

“GOD’S GRACE TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS”

I Timothy 1:12-17

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INTRODUCTION

Who is the worst person you have ever known? Ever said, “If God can save him, He can save anyone! God already did save the “chief of sinners”! So yes, He can save anyone—no matter how evil. You know what our problem is? We need to really see ourselves the way God sees us, and need to come to grips with the desperate wickedness in our hearts, till we come to Paul’s place: “Me, the chief of sinners”!

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to correct teachers who were misusing their office to teach invented stories and human speculation rather than the sure Word of God; biblical teaching and preaching results in love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith (v. 5). These teachers pretended to be authorities on the Old Testament Law but they did not understand what they were saying or the subjects about which they taught (7). Paul reminded Timothy that the purpose of the law was to restrain evil and to bring genuine conviction of sin to the lives of people so that they would turn to the Gospel of God’s grace (vv. 8-10).

That mention of the Gospel entrusted to Paul by God brought to his mind the miracle of grace that saved Paul and changed him from a confused and misguided teacher of the law to an object of grace and a proclaimer of the grace of Jesus Christ. God had saved him – had converted him from an empty and vain life lived for himself. The law had done its job with Paul convicting him of sin and pointing him to the grace of God in Jesus Christ! Therefore in verses 12-17 Paul reflects upon:

- 1) *His pre-conversion life* (13)
- 2) *His conversion* (14-15)
- 3) *His post-conversion ministry* (12, 16), and then he concludes with
- 4) *A doxology of praise* (17).

God worked a miracle in the life of Paul and changed everything for him and then blessed him by putting him into his ministry. Therefore Paul expresses a doxology of praise to his wonderful Savior!

How about you? Has the wonderful grace of God saved you? Are you serving him? Are you praising him?

YOU MUST GLORY IN THE AMAZING GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST.

- I. LIFE BEFORE SALVATION (13) [See [Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2](#)]
 - A. A blasphemer
 - B. A persecutor
 - C. A proud, contemptuous, violent aggressor
 - D. Ignorant of spiritual truth—yet totally convinced he was right [He was not sinning “with a high hand.”]
 - E. Mired in unbelief
 - F. The chief of Sinners! [v. 15; cf. “the least of the apostles”, “less than the least of all the saints”]
Yet, God showed him mercy! *Not giving him what he deserved, having compassion and pity on him.*
Note **mercy** is shown because Paul was the chief of sinners—v. 16!

Paul was in misery of his own making. So is everyone before he is saved! **How about you?**

- II. SALVATION (14-15)—Conversion [*There is a great change when you are born again!*]
What we now describe is a trustworthy statement worthy of acceptance by all, and worthy of complete acceptance. It has been tested and tried and found to be true and trustworthy.
- A. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. [cf. Jn. 3:16]
 - 1. Preexistence
 - 2. Incarnation
 - 3. Redemption; this is why He came! He came to save only sinners. **He did not come to save anyone who is not lost!** You must know you are lost before you can be saved.
 - B. God's Grace is Super-Abundant. (v. 14; Paul had to use a rare word [only here] to express his idea!)
 - C. God's total, complete, perfect patience [longsuffering] is manifested (16) in our salvation.
 - D. God's grace provides **faith** by which to accept salvation.
 - E. God's grace produces **love** which fills our hearts and by which we live the Christian life.
 - F. All of this is found in Christ Jesus—nowhere else! Our union with Him.
- III. SERVICE (12, 16)—For **Christ Jesus our Lord!**
- A. Enduing us with Strength (12)
 - B. Considering us Trustworthy
 - C. Putting us into service [Paul's apostolic; not to be confused with "diaconate"]
 - D. The **chief of sinner** becomes an example [sketch, outline] for others to be saved (16)
 - E. Many others believe in Him (16).
 - F. Many others receive eternal life (16).
- IV. A DOXOLOGY OF PRAISE (17)
- A. King of the Ages—Eternal King
 - B. Imperishable/incorruptible/immortal
 - C. Invisible—Not part of this creation; outside of it and different, perfect, pure
 - D. Only God [wise]
 - E. To Him is Honor and Glory forever and ever.

AND ALL GOD'S PEOPLE SAID: **AMEN!**

CONCLUSION

Look at your life BC and look at your life AC, and sing a doxology to God for His "abounding grace and mercy" shown to you. Look at where God has put you with opportunities to serve Him and more yet to come. Praise God for His grace that is greater than all our sin!

But, what if you honestly have to admit that your life has not been transformed by God's grace? You are not Saved? It is time to bow at the foot of the Resurrected Savior and Lord and call out for mercy and grace! In Faith, trust Him to save you today! Don't wait another minute.

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