

# The Apostle Paul's Testimony

Text: I. Timothy 1:12-17

Introduction:

1. The importance of personal testimony – *“Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy”* (Psalm 107:2)
2. The power of personal testimony – *“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.”* (John 4:39)
3. The example of Paul's testimony can serve as a helpful template to follow for sharing your own testimony.

## I. Paul's Present (Vs. 12)

- A. Thankfulness was a key feature of Paul's Life and saturates His Epistles.
- B. Paul gives thanks for 3 blessings he received from God:
  1. **Empowered:** 'enabled' means to strengthen. Christ was the source of Paul's strength and power for ministry.
  2. **Esteemed:** 'faithful' means trustworthy, dependable. Paul proved Himself for approximately 9 years after his conversion before God set him apart for the missionary journeys in Acts 13.
  3. **Entrusted:** placed into ministry. 'ministry' is the word 'deacon'. Deacon is a compound word made up of 'through' and 'dust'. Picture = one who moves quickly to perform his duties and makes a trail of dust in his haste.

## II. Paul's Past (Vs. 13-14)

Considering His present, privileged position, his thoughts quickly travel back in time to his sinful past and the experience of God's saving power.

### A. The Description of His past (Vs. 13a)

1. 'blasphemer' = slanderous and irreverent words. Paul misrepresented the God he claimed to serve
2. 'persecutor' – one who pursues as a hunter. Paul expresses this elsewhere in the following words: *“And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.”* (Acts 22:4) *“And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”* (Acts 26:11) *“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion,*

*how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it;” (Gal 1:13)*

3. ‘injurious’ – one who treats others with contempt and violence (words and actions)

## **B. The Intervention of God (Vs. 13b-14)**

1. The mercy of God (Vs. 13b)
  - a. The character of God’s mercy
    - i. ‘but’ – praise God for His intervention!
    - ii. ‘mercy’ – Divine compassion, pity. Not getting the judgment we deserve.
  - b. The reason for God’s mercy
    - i. Ignorance – Paul honestly thought he was in the will of God. His zeal was misguided.
    - ii. Unbelief – linked to his ignorance
2. The grace of God (Vs. 14)
  - a. The Abundance of Grace (14a)
    1. ‘grace’ – unmerited favour. Giving us what we don’t deserve. God does not give His grace to us because He owes it to us in some way. He gives it freely to the underserving sinner because of His love; because it is one of His attributes.
    2. “exceeding abundant” = abounding, overflowing. Grace that exceeds the vilest sin.
    3. “...*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*”  
Rom 5:20
  - b. The Accompaniment of Grace
    - i. Faith
    - ii. Love
    - iii. Closely follow the work of grace in the heart.
  - c. The Source of Grace
    1. Jesus Christ – “...full of grace and truth.” (1 John 1:14)
    2. Paul mentions the name of Christ 4 times in these verses. He was the focus of his thanksgiving and praise!

## **III. Paul’s Pattern (Vs. 15-16)**

Paul is an example (pattern) to us of two key truths. Paul was able to see the Sovereign, Divine purposes of God behind His salvation.

### **A. Christ’s Salvation (Vs. 15)**

1. Christ’s Divine Purpose (15a)
  - a. “a faithful saying” = dependable, worthy of absolute confidence. First of 5 faithful sayings found in the Pastoral Epistles.
  - b. “worthy of all acceptance” = this truth is to be received without reservation or doubt

- c. “Christ Jesus came into the world” = the grand fact of the incarnation
  - d. “to save sinners” = statement of the great, central purpose for which He came. “...and thou shalt call his name *JESUS*: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matt 1:21) The name ‘Jesus’ means Saviour.
2. Paul’s Humble Confession (15b)
    - a. “I am” – Even after salvation, Paul’s attitude is still humble. “I’m just a sinner saved by grace.”
    - b. ‘chief’ – first, foremost. First in rank. The greatest of sinners.
    - c. Note: If Christ saved Paul, the foremost sinner, he can save anyone!

**B. Christ’s Longsuffering (Vs. 16)**

1. Connected to Mercy (16a). Note: This is the second time Paul makes reference to obtaining mercy in these verses (Refer Vs. 13)
2. Displayed in Paul (16b)
  - a. “shew forth” – display, reveal
  - b. ‘all’ – every aspect of God’s attribute of longsuffering
3. Purposed for Others (16c)

**IV. Paul’s Praise (Vs. 17)**

Praise of God is a natural conclusion to the meditation of a thankful heart. It is the natural response of the heart that has understood something of the majesty and wonder of its salvation.

**A. The Description of God’s Person (17a)**

1. King Eternal = Sovereign Ruler. No beginning or end. He was King in eternity past. He is King now and He will be King for all eternity future. There has never been a time when He was less than King and there never will be a time in the future. “...*from everlasting to everlasting, thou are God*” (Psalm 90:2) He is King of kings, there is none like unto Him. He is above all.
2. Immortal = incorruptible. He changes not. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
3. Invisible = He is a Spirit and is distinct from man. He chose to take on human flesh in the Person of Christ.
4. Only = He is God alone. Through Him alone we are saved.
5. Wise = He is the possessor of all knowledge and understanding. He has never learned as he already knows all things.

**B. The Exaltation of God’s Person (17b)**

To this God described in the above words, Paul ascribes two things:

1. Honour = reverence and respect. He is worthy to be honoured in our lives in our words, thoughts and actions.
2. Glory = the outward manifestation of God's inner essence. He is worthy to receive all the glory (focus, attention).

**Conclusion:** Have you experienced God's saving power? Are we thankful for our salvation? Are we humble? Do we take time to meditate on His goodness and praise Him for His love?