now here's the glorious thing about faithfulness. It's completely autonomous, it doesn't depend on anything or anyone else. Here's what I'm saying, you don't have to be smart to be faithful, you don't have to be talented/gifted to be faithful, it's a quality that God has placed w/in the grasp of every one of us. Whatever sphere God has placed you in, be faithful.

**Often times people think that they'll be faithful when they're in a certain place or doing a certain thing. That's nonsense, if you won't be faithful in small things you won't be faithful w/larger things. But if you're faithful in the days of small things... if you're faithful w/little (Jesus said) you'll be faithful w/much. Faithfulness starts right where you are. How many of you know that God is faithful? Even so we should be faithful.**

Paul was *entrusted*, he was *enabled*, & he was *enlisted*. Jesus enabled him & enlisted him into the ministry. Of course the word ministry means nothing more than "service". There's nothing high or lofty about the word, it just means to work hard & to serve.

**He says, "Even though formerly I was a blasphemer, a persecutor & an insolent man." Herein lies the transforming power of the grace of God, right? God's grace can make a minister/missionary out of a murderer & a preacher out of a persecutor, amen!? It's the beautiful principle at work: where sin abounds, grace abounds much more. This may be hard for you to believe, but there is more grace in God than there is sin in you.**

<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Co 4:2]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done, Christ can take you & make of you a new creation, old things will pass away, behold all things become new. He gives you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning & the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Paul's life was like a trophy of the transforming power of the grace of God in Christ. Now here's what I want you to see; Paul's past didn't disqualify him from serving God. God's grace was *exceedingly abundant*.

Listen, don't allow your past to pull you down, let it propel you forward. That's what Paul did. This was the guy who journeyed miles & miles & miles just to drag Christians out of their home, compel them to blaspheme/deny Christ, cast his vote against them to be put to death & then arrogantly hold people's coats for them while they were stoning the believers to death... **Read the book of Acts, it's all there. But when the time came, & Jesus brought him low & saved his soul... to the degree he persecuted he preached, the extent he would go for murder, that zeal fired him up all the more toward missions.** He said to the Corinthians, *"For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*<sup>7</sup> We're saved by God's grace, we serve *through* God's grace, but here's my point. Paul's previous passion *against* Jesus served as a catalyst in him to propel him on all the more *for* Jesus after he was saved. **Far from moping around being pulled down by his past he said, "God's grace toward me will not be in vain, there's a reason He's laid hold of my life & I will lay hold of that w/all that I am." "People only thought I was passionate *against* Christ, it'll be 100 fold *for* Christ..."**

Don't let your past pull you down. "Well I did this, or I've been through that..." welcome to humanity. We're broken, torn & tattered lives in desperate need of a Savior. Once Christ has found you allow those things instead to push you forward, for as much sin as you once indulged yourself in, now crucify your flesh & serve your Savior w/double/triple the ambition that you had toward your sin.

There was a time in my life that I made a conscious decision that if prior to Christ I was willing to let my life be spent in such a way as to ultimately glorify the enemy, than all the more I now wanted my life to glorify Christ. Let me just challenge you, if God has forgiven you much, than love/serve Him much more...

<sup>7</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Co 15:9-10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now... Ignorance doesn't *excuse* our sin (he says he did what he did out of ignorance, the same is true of most people) but it does *invite* God's mercy. Willful transgression invites God's wrath, ignorance invites His mercy. Of course Paul's ignorance didn't save him, the exceeding abundance of God's grace (Vs 14) did.

In Vs 14 Paul highlights those enabling elements of God in his life. The exceeding abundance of God's grace, along w/the faith & the love that are in Christ Jesus.

### Vs 15-16

Earlier in Ch 1 Paul was rebuking the *complexities* & the *ambiguities* of the teachings of those teaching false doctrine. He told Timothy to safeguard the *simplicity* of the gospel, which he makes known right here in 9 words. It's a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." That should be underlined in every bible here.

Now we could point out that Christ Jesus "came" into the world & spend time developing the pre-existence of Christ before the world. Jesus was not a created being, He *came* into the world, robed Himself in flesh & blood at the incarnation, but has always existed as the eternal God. Remember His prayer there in John 17? *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."*<sup>8</sup> He's referencing the eternal nature of His deity. Jesus (as God) has always existed & He *came* into the world. But I don't want to focus on that particular aspect of this Vs (though it is critical that we understand the deity of Christ).

What I want to focus on is what this Vs focuses on, "That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." You guys that's the gospel! That's the good news, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Now the bible teaches that all of mankind are sinners, that all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God. Therefore Jesus came to save us all, there is no one exempt from the desire of God's heart to save them or the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to save them.

There are no adjectives between the words "save" & "sinners". "Jeff, you don't understand I've been a drunkard." Is a drunkard a sinner? Than you qualify to be saved. "You don't understand, I've been a thief, I've been sexually immoral, I've been a drug addict, I've been a violent individual." Well, is theft, sexual immorality, violence & drug addiction sin? Than Jesus came to save you, it's not the well who are in need of the physician but the sick. Jesus didn't come to call the righteous but the sinner to repentance.

<sup>8</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Jn 17:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He didn't come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world *through Him* might be saved. He came to seek & to save that which was lost. He didn't come to be the greatest teacher the world ever know (although He was) He didn't come to set a great moral example (though He did do that), He came into the world to *save sinners*.

Read through the gospels, you will discover that Jesus make accusations against the sinner; but rather He gave the invitation to receive Him as Savior. That's why Christ came into the world, to save sinners.

"...of whom I am chief," Paul says. The essence here being, "You couldn't get any lower than me, the longsuffering of Christ will never be tested more than I tested it." He wasn't just a murderer or a persecutor, He took specific aim at J.C. & those who belonged to Him, punishing them often in every synagogue he found them in. **Compelling them to blaspheme (had them tortured [basically] till they denied Christ), was exceedingly enraged against them & went out of his way to hunt them down & if possible put to death.**

But God reached out in the Person of J.C. & saved the sinner at the bottom of the barrel, the dreg of the dregs... why? So that people might realize, "Hey, if God can save *that guy* than He can save me."

**God loves to blow our minds & save people whom we thought could never be saved. Because they magnify His grace & demonstrate the fact that you can't be so deep in the miry clay but that He can't lift you out & set you on the solid rock of salvation in J.C.**

Now the best testimony is a life lived for J.C. spared the turmoil & trouble that so much sin & rebellion brings into our lives. But there is no sin that God cannot save you from, He's already saved the worst one, the rest (by comparison) are a walk in the park.

If Saul/Paul can be saved, than you to can believe on the Lord J.C. for everlasting life. Notice also that God didn't hold Paul's past against him. We spoke of how we can let our past get to us. But God didn't do that to him. He didn't say, "Yeah, I'll save you but you're gonna be the lowest guy on the totem pole, you're gonna sweep streets, clean toilets & take out the trash." God caused him to be an apostle of J.C. put in the highest place of esteem available to man. Your past won't cause you to inherit 2<sup>nd</sup> rate citizenship in the kingdom of God. God wants to do great things through your life, surrender to Him, wholeheartedly, unconditionally.

Paul in thinking of this grace that God poured out upon him, knowing who he was, where he'd been, the things he'd done, couldn't help but exalt the Lord, notice.

**Vs 17**

Let me encourage you to take some time to consider how sinful you are & how great God's grace is in saving the likes of you. Why would God choose you? Why would He choose me? Only one reason... grace. How can our hearts not well up w/praise & adoration at the thought of God's overwhelming grace & mercy poured out upon us?

"To the King eternal," God rules & reigns in complete power, complete control, in all His glory over all the ages. "Immortal" He is eternal, He is immortal, the source of all life, invisible (there are simply things we do not know & cannot know about God, we know of Him only what He chooses to reveal to us). He alone is wise, He alone knows all & understands all & to Him be honor & glory forever & ever. Amen.

**Vs 18**

Or as we mentioned earlier, stand strong & safeguard sound doctrine; fight the good fight. Paul reminds Timothy that God had spoken to him, prophecies had been given to him & he was to find strength in that & stay in the trenches. *He* wasn't to desert his post & neither are *we*, we're to wage wise warfare, fight the good fight of faith. It won't be easy, but what war is? So he says, "Wage the good warfare..."

**Vs 19-20**

Couple quick things & we're done. I want you to note that when it comes to waging good warfare that both "faith" & "a good conscience" are critical/essential. They point to both belief & behavior. It's not enough to have only correct doctrine. Because you can have a correct understanding of the bible & still live in "hidden/secret" sin, it happens all the time. It's the pathway to suffering shipwreck. Meaning put out of commission concerning ministry, or being used effectively by God.

Which some having rejected concerning the faith... the word "rejected" speaks of a thrusting away from oneself. In order to accommodate sin we have to thrust away God's Word. We reject the faith, & sear our conscience to accommodate sin in our lives.

**Vs 20**

Paul had no problem calling people out. Ok. #1 What does he mean by, "Whom I delivered to Satan." We don't really know, it would seem to speak of putting them out of the church & into the world which is ultimately Satan's domain. There is a spiritual benefit afforded to the believer in being part of the local assembly. Once that's removed it's a game changer for the one seeking to justify sin in their life.

But the primary thing here is to note that Paul's motive was not punitive, it was remedial. It wasn't to hurt them but ultimately to help them, so that they might learn the error of their ways, repent & be restored. That's always the motive for church discipline, to see the one who is in error repent & be restored.

Christ came to save sinners. You guys that's why Christ came, that's why we're here. This church isn't an "I'm ok, you're ok" country club. It's a hospital for torn & tattered lives who need to find hope & healing, revival & restoration to God and one another through Christ.

& Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor & glory forever & ever. Amen? Amen.

### Prayer Points:

God, once again we thank You for Your word. For the exceeding abundance of Your grace & Your love & Your mercy. God we have entrusted our lives to You, but You have entrusted the gospel to us, You have enabled & enlisted us into the ministry our lives are not our own. May we be faithful to herald the call, to make an eternal impact on many lives to the glory of Your name.

I don't know how to make it any easier than what Paul did. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. & Since that's you, you qualify for a Savior. Jesus didn't come to condemn you, but that You through Him might be saved. Believe on Him & so receive everlasting life...