

1 Timothy 1:12-20 – Worthy to Serve

Michael Silva / April 30, 2017

Opening: Joke

- A climber fell off a cliff, and as he tumbled down, he caught hold of a small branch wedged in the rock.
- “HELP! IS THERE ANYBODY UP THERE?” he shouted.
- A majestic voice boomed from heaven and echoed through the gorge:
- “I will help you, my son, but first you must have faith in me.”
- “Yes, yes, I trust you!” cried the man.
- “Let go of the branch,” boomed the voice.
- There was a long pause, and the man shouted up again, “HELP! IS THERE ANYONE ELSE UP THERE THAT CAN HELP ME?”

Transition: We are on a Journey... Which began last week with a new study in 1 Timothy, a book that has a lot to say about church leadership, **discipleship**, and doctrine.

1. Paul wrote this letter to young Pastor Timothy to encourage & instruct him in [how to deal with false teachers](#) within the church at Ephesus.
 - a) Paul’s instructions are intended to help the church [recognize the difference](#) between false and true teachers.
2. Key Verses: **1 Timothy 2:3–4** ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
3. Throughout this letter, we will see that as disciples, we are to be [grounded](#) in and [guided](#) by the gospel.
 - a) As disciples of Christ, we are called to [live out the realities](#) of the gospel in our lives.
 - b) The Gospel message says that I’m a sinner saved by grace!
 - i) It’s not about what I can do, but what God can do through me.

Let's read our passage: 1 Timothy 1:12-20 (NKJV)ⁱ **And Pray...**

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. - Psalm 19:14

1. In Verse 3 that we looked at last week Paul instructs Timothy to [remain](#) in Ephesus.
 - a) We are not told why Paul made this statement, but we can gain a sense that Timothy was perhaps thinking about [leaving](#).
 - i) Paul tells Timothy that he has an important job to do in [protecting, instructing, and feeding](#) the flock.

- b) Paul's words in our verses today are **further encouragement** for Timothy on why he should remain and continue in the ministry in Ephesus.

1 Timothy 1:12

¹² And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

1. Here in lays **the key to all of Paul's success** as a leader and evangelist.
 - a) Paul was **entrusted** with the gospel ministry and leadership over the church because Christ Jesus our Lord had **enabled** him.
 - i) The ESV says that Christ Jesus gave Paul his **strength**.
 - ii) All that Paul accomplished resulted from God's enabling & strengthening.
 - (1) It was all a God thing and not a Paul thing.
 - (2) Read **ACTS 14:8-15**... Paul was just a man.
2. It's been well said, "*God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called.*"
 - a) If Timothy was feeling **inadequate**, here is a reminder that it's not about what Timothy could do, but rather **what God could do** through Timothy.
 - b) And **the same goes for you**... It's not about you, but what God wants to do...
3. Who does God enable and equip?
 - a) The smartest? Strongest? Most eloquent? Best looking?
 - i) Students of brilliant teachers who go to the best schools?
 - b) No, that's often not the case. God enables and equips those who are **faithful**.
 - i) Faithfulness is the first and most important character quality of a Christian.
 - c) My pastor, **Rick Barnett** in Okinawa, started serving the Lord after he got saved by mowing the grass... really dirt at CC Livingwater in Corona, CA.
 - i) He would faithfully come and cut it and even pray that it would look nice.
 - ii) Next, he was faithful in teaching in children's ministry...
 - (1) And then in leading the children's ministry before he eventually moved to Japan to plant a church.
 - iii) He has remained faithful to simply love, tend and feed the sheep.
 - iv) Pastor Rick has been an example of someone who has simply been faithful and it is God who has enabled and strengthened Rick to do a great work.
4. Have you had **doubts** about your **usefulness** because you don't feel like you have a lot to offer?
 - a) You can always be **faithful**, just **start small and keep it simple**.

- i) Spend time in the **Word**... Prayer.
- ii) Seek out **fellowship** with other believers. Send a text or make a call to stay connected.
- iii) **Share your faith** with others.
- iv) Give of your **time, talents and treasure** unto the Lord as He leads you.

1 Timothy 1:13-14 ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

1. Paul was a man who was passionate in his pursuits as a Pharisee, one who had made it his aim to destroy any traces of Christianity he could find.
 - a) He persecuted the church with great zeal and with great ignorance.
2. Wiersbe explains the role of Paul's ignorance in his life, "What did Paul's "ignorance" have to do with his salvation? Is ignorance an excuse before God? Of course not! The fact of his ignorance is related to a special Jewish law (Lev. 5:15–19; Num. 15:22–31). If a person sinned knowingly "with a high hand" in Israel, he was cut off from the people. But if he sinned in ignorance, he was permitted to bring the proper sacrifices to atone for his sins. Jesus recognized this principle when He prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Their ignorance did not save them, nor did Christ's prayer save them; but the combination of the two postponed God's judgment, giving them an opportunity to be saved."
 - a) Paul knew what he did to the church was wrong and therefore he speaks of obtaining **mercy**.
 - b) So great were Paul's sins that **the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant** toward Paul.
 - c) And by **faith** Paul received the **love** of **Christ Jesus**.

1 Timothy 1:15 ¹⁵ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

1. This verse is why letter has been written.
 - a) This isn't just a story we share... This is our story. We are the sinners in need of saving.
 - b) In my role at Cru I am trying to hire someone. I am reviewing applications and conducting interviews.
 - i) I'm looking for certain qualifications in order to file a certain role.
 - c) In a way, God is doing the same, and the very first qualification He is looking for is if we are willing to admit that we are sinners in need of a Savior.

- i) If that is not true then we can go no further in the application process with the Lord.
- ii) A prerequisite of the faith is admitting that I am a sinner.

(1) The great news is that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.**

2. Paul calls himself a **chief** sinner, meaning his sins were worst of all...

- a) C.H. **Spurgeon**, commenting on Paul's classification of himself says, "All men are truly sinners, but all men are not equally sinners. They are all in the mire; but they have not all sunk to an equal depth in it."
- b) But the awareness of the depth to which we have sunk into sin individually is not intended to make us feel bad following our salvation...
 - i) This awareness is to highlight God's great grace and mercy!

(1) The focus should always remain on Him and His great work in our lives, to which we give Him praise.

1 Timothy 1:16

¹⁶ However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

1. Paul was not just a messenger, but he was an **example** or pattern to those who are going to believe.
 - a) Why should Timothy remain in Ephesus and continue to pastor the church there? If God can save and use Paul, then he can save and use anyone.
 - b) God often works in our lives in such a way that He's allowing us to become an example and demonstration of God's mercy, grace, and salvation.
2. **John Calvin**: Our mind is always prone to dwell on our own worthiness and, as soon as our unworthiness becomes apparent, our confidence fails. Thus the more a man feels the burden of his sins, he ought with greater courage to betake himself to Christ, relying on what is here taught, that He came to bring salvation not to the righteous but to sinners.

1 Timothy 1:17

¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. Paul, a former **blasphemer** turned **believer**, a prior **persecutor** now a **preacher**, breaks out in **worship** as he recounts God's work of **mercy and grace** in his life.

1 Timothy 1:18-19a ¹⁸ This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience,

1. Jon **Courson** reminds us that, “Words of prophecy are words of edification and exhortation, instruction and direction”
 - a) Paul is saying don’t forget about those **words from the Lord** that were **spoken through a fellow believer** for those words will help you fight the good warfare.
 - b) Serving in ministry invites **spiritual warfare!** Perhaps this is why Timothy wanted to leave Ephesus.
 - i) Experiencing spiritual warfare can be **discouraging!**
 - ii) One of the weapons against that discouragement is remembering that words of encouragement and exhortation you received from your brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - c) Continue in the way God has shown you with **faith** and a **good conscience**.

1 Timothy 1:19b-20 which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, ²⁰ of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1. First note that those who reject the clear and simple instructions of the Lord suffer **shipwreck**.
 - a) **Disobedience** often results in **disaster**.
 - i) It is **never** wise to reject the faith.
 - ii) But praise God that He can **redeem** all things for our good and His Glory.
 - iii) He can make **beauty from ashes** (Isaiah 61:3).
2. Paul concludes this first chapter describing the **final measure** in the process of **church disciple**.
 - a) Those who will not repent and abide in the clear teachings of Christ are to be **first confronted one-on-one**. (See Matt 18:15-20)
 - i) If that does not work, **two or three are to go and confront** the person who is in sin.
 - ii) If that does not work they are to be **presented to the church** and put out of the church if they are still unwilling to repent.
 - b) Being a part of a church provides a **spiritual covering and protection**.
 - c) A person who is willfully continuing in sin is to be put out of the church and left unattended in the fallen world, which is Satan’s domain (2 Cor 4:4).
 - i) This is what it means to deliver them to Satan.

3. This course of action is **not** intended to be **punitive, but restorative**.
 - a) The goal in Christian relationships is always **reconciliation**.
 - b) **2 Corinthians 5:18** Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

Conclusion: What's the big take away from this passage?

1. You are **worthy** to serve Jesus because it's **not** about you, it's about what God wants to do through you.
 - a) You don't have to be a superstar saint like Paul to be used by the Lord.
 - b) He's just calling for you to be **faithful** so He can **enable** you and **strengthen** you for **works of ministry**.

Invitation: Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

ⁱ All scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from The New King James Version. (1982). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.