

Glorious Good News

1 Timothy 1:15-17

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15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. 17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ walked on this earth. Wherever Jesus went, the sick were healed, the lame walked, the hungry were fed, the dead were raised, the seas were stilled. After three and a half years of ministry, Jesus willingly went to Jerusalem, Jesus was publicly humiliated. Jesus was shamed, crucified and left to die.

However, on the third day, Jesus shamed death. Jesus rose from the dead. That's why Easter is celebrated.

Why?

Here is the answer summed in *nine* words.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners!

If I asked you to define who is a plumber, a carpenter, a painter, a builder, a cashier, a teacher, a driver I imagine that would not be difficult.

But, sinners, who or what are sinners?

Sadly, the term *sinner* has become harder and harder to define in our world today, including some evangelical churches.

But if you look at verse fifteen, you see Paul's self-disclosure. He says he was the foremost of sinners. Some translations say 'chief of sinners'. What were his chief sins? Paul tells us In verse *thirteen*.

"formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent."

- A *blasphemer* is someone who dishonors God. In Paul's case he was spoke abusive and threatening words against the followers of Jesus.
- Paul says he was a *persecutor*. Paul was an accomplice to murder. Acts 9:1 Paul was "*breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord*".

- Paul says he was also *insolent*. This is the word *hubris* - excessively overbearing or having a sense of exaggerated pride. Acts 26:9-11

To sin is to defy God. God is offended every time you sin. To sin is to rob God of His Glory. Sinners can expect death, judgment, wrath and hell as compensation.

Ezekiel 18:4 *“The soul that sins shall die”*

Romans 6:23 *“The wages of sin is death”*

Galatians 3:10 *“Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them”*

Revelation 21:8 *“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death”*

Sin is bad news for sinners.

The severity of sin.

To see how serious sin is to God, we'll have to see how God treated sin with regard to his own chosen people from ancient times - the people of Israel.

Ancient Israel had been given the enormous privilege of receiving the revelation of God, being adopted by God, receiving the covenants, promises, the pattern of worship. Ancient Israel had such favor that God wanted to be with them and show them his goodness and glory.

But how did Israel respond to God? By and large - unfaithfulness and the sin of idolatry.

In the book of Exodus, we see that God rescues the people of Israel and brings them to Sinai. However, the people turn out to be idolaters from the get-go. Day one they rebel against God.

God had a favorite term to describe the spiritual status of this ancient people.

Exodus 32:9 *“And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.”*

Stiff-necked people. Stubborn people. Hardened and rebellious in hearts.

In the book of Deuteronomy chapter nine, Moses recounts the golden calf event to the people of Israel.

“¹⁵ So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. ¹⁶ And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the Lord your God. You had made yourselves a golden

calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you. ¹⁷ So I took hold of the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. ¹⁸ Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin that you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger. ¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the Lord bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also. ²⁰ And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him. And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.”

So God spared Israel and made a covenant with the people of Israel. The covenant had these conditions - blessings for obedience and curses or death for disobedience.

Death was such an imminent and terrifying reality for the people of Israel.

Exodus chapter thirty-three verse five. *“⁵ For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you.*

The general public was not allowed into the presence of God because they would be consumed. Even the priest was to wear a special bell on his robe when he went into the presence of God. This bell was there to alert people that the priest was still alive after he came out of the presence of God.

Approaching God was such a big deal that even a small mistake would cost them their lives.

There was a time, the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, offered incense to God that was not prescribed and the result? Both were consumed by fire from God and killed.

“Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. ² And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. ³ Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” Leviticus 10:1-3

What was God’s message to Israel? God will be treated as Holy.

But what about sin? Is sin a static and dormant force that you could suppress at will?

The Bible tells us that sin is self-deceptive – *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves”* 1 John 1:8. Sin deceives you by making you think it can be downplayed.

Sin cannot be tamed. Managing sin on your own is like attempting to domesticate a Wild Boar.

Sin traps you. Sin enslaves you. Sin kills and sin eventually damns you to hell.

The universality of sin:

The sobering reality of our humanity is that there is no one who does not sin. One out of one sins.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 *“Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.*

1 Kings 8:46 *“for there is no one who does not sin”*

Paul argues this way in Romans 3:9-10,19,23 – ⁹What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰ as it is written: *“None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” ¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²³ all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*

The whole world is liable and guilty before a Holy God.

No one can ever escape the judgment of God. And no amount of good work or payment will ever satisfy or appease God. Psalm 89:49

God is a Holy God, a Just God, a Righteous God.

However, God is also a God of Love, patience, grace and mercy. God does not have any pleasure in the death of sinners.

So, what does a Holy and Loving God do for sinners?

God sent his Only Son Jesus Christ that whoever believes in him will not die but have eternal life. John 3:16

God sent His own Son on a rescue mission to save sinners. That is why Jesus Christ came into the world – to take away the sin of the world. John 1:29.

To save sinners from the penalty of sin.

This is Good News!

In verse *sixteen* Paul writes how he was saved.

Verse 16 *But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.*

Paul says he received mercy for this reason. That God would display God's perfect patience in Jesus Christ. This is a very radical statement for Paul to say. Why? Because Paul is describing God's character in the person of Jesus Christ. It would be blasphemous to do that unless Jesus Christ is divine. And that is who Jesus is - the eternal Son of God: perfect in patience, full of mercy and grace.

- *“The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation” - Exodus 34:6*
- *“But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” - Nehemiah 9:17*
- *“The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” - Psalm 145:8.*

Paul once thought Jesus was a dead Savior that Christians followed. Until one day the resurrected Christ showed Paul his terrifying power. He fell from his self-glory and pride to a place of repentant humility.

Paul's repentance was so radical that he not only abandoned his former opposition to the name of Jesus but Paul became one of the greatest promoters of Jesus. He wrote thirteen letters in the New Testament.

Paul the *blasphemer*, the *persecutor*, the *insolent* opponent, Paul the ignorant unbeliever received grace and was forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see Jesus came into this world for people like Paul. Jesus came into this world for *sinner*s who repent.

The Good News is glorious because it offers forgiveness from the greatest of sinners to the least of sinners. You look Paul's past life and say, “If such a grave sinner could receive mercy and forgiveness, I can too”. His life is an example for others to believe.

In light of God's mercy, how does Paul respond? How do forgiven sinners respond?

Verse seventeen.

17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul bursts out with Thankfulness, giving honor and glory to God.

This is what happens when you are saved. Joy, peace and thankfulness fill your heart.

You could search the world and history books for saviors for someone who can plead your case before God but everyone falls short except Jesus Christ. All the so called saviors in history they all are dead. They are still in the grave. Only Jesus Christ, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

Sinners deserve death but receive life when they repent and believe. Sinners deserve wrath but receive grace when they repent and believe. Sinners deserve judgment but receive forgiveness when they repent and believe. Sinners deserve condemnation but receive eternal life when they repent and believe.

Repent and believe in Jesus Christ. Be Saved.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Glorious Good News. 1 Timothy 2:15-17

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. How would you describe the Gospel in one sentence?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

1. What do you believe about the essentials of the Gospel?
2. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

1. For personal reflection: What was your response when you heard the Gospel and you were saved? What is great about the Gospel? What will you do about it?