

PAUL'S PRAYER OF THANKFULNESS (1 Timothy 1:12-17)

I. He was thankful Jesus gave him power (vs 12).

- A. Out of the 58 times "Christ Jesus" is used in the New Testament, Paul used it 56 times and Peter twice.
 - 1. I find this very interesting that only one other writer uses this sequence of the name of our Lord.
 - 2. It may be that Paul knew Him first as Christ before he knew that Jesus was the Christ, there on the road to Damascus, while the others knew Him as Jesus first and then the Christ.
 - 3. Whatever the reason, our Lord is the Messiah, the Christ named Jesus.
- B. Jesus gave Paul power to be in the ministry.
 - 1. This does not necessarily refer to something miraculous.
 - 2. Rather, it probably refers to the strength Paul gained from his experience with Jesus and the fact that, as this text states, Jesus counted, or believed Paul to be faithful.
 - 3. His being deemed faithful by Jesus was no doubt a result of the steadfastness with which Paul served the Jews religion.
 - 4. When Paul was confronted with the error of his ways, only then did he waiver; nothing else could move him.
 - 5. His faithfulness then was a precursor to his faithfulness to Jesus.
- C. When Paul came into contact with the Christ, he then gained a new and powerful direction.
 - 1. He then became a part of the ministry of Christ.
 - 2. He gained the ability, or power, to do this because of his meeting the Christ and being changed by that meeting.
- D. If we will meet Jesus, truly meet Him by seeking Him through His word, then we can have this same power or strength Paul had.

II. He was thankful for deliverance from the past (vs. 13, 15).

- A. Paul, like all of us, had sin in his past that grieved him.
- B. He first says he had been a blasphemer.
 - 1. This means one who accuses God or man and rails against God or man.
 - 2. Since Paul did this toward the Christ, while he was known as Saul, makes this against God.
 - 3. He berated the Christ and denied Him while serving Judaism.
- C. He then says he had been a persecutor.
 - 1. He took his blasphemy to the next level by hurting Christians.
 - 2. He took them to jail and had them condemned to death.
- D. Lastly, he says he was injurious.
 - 1. This is an interesting word.
 - 2. It means, "insolent wrongdoer to others for the pleasure which the affliction of the wrong imparts."
 - 3. In other words, Saul enjoyed the persecuting he did.

4. He gained pleasure from the pain of Christians because he believed he was doing God's will in persecuting them.
- E. Because of these sins that he committed, he believed himself to be the chief, or foremost sinner of all mankind.
 1. In Paul's mind there was nothing worse that could be done by a person than what he had done.
 2. He had been the lowest of the low in his own new set of spiritual eyes.
- F. However, he obtained mercy, which is one word in the Greek, meaning "extend help for the consequence of sin."
 1. God helped him with his sin.
 2. The reason for the help is that it was done out of ignorance.
 3. Saul did what he did because he thought it was right, not because the people he persecuted were right and he hated them for it.
 4. Saul fit into the category of those for whom Jesus prayed on the cross.
- G. We all have things in our past that we wish were not there.
 1. We can obtain mercy if we haven't already.
 2. We can get that help for the consequences of sin.

III. He was thankful for the presence of Christ Jesus (vs. 15).

- A. Paul says that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
- B. Have you ever stopped to think what it would be like in our world if Jesus had not come into it?
 1. How repugnant and evil this world would be.
 2. We think things are bad now, but they would be so much worse if Jesus had not come.
- C. Paul realized that.
- D. What is also interesting about this statement is that it attests to the eternity of Jesus.
 1. He was not created.
 2. Jesus was somewhere else, and He came here for us.
- E. As Paul would write elsewhere, "Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift."
- F. His purpose for coming was to save sinners.
 1. That is the only reason Jesus came.
 2. He came to rescue those who were perishing.
- G. Without His presence, there would be no salvation.
- H. We should thank God daily for the presence of Jesus in our world.

IV. He was thankful for the purpose given him (vs. 16).

- A. Notice how the English Standard Version renders this verse: "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."
- B. The NIV says, "But 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."

- C. The purpose given Paul was to be an example to all sinners that Jesus could save them.
 - 1. Notice this statement by Barnes: “that there might be for all ages a permanent proof that sins of the deepest dye might be forgiven.”
 - 2. Coffman stated this: “Paul's conversion, along with the resurrection of Christ, is part of the incontrovertible evidence of the integrity and authenticity of the Christian faith.”
- D. Each one of us, no matter what sin was committed, can look to Paul for a pattern, or example of how to be saved.
 - 1. The word pattern is interesting as well.
 - 2. It means, “To draw a sketch, or first draft as painters when they begin a picture.”
- E. When we see Paul, we see how to be saved from sins by Christ Jesus.
- F. We see submission, obedience and faithfulness in Paul.
- G. We see the saving power of Jesus over the blackest of sins.