

Grace

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Preface

The dictionary defines Testimony as – *An open declaration, profession or statement of fact.*

Paul gives a mini testimony in our text today. Like many testimonies Paul begins by stating where he is and how he got here.

Paul's testimony begins and ends with gratitude and thankfulness for what God has done in his life.

Let's take a look.

Scripture

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. ¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:12-17 NIV

Content

1. Grace Was Needed, Vs. 13-15

Why did Jesus come to earth? Why did he die on a cross only to be raised in three days? Was it to teach us about God? Was it to teach us about ourselves? Was it to set an example of how we should live?

While it may have been all of these, the primary reason for the life of Jesus was to **salvage sinners from spiritual darkness**. Paul considered himself among the worst of sinners.

¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

Paul says he was worst of sinners and he wasn't exaggerating.

Illus: One time the famous American evangelist, Billy Sunday, was preparing for a revival meeting in a large city. He wrote a letter to the mayor of that city asking him for names of people who had spiritual problems and needed help.

Billy Sunday was somewhat surprised when he received a package from the Mayor and it was the city telephone directory.

We are all sinners and in desperate need of God's grace and forgiveness.

Until you see yourself as a sinner, you will know nothing of the concept of grace.

We must feel the guilt of sin before we can experience the joy of grace.

2. Grace Was Offered, Vs. 13 & 16

God offers mercy through Christ Jesus.

¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

Willful disobedience triggers God's wrath. But God deals gently with the ignorant and misguided.

Paul's sin was bad but it was over shadowed by the grace that God offered. God offers you and me His grace today.

Illus: When our children were small I would pile up in the bed with them and we would horse around. Usually the process would end with me saying "I love you." They would respond with "I love you more" and the game would begin. We would name the biggest thing we could think of to describe how much we loved one another. "I love you bigger than the car. I love you bigger than the house, the mall, etc"

God says to us today, "I love you bigger period!" That's grace.

3. Grace Was Accepted, Vs. 14 & 12

Grace requires faith and repentance in order to be realized in one's life. This is the acceptance of grace; believing and repenting.

Paul was judged faithful because he accepted God's grace through Jesus Christ.

Paul was a man of disbelief and violence. God's grace changed all that.

¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

In the bright light of God's grace, sinners become servers.

Paul learned how to love and have faith because of God's super abundant grace.

Paul was once completely blinded of God's love. He thought he had everything figured out. But when he met grace, his life was so changed that he ultimately said, ***"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."***

The ultimate sinner became the ultimate saint. God's greatest enemy became His finest servant. That's what grace does.

Illus: Have you ever noticed when a business has been failing and someone new takes over, they put a sign outside that usually reads, "Under New Management". This means things have changed and will be done differently.

God's grace transforms a person's life as it becomes under new management.

Conclusion

I can't really explain grace. You have to feel grace and experience grace first hand in order to comprehend it.

In his book, "What's So Amazing About Grace", Phillip Yancy says, *"grace breaks the cycle of blame and loosens the stranglehold of guilt."*

2 Peter 3:18 says we are to grow in our grace.

2 Timothy 2:1 says we are to be strong in our grace.

Grace is the wonder of the gospel.

Grace is the power of the gospel.

The prodigal son found grace in a hog pen and it brought him home.

Joseph found grace in a pit dug by his own brothers and it lifted him up into high command of Egypt.

A sinful Samaritan woman found grace at a well and her life was restored.

Paul found grace on the road to Damascus and he became the great missionary.

Illus: When Pam and I first got married, we had nothing. The first items we purchased were an 18 inch television and a bar-b-que grill.

We only had one vehicle and it wasn't long before we knew we had to have another. Pam had a semester of school to complete and we needed two vehicles. We found a used vehicle and agreed to take over the payments but the lender had to approve us to do so. We applied and were turned down.

If you have ever received a turn down letter from a lender, you know the humiliating feeling it brings. Basically, someone is saying to you, **"We don't think you are good for it."**

That was not to be my last turn down letter. But I once received a turn down letter like no other. It reads something like this, "I don't think you are good for it or deserve it. However, it is yours as a gift through my son Jesus Christ."

I found grace at the age of 15 in Grand Bay Alabama. I've been finding grace ever since.

Grace is where you abandon your crippled past and walk in the new life.

Have you found grace?