

1 Timothy 1:12-17

1:12— I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful

—It's not skill or knowledge but faithfulness that Christ desires, and Christ will give the strength for the service as a believer.

— **putting me into service**—it was not Paul's idea. Jesus supernaturally called Paul and put him into the service of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. It was in the exact opposite direction he was heading, i.e., persecuting believers.

1:13— even though I was formerly a blasphemer—at that time, he thought it was the Christians who were the blasphemers, but in reality, Paul was the blasphemer against Christ, the Son of God.

— **and a persecutor and a violent aggressor**— “I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it” (Gal 1:13; see also Acts 8:3; 9:1, 2, 4, 5; 22:4, 5; 26:9-11).

— **Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief**—Paul wrote this same idea about his fellow Jews. “They have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge” (Rom 10:2). In other words, even as an unbeliever, Paul's zeal was for God, not against God. That, for sure, did not save Him. But Jesus can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided (Heb 5:2). Once Paul was confronted, on the road to Damascus, with the truth of Jesus Christ, he no longer acted ignorantly in unbelief. He believed and was shown mercy by Jesus.

1:14—and the grace (charis) of our Lord was more than abundant (to be present in superabundance)

—after a vivid and candid description of his sin as an unbeliever, Paul now tells us that God's grace was superabundant, it covered his sin and even more.

— **with the faith (pistis) and love (agape) which are found in Christ Jesus**—Paul's triplet: God's grace/gift of salvation, appropriated through faith, resulting in agape love for God and others.

1:15—It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance—Paul uses this phrase here and in 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8. This is a statement on which full reliance can be placed.

— **that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**— For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him (John 3:17). Christ's first coming was as a Savior. His second coming will be as a Judge (Rev 19–20).

— **among whom I am foremost of all**—perhaps Paul meant that his sin was the foremost in the sense of gravity rather than chronology. Actually, he was what we would call a very moral person, being a Pharisee. However, his sin was worse because he was killing Christians, God's people. It's also the worse sin of the antichrist. Sins against humans are terrible. But sin against God is the worst.

1:16—Yet for this reason I found mercy—Paul did not brood over his sin, but he did not forget it either. Every time he remembered it, he remembered the still greater mercy of Jesus Christ.

— **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**—Paul did not ever hide his record. Several times he shared his conversion story, realizing that God used him as an example of those who would believe. Paul murdered believers. If God can save him, God can save anyone. God's greatest enemy became God's greatest servant.

Application—Unbelievers, not acquainted even with the morality of God in the Bible, do not recognize sin in their life. Christians realize the sin in their lives, for which Jesus died. The air in a room seems to be clear, but when it is penetrated by the sunlight, it's seen to be full of dust and other impurities. So as we draw near to God, our souls are penetrated by the light of God (1 John 1:5), and we see more clearly our own sin and begin to feel for sin something of the hatred for it which God feels for it.

1:17—Now to the King eternal (sovereign), **immortal** (eternal), **invisible** (spiritual), **the only God** (unique, only One), **be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.**

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