
This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. (1 Timothy 1:15)

I. Paul's Testimony (vv.12-18)

- a. Paul testifies to the forgiving power of God's grace. His testimony worth listening to.
- b. Why is he "retelling" this testimony to Timothy? Did not Timothy hear it before?
- c. Paul's testimony begins with these words, "Let me tell you how Jesus saved me."
- d. God's plan for our lives involves personal history and salvation history.
- e. Paul could only ask, "Why me?" There was nothing about his old way of life that would have moved God to choose him; it could only be God's mercy.
- f. Testimonies strengthen us in the faith; 1) they remind us of the power of God; 2) we all need to hear "good news" stories; 3) they encourage us to give God glory
- g. Because we serve a personal Savior, He gives us a personal testimony to empower a personal witness. Make it personal! The testimony reveals the greatness of God in our weakness.
 1. *I was a blasphemer, persecutor and insolent opponent* (Acts 7:58)
 2. *I received mercy...I had acted ignorantly in unbelief*
- h. Jesus judged Paul faithful in advance of His service (v.12) Jesus looked beyond the sin and called him. What does this tell us about how the Lord calls people into His service?
- i. Do we, as Christians, ever think about the work God has done in us and wonder why He chose us?
- j. What encouragement does Paul's description of his life, before he was a Christian, give us for the work of evangelism?

II. Shipwrecked Faith (vv.19-20)

- a. Paul gives a charge to Timothy to remain consistent in the faith.
- b. Sometimes people start well but later go astray. We do not know *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander*, but this should warn us to stay on course.
 1. Perhaps they were leaders in the church who had abandoned the truth taught by Paul.
- c. A shipwrecked faith is a powerful image. Their lives were like ships broken to pieces by rocks.
 1. This image depicts people who are not anchored in truth and drift back into the world.
- d. We do not know the whole story about these men, but Paul had no other choice but to hand them *over to Satan*. What about grace? What about tough love?
- e. Hand them *over to Satan* is an expression Paul used to describe the kind of discipline that has to be put in place in the case of a serious rebellion against God. (1 Cor 5:4-5)
 1. The church is the domain of Jesus, and human rebellion against God is Satan's realm.
- f. If a Christian rejects truth and willfully embraces a contradictory lifestyle, they have already put themselves under Satan's sphere of influence. We cannot have it both ways! (Matt 18:15-20)
 1. After repeated warnings and without change, the church must be concerned with *infection*.
- g. The local church should not stop loving or praying for the person, but the person must learn the seriousness of their rebellion.
- h. It is not easy to be consistent when so many Christians are wandering from the truth, but if you keep telling your testimony you are less likely to drift.
- i. What are you doing in your personal life to avoid being shipwrecked?
- j. How would you advise a Christian who you discern is shipwrecked?
- k. How seriously should we apply church discipline today?