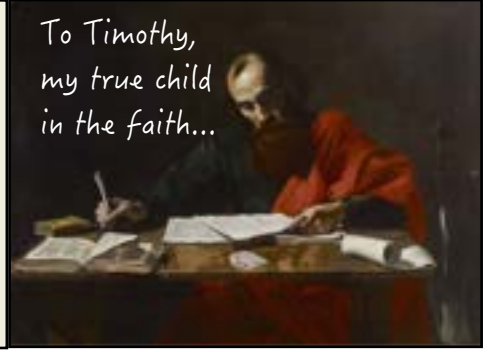


1 Timothy

A Call to Faithful Service

Lesson 2

To Timothy,
my true child
in the faith...



After the introductory comments in 1:1-2 Paul moves to an impassioned plea to Timothy calling for true and faithful teaching in the church. Some in the congregation were caught up in making unimportant speculations into major points of controversy. Paul says these false teachers didn't understand what they confidently taught.

Who Paul Is Now and What He Had Been (1:12-16)

The apostle Paul stands as a supreme example of how Christ can change lives. Paul accurately describes his former life as a “blasphemer,” “persecutor,” and “insolent opponent” of Christ. He later claims that he had been the foremost of sinners. Paul's description of himself is not hyperbole or exaggeration because he actively and rigorously opposed and persecuted Christians prior to his conversion.

1. What are the meanings of the following words or phrases?

- a. Blasphemer -**
- b. Persecutor -**
- c. Insolent Opponent -**

2. For what three reasons does Paul express thanksgiving to Christ in 1:12?

- a.**
- b.**
- c.**



Paul's words gush with thanksgiving for the forgiveness and commission that he found in Christ. It was not just that he was forgiven, but he was also entrusted to serve as an apostle and missionary.

Though Paul had persecuted the church, he had done so in ignorance. He had believed that he was serving God by attacking those who followed Christ. Paul's actions done in ignorance can be contrasted with the false teachers in Ephesus who say they are following Christ yet act in a way that is harmful to the church.

Paul attributes his forgiveness to the grace of God which he says “*overflowed*.” The word that is translated as “*overflowed*” means to “superabound, be in abundance, over exceed.”¹ What a wonderful description of God’s grace which is not just sufficient, but abundantly exceedingly sufficient. This grace given by Christ to Paul moved him to a great faith and love for Christ.

3. According to 1:15, why did Christ Jesus come into the world.

In verse 15 Paul uses the present tense when he say of sinners, “*I am the foremost*.” Even though he was forgiven since he had received God’s mercy and grace, he knows that he is simply a forgiven sinner and that what he had done as a persecutor of Christ and his people was the worst of sins. We know that all have sinned and all stand condemned without the mercy, grace, and forgiveness of Christ.

4. How should this purpose of Christ’s coming motivate us?

Paul came to Christ more than a quarter century before penning these words to Timothy yet he writes as if it were yesterday. His thankfulness for the mercy and grace of Christ had not dulled over time, but had grown along with his faith and love.



5. How can we keep the wonder of our forgiveness in Christ fresh in our minds?

Whether or not any of us would say that we are the worst of sinners, the fact remains that we **are** sinners and outside of Christ we are as lost as Paul ever was (Romans 3:23). What joy we should have because of the mercy and grace we have found in Christ.

Paul as persecutor of the church stands as a tremendous example of the power of God to save all who would come to him by faith. Paul’s conversion as recorded in Acts chapters 9, 22, and 26 stands as “one of the most important events in the entire course of Christianity.”² In these verses we see what Paul **is** (the great evangelist who loved and served Christ with all his heart) and what Paul **was** (a persecutor of Christians.)

Ananias asked Paul the most important of questions in Acts 22:16, “*And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.*” 1 Timothy 1:16 says that Paul serves as an example “*to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.*” If God could wash away the sins of Paul, he can likewise wash our sins away.

6. What is the meaning of the phrase “perfect patience” used in 1:16?

¹ <https://www.teknia.com/greek-dictionary/hyperpleonazo>

² Latourette, Kenneth. *A History of Christianity, Vol. 1*, San Francisco: Harper, 1953, p. 70.

Who God Is (1:17)

God is seen in verse 12-16 as merciful and gracious and the one who sent his only son into the world to save sinners. The greatness of forgiveness causes Paul to gush with magnificent praise in 1:17.

7. What do each of these descriptions tell us about God?

- a. King of the ages -**
- b. Immortal -**
- c. Invisible -**
- d. The only God -**

God is seen in verse 12-16 as merciful and gracious and the one who sent his only son into the world to save sinners. In verse 17, Paul uses words and phrases to describe the awesome God who is above all.

The Charge to Timothy (1:18-20)

Verses 18-20 continue Paul's instruction to Timothy concerning the necessity of sound doctrine in the church. As in verse 2, Paul refers to Timothy as his child reminding us of the affection he felt for his disciple.

Timothy's charge was to be faithful with the message which had been entrusted to him. At some point, prophecies had been made about Timothy; probably given to Paul by the Holy Spirit so that Paul knew he could have complete confidence in Timothy's role as an evangelist.

8. Why does Paul describe Timothy's work as an evangelist as "warfare?"

As Timothy battles the false teachers he will need to hold on to two important qualities: faith and a good conscience. Timothy will need faith to rely upon Christ in the midst of conflict and difficulty. He will need a good conscience as he lives a life that is holy and he teaches that which is true.



9. What is the outcome of those teachers who do not hold on to faith and a good conscience? (vs. 19)

Two men who shipwrecked their faith are Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus is mentioned also in 2 Timothy 2:16-18 where we learn he has "*swerved from the truth*,"

saying the resurrection has already happened.” Alexander is again found in 2 Timothy 4:14 where he is said to have caused Paul great harm.

Paul says that he turned these men over to Satan meaning that they faced church discipline and had been put out of the church. Back in the world these men were again in the domain of Satan. The goal of this discipline was to bring these men back to faith.

Church discipline can have two positive benefits; first it protects the church from ruinous doctrine and the acceptance of an unholy lifestyle and second it may lead an erring brother to see the sinfulness of his ways and lead to repentance and a return to the faith.

These verses point out that it is possible to fall away from the faith after a person becomes a Christian or even after he becomes a teacher of Scripture.

Practical Application

1. We must **never** forget that we are sinners who are lost except for the mercy and grace of God. Paul wrote, “I am” the foremost of sinners; not “I was.” James E. Smith writes, *“The more we discern of God’s holiness the more we will see the sinfulness of our own hearts—and the more we will be grateful for the outpouring of God’s grace.”*³
 - a. We should daily reflect on what God has done for us in our lives and where we would be without his mercy and grace.
2. God can use every person to labour for his glory, in the ways in which he has gifted them, no matter what their past. Paul may have been a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent, but he became the greatest of apostles and missionaries.
3. Truthful teaching is essential in the church, but those who teach falsely can be so disruptive and damaging that battling them can be described as spiritual warfare.
4. It is possible to fall away from the faith.
5. Church discipline is sometimes necessary to protect the church and to bring repentance from those in error.



³ Smith, James E. *Exhortation Epistles*. Lulu, 2011, p. 49.