

1 Timothy 1:12-20

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[0:00] Now take out your word with me. Some of you men just sat down and said, oh no, take out your Bible and go into the book of 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy chapter 1. 1 Timothy chapter 1. We're gonna pick up in verse 12 and we're gonna go to the end of the chapter.

Almost stopped it at verse 17. It would have been a good place to stop it because there's an amen there. Some of you say, well, when it says amen, then you ought to stop. But we're gonna continue on. We'll read the next three verses and we'll get to the end of the chapter which gets us to verse 20.

So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm gonna ask you if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God, 1 Timothy chapter 1. I promise after this, no more up and downs, okay? Starting in verse 12.

Again, Paul writing to Timothy as he is pastoring the church at Ephesus. 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, 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.

[1:07] 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. Yet for this reason, I found mercy.

So 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 that the king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme. Let's pray one more time. Father, bless your word for your glory.

Speak to our hearts, and may it draw us closer to you. And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. As we make our way through the letter of 1 Timothy, this pastoral epistle, we understand that not only is Paul writing to the pastor himself, but he is writing to the pastor with instructions to the congregation.

[2:30] So it has just as much application and implication upon the congregation, which we refer to as the church, as it does the pastor. One thing that you will notice as you make your way through the books of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and even into Titus, is that these books are full of charges, commands, responsibilities, requirements.

That God is calling the pastor to instruct the people to do something in particular. He is not necessarily admonishing or rebuking a false practice. When Paul does that, he writes a letter to the church.

But here he is giving a charge and a command. He is commissioning the individuals so that they would be used by the Lord where they are at for the glory of God among the people of God. These books are full of those commands and charges.

These books have great application. And if you remember, 1 Timothy really is a book about being the church. He is instructing Timothy, who will not remain at Ephesus very long, if we go back and we correlate it with the passages we find in the book of Acts.

We know because Paul says that he left him behind when he left to go into Macedonia. We can see that reading in Acts 19 and following. We don't take very long into the book of Acts before Timothy rejoins Paul on his missionary travel.

[3 : 50] So Timothy is not left there indefinitely. He's left there for a period of time. But he's given these instructions to pass on to other men so that what Paul is instructing, Timothy will continue throughout the church.

So this is what it looks like to be the church. Now, just for comfort, the church didn't get it right away. Paul had been at Ephesus for a number of months.

As a matter of fact, nearly two years. By the time he left, he did not leave under great terms. He was actually ran out of town. He was sent away for his own safety, but the church was not yet able to stand on its feet, so therefore, Timothy was left behind.

We have seen, leading up to this point, that the church, as we understand the theme, he tells us that he wrote this letter so that the people will know how to conduct themselves in the church, which is the pillar and support of the truth.

So the church is to uphold the truth. Paul addresses that very quickly because one charge that he gives to Timothy is to instruct certain men so that they will know how to convey this truth, and they will also know how to contradict those who are out for personal gain and personal glory.

[4 : 58] We see that in the first 11 verses. They're using the law and what he calls myths and endless genealogies. That is, they're full of this head knowledge. They have all of this great teaching, and they're using it so that they can acquire a position, and they're trying to spread this about, and they're appearing to be very hyper-intelligent instructors and teachers, and they are those who have all this knowledge, but they're interweaving, and in the sense of interweaving these myths and genealogies, they are weakening the gospel.

Because if the church is going to uphold the truth, then it first must have the truth. We don't want to hold up a partial truth or a half truth or even a false truth.

We are the pillar and support which holds up the truth. Scripture is very narrow in some aspects, and for that, we thank God. We praise Him for the narrowness of the way until eternity in heaven. We praise Him for the narrowness of the truth because God is very clear what is the truth, what is the way, what is the teaching which we must accept, and we praise Him for the fact that it is narrow. Some people say, well, that's very judgmental. No, we praise Him because He does not leave a broad spectrum for us to figure it out. Rather, He tells us what it is, and He gives us a definite answer and a definite purpose of what we are to hold up.

[6 : 20] So I want you to see this morning that on being the church, we must also, and this is a charge, again, given to Timothy, but also to us, those who keep the faith, what it looks like to be keeping the faith.

Now, there's a connection between what transpired at the first part of the first chapter and what goes on near the end of the first chapter, which Paul says that an instruction is given because some men are leading to this endless genealogies and speculations rather than furthering the administration of God, which is by faith.

So he speaks of this reality that man needs faith and a good conscience and a sincere faith. And then, by the time we get to the end of the first chapter, he commands Timothy to live with a good conscience and a sincere faith.

So what does it look like? Where is the dividing line? It's really between verses 11 and 12 to be those who keep the faith. Now, you need to understand that the word the faith here really just means the gospel.

What it looks like to really hold on to the gospel. This is a deep, great passage, which we probably will not even get halfway below the surface of, but it is a passage which should lead us to glory in the gospel.

[7 : 31] And we see it for a number of reasons. Number one, I want you to see that to keep the faith, we must realize the problem. We must realize the problem. Look at what Paul says.

I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has strengthened me. So Paul admits the first problem he has is that he was unfit and really too weak to be in the ministry at all.

Now, contradict this with those who think they know enough that they ought to be teachers of the law. Paul says those who are teaching of the law really don't even know what they're talking about. Now, it's astounding when we read that Paul says, I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has strengthened me and put me into the work.

So Paul realizes his own weakness. Again, we read parallel passages. This is one glorious truth that we find of scripture. When we are looking at a particular place in scripture, we want to confine

ourselves to its setting, its people, and really the intended audience and the purpose there, but we are not constricted there.

That is, scripture says the same thing over and over and over again. When Paul meets Jesus Christ on Damascus Road and he's on his way to Damascus and he comes to Christ and we read there in Acts 9 and following of the beginning of the ministry of Paul, you will read this astounding statement by the time you get to the end of the ninth chapter of the book of Acts, that Paul was being strengthened daily and many people were confounded at his teaching of Jesus Christ.

[8 : 59] That Paul was being strengthened and emboldened and now here he is praising the Lord Jesus for strengthening him. See, the first problem that Paul had to address was the problem of his own weakness.

Now, I say this is amazing because we're looking at Paul, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, one who had attained the highest level of education, he'd set at the feet of Gamaliel.

He was one who was the strictest adherent to the law. He would say elsewhere as to the law, blameless. He was living, now that's not prideful, as a matter of fact, when he says that, he is reiterating the fact that his blameless position before the law did him no eternal good.

This is a man who was living strict of strict. He would not carry so much as a cup of coffee further than he should on the Sabbath day. He would not walk any further than the law had commanded him to.

Of the 634 oral laws found in the Mishnah, he was adhering to and keeping as many of them as physically possible. This was a man who had attained the greatest education that the Jew ever hoped to attain.

[10 : 04] This is a man who was revered and respected by the religious leaders of his day. But this is a man that the moment he accepted Jesus Christ understood that he was weak and needed to be strengthened.

He did not trust in his past experiences. He did not trust in his worldly attainments. He did not trust in his educational abilities. Rather, his reliance was upon the reality that Christ was strengthening him.

See, friend, the first problem that we must realize if we want to be those who hold up the truth is that every one of us are too weak to do it on our own. It is this great place of dependence that none of us are fit that no degree that we attain, no amount of education that we pursue, no amount of study that we adhere to, no matter how much legalism, no matter how many genealogies that we can remember, no matter how many facts that we could go, how many cross-references we can share in Scripture, that without the strengthening of Jesus Christ, none of us are fit to be put into the labor of the kingdom.

We are weak. Now, the problem is is that man does not like to admit his own weakness. But it is a problem which we must realize.

He says, I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has strengthened me. Now, to understand your weakness, you need to go a little further. Some of you say, well, I'm not that weak. I'm okay. I think I can hold it together.

[11 : 36] I'm a pretty sharp individual or I labor and I do this and I do that. Well, we need to go a little further. We need to find out who we really are and thankfully, Paul does that. Paul says that he was being strengthened because he considered me faithful.

When you say, well, yeah, look at Paul. He ought to be faithful with all of his learning, with all of his education, but Paul says he didn't consider me faithful because of anything I had attained. Friend, listen to me. Christ doesn't call you to him for salvation because of who you are.

He calls you in spite of who you are. That is, you don't clean yourself up and present yourself to the Savior as a candidate for salvation. You don't say, I think I did the best that I can.

I've worked as hard as I could. Now, Jesus, I need you to pick it up from here. That's not how it is. He didn't consider Paul faithful because Paul had sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

He didn't consider Paul faithful because he had tried to adhere to the law. He didn't consider Paul faithful because he was a Jew or a Pharisee or even a Roman citizen. And the reason we know that is because he says, even though, even though, Christ considered me faithful even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.

[12 : 48] Never forget that the one writing this was the one who was trying to annihilate the church off the face of the earth. He gives the strictest and strongest of language that he can. He says, I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, and I was a violent aggressor.

That is, I was violently going after those who proclaimed the name of Jesus Christ. This is who I was. Now, I love how Paul says, I was formerly.

Right? Because he is recognizing and realizing the problem. The problem is, is that we are weak and we are sinful.

That we have a problem. Listen, friend, the gospel starts with the problem of man. You say, well, I've got a lot of problems. Well, I've got good news for you because that's where the gospel starts. The gospel doesn't start with the perfection of the Savior. We get to that. We don't need a perfect Savior unless we have a messed up man.

[13:56] The gospel starts with the problem of man. If you don't believe me, then open up the pages of your scripture and go to the book of Genesis. I've told you this before.

Some of you heard me preach through it eight years ago. Genesis chapter one through 11 define for us every problem that man has ever had. It only takes 11 chapters for God to declare to us the problem of man.

Genesis one through 11, the problem of man. Starting in Genesis 12, you ought to know where that is because out of the land of Ur, the Chaldeans, God called Abram unto himself. And that is the beginning of addressing the problem of man.

But if you want to go a little bit further and you say that the gospel starts with the problem of man, then go back to what we call the Proto-Evangelium or the first mentioning of the gospel. The first mentioning of the gospel is in Genesis chapter three verse 15.

And if you know your scripture and I hope that you do, then you will know that Genesis 3, 15 comes after what we refer to as the fall. That is, there is no gospel until man has a problem.

[15:01] So if you come to him with problems, there's good news because that's where the gospel begins. And you need to realize your problems. Paul does not say I came to him with good efforts.

I came to him with great works. No, Paul says he came to me while I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent aggressor. See, we keep the faith when we realize the problem.

A proper understanding of who we are gives us a firmer grasp on what the gospel is. Some people say, well, pastor, you really don't ever paint a good picture of man.

And I'll tell you that in glory we can paint a good picture of man, but until we get there, man is not good. The only picture that we see of man in the gospels and the only picture we see of man throughout scripture is that man is a man with a problem.

We like to overlook it. We like to color it in. We like to kind of shade it away. We like to deny it. But we don't really keep the faith until we realize we have a problem.

[16:13] And when we realize that, then all of a sudden we can make our adjustment now. There's a realized problem, but there's a reaffirmed purpose. Look at what he says.

He says, even though I was formerly. Now those of you in Christ, you need to live in the formerly world, not even though I am. It's an I was, right?

In Christ, it's an I was, and we'll get to that in just a moment. Even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent aggressor, yet I was shown mercy. Yet, I was shown mercy, he says, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief.

Now, let's stop right here for just a moment because we need to address this. Ignorance is not an excuse when it comes to eternity. Paul abolishes that in Romans chapter 1 because if ignorance was bliss in the light of eternity, then we should never take the gospel anywhere because if the people don't know, then surely they'll be in glory with him in eternity.

Paul says in Romans chapter 1, that's absurd because God has said eternity in the heart of all men, Ecclesiastes chapter 3, but God has also revealed what may be known about him to all men through what he has created.

[17:25] So there is what we call natural revelation. It is not one unto salvation, but it is one that God has made himself know so that, he says, no man is without excuse. So what is Paul saying here?

He says, because I was ignorantly in unbelief, what he is saying is that he was doing the best he thought he could, how he should, and yet it was woefully short. And that's where God met him. Now, this is a good side note because it is also a good side note that we find an allusion to in the book of Leviticus. And that is, Paul is declaring here that this grace and mercy and the love of Christ was shown to him because he was all of these things, but he was not all of these things after he knew about Christ.

Leviticus calls it the high-handed sin. It would be those who, in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 6, say, crucify again Jesus Christ. What he is saying is that once I heard the gospel, I did not continue because for them it is knowing the truth, ignoring the truth, and high-handedly looking to God and saying, I don't care about the truth.

When you get into the book of Leviticus, you get into all these sins and these offerings that are joined to each sin. There is, if you do this, then do that. If you do this, you do that. If you do this, you do that.

[18 : 45] And then there's this passage that says, but for he who high-handedly sins, that is, the one who looks to God and says, God, I know this is wrong, but I'm going to do it anyway, Leviticus says, for him, there is no offering.

He says, oh, but I praise God that I'm on this side of the cross. And me too, because every one of us, if we're honest, we have high-handedly sinned, we have looked to him, known the truth, what may be known about us.

Some of us have heard it in Sunday school class. Some of us have heard it as adults in church, and yet we still do the things which we know we shouldn't do. But what Paul is reaffirming here is we cannot continue to live that way and expect the grace and mercy because God will not be mocked. So if the day of salvation is still present and the Spirit is still bringing conviction, then my friend, let us move to the formerly, not to the present. He says, he did it ignorantly in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was more than abundant. What good news. Here we're lifting this up. The grace of our Lord was more than abundant. You realize you have a problem, but realize this, the grace of Jesus Christ is more than abundant for every problem of man with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

[19 : 59] Oh, what a gift that is. But here's the reaffirmed purpose. It is a trustworthy statement, he says, deserving full acceptance.

In contrast to the endless babbling of the teachers who think they know what they're talking about, and he tells Timothy to cast them off, here is something that you must hold on to. Here is something that all people need to know.

Here is something that is worthy of acceptance by all mankind. Here is a trustworthy statement, something that you can count on. And if Paul says it's a trustworthy statement, then maybe we ought to stand up and take notice.

Someone has said the gospel itself is declared in nine simple words in this passage. Look at what it says. Here's the trustworthy statement. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

There is the purpose. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. We reaffirm that purpose.

[20 : 57] The problem of man is the beginning of the gospel, but praise be to God, it's not the end of the gospel, right? When we open it up and we see the beginning, we get overwhelmed.

But we need to reaffirm the purpose of God with the gospel so that we don't get hung up in our problems. Friend, you got problems and I got problems. We're people with problems.

Praise be to God. That's just where it starts. That's not where it ends. So since we know our problems, let's reaffirm his purpose. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Oh, those nine words, they're full of the gospel message. Look at this. I'll break it down. I'll give you a sermon inside of a sermon, right? This will be good. You'll like this. I'll even alliterate this one as well. In this one verse, we see there is a person we are to look at.

Christ Jesus. You have a problem. Quit looking at yourself. Once you know your problem, don't look to yourself to fix your problem. You know, when I came to Christ, I could understand my problem better than anyone else.

[21 : 59] I understood my problem so well and so in depth that I knew that I could not fix my problem. No one needed to tell me how bad I was. The Spirit was already doing it. But then the Spirit and His grace and mercy and God's loving kindness also showed me that the problem I had was so deep it was to the very core of my being that there was nothing inside of me, nothing outside of me that could fix my problem.

I tried to work my problem away. I tried to medicate my problem away through recreation and activity. I tried to ignore my problem away like every other good man, right? I tried to do all of these things to make my problem go away but the problem happened at every single night that when I laid my head on my bed at night and the room would get still, the problem was still there.

Nothing I did during the day, nothing I did during the night, nothing I could ever do to keep myself busy, I was always still left to myself and when I was left to myself the reality was that the problem was still there and I could never get it away.

I could never leave it. I was looking at the wrong one. Billy Joe, you need to clean yourself up. Billy Joe, you need to fix yourself. Billy Joe, you need to get over this. Friend, listen to me. There's a person you need to look at and it's not you.

Once you look in the mirror and figure out the problem, walk away from the mirror. Why keep focusing on the problem? There is a person to look at.

[23 : 14] Christ Jesus. There is not only a person to look at, there is a presence that has ever been and always will be. There's a little word in there that you need to pay attention to.

Christ Jesus came. There is a presence that existed long before your problem ever did. He came. Christ Jesus didn't just get born.

He didn't just come into existence. Listen, there was a point in time in which you were born. There's a point in time in which we can say your life began. You cannot say that about Christ Jesus. He came into the world.

His coming reiterates the fact that he had come from somewhere. You don't come unless you started out somewhere else. You came here this morning because you left somewhere behind, right?

If you didn't leave somewhere behind, all of a sudden you just popped up. We would say a supernatural event called a birth happened. Now, if a pregnant lady walked in here and we had a birth this morning and we had to deliver a baby inside the station, most of us would leave.

[24 : 12] We'd leave your nurses behind and there was someone who did not come from somewhere else this morning. They started out here. But every one of you that came here this morning, you came because you left somewhere else.

Christ Jesus came. He left somewhere before he came to earth. Where did he leave? He left a throne room of heaven because he is eternal past and he is eternal presence.

He's eternal future. So we're looking at a person but we're also looking at a person who has an eternal presence. Christ Jesus came. There is also here a place he inhabited to the world.

Christ Jesus came into the world. Friend, listen. He came to where your problem exists. your problem is not in the heavenlies.

Your problem is in the world. He came to your problem. He came to my problem. He came into the world. Probably the most reiterated and reaffirmed purpose that we must adhere to is not only is there a person who had a presence who came to a place but there's also the people he came to serve.

[25 : 18] Sinners. Until you find yourself in the company of sinners you cannot say he came for you. But the good news is once you realize you're a sinner then you can put yourself in the company of the people he came to.

He came to save sinners. Jesus himself said I did not come to call the righteous but the unrighteous, right? I did not come to heal those who are already healthy.

I came to heal those who are sick. You need to know your problem before you know that he came for you. This is a reaffirmed purpose. Understand this. The gospel is the purpose of God to the attainment of man.

It is the purpose of God not the work of man. The gospel is the purpose of God to come meet you in your problem. Reaffirm that.

Because you cannot keep the faith. As long as you think you make your way to him you've got the gospel message wrong. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

[26 : 20] number three there's a redirected praise. See there's a realized problem which reaffirms the purpose of God that redirects our praise.

Paul says here in the first half of the first chapter that there are men who want to be teachers. Why would they want to be teachers? Because they love the praise of men. Paul can tell you that here once you realize your problem and you reaffirm the purposes of God there are no longer any self-interest purposes of man because look at what he says.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners among whom I am foremost of all. So you have to get to this point too. Paul says I'm the foremost of all yet for this reason I found mercy.

Oh this would be a good place to stop and a good place to pay attention. If you ever wanted to know why Jesus would save someone like you if you ever wanted to know why Jesus would save someone like me then let's just plug ourselves in here to this story.

Yet for this reason I obtained mercy. Not because I deserve it because I'm a man with problems. Not because I could attain to him because he came to me.

[27 : 30] Not because I had appeared to be approved because I was rather unlovely in my sins. Yet for this reason I found mercy so that in me as the foremost of all Jesus Christ might demonstrate his perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in him for eternal life.

Paul says the reason Christ saved me is so that he could put me forward as an example. If he can save Paul he can save anyone. Do you want to know why he redeems you?

If you know Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior you want to know why he's done it? It's so that in you he can show others he can save them. You say well I got so many problems.

I don't know if he could save me. Friend do you know why he can save you? That if you go to him and you reaffirm this is his purpose not yours. If you go to him as your Savior the reason he will redeem you and save you is because he wants to use you as an example to others.

Some of you have a great testimony. Some of you have a testimony of hard wretched lives and meeting a glorious Savior. Some of you have a testimony of you were pretty good.

[28 : 41] Some of you have a testimony and praise God for that testimony. I grew up in church my whole life. There was never a day where I really didn't believe in Jesus but I came to a point what a testimony. Salvation is just as grand.

My testimony is Christ Jesus can even save good old boys because good old boys are in desperate need of a Savior as the deepest of sinners. You know I would say I done a lot wrong but from the world's perspective I looked okay.

From the world's perspective I looked alright. From everybody else's perspective he had it all together but deep in my heart being all together wasn't sufficient.

He came to save me so that I could tell other people I don't care how good everybody thinks you are. The gospel says you have a problem and the Savior has got the answer. See he does it so that he could demonstrate his perfect patience.

Now when Paul declares this it leads him to spontaneous praise. Because see friend listen to me you cannot I mean you cannot rightly understand your problem correctly understand his purpose and not praise him.

[30 : 02] so if praise is hard it's because you don't really understand there's one of two things you don't understand. Either you don't realize how bad your problem was or you don't understand how wondrous his purpose was.

See because Paul realizes this and he praises he says now to the king eternal immortal invisible the only God be honor and glory forever and ever amen.

He breaks out into praise because he has just reaffirmed that it was God who has saved him through Christ Jesus and this praise is so full he says to the king eternal immortal you say well he repeats himself no there's two words there and those two words are very clear the word eternal means of the ages so he is the king of the ages I like history some of you like history we can read open up our bibles and we can read history and history and history and we can see this progression especially right now we're second kings and we'll eventually make our way to first and second chronicles and we're seeing the progression of these kingdoms we can go to the book of Daniel and we can see the visions of Daniel where he sees the statutes and we can see the progression of the kingdoms and we can look and see how God is working how there's the you know there's all these kingdoms that are rising up there's the Medes and the Persians there's the Greece and Romans and there's all these kingdoms that will come but what he is saying here is that even though these kingdoms may come and they may go these kingdoms rise up in power and they go down in power there is one who is the king of the ages that is there is a king that exceeds every time of span his kingdom does not end and that is God and that kingdom that does not end it is the dynasty that rules forever and ever and ever and ever that has no end but the good news is now some of you are with me on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights and you know we are making our way through the book of 2nd Kings and we are reading through 2nd Kings and we are seeing God's faithfulness he is maintaining the Davidic line upon the throne of Judah right there is but one family the family of David that sits upon the throne of Judah not all of them are good not all of them are bad but what we see is that God maintains this Davidic line there is one family who reigns that

Thank you.
[46 : 27] Thank you.
Thank you.