

**SUBJECT :** Finding Strength To Serve

**BIBLE BASIS:**

Lesson Scripture:

1Timothy 1:12-20

**BIBLE TRUTH:**

We are all called to serve.

**MEMORY VERSE: READ 1Timothy 1:12**

Lesson Aim

That your students will take their call to the ministry seriously. John 15:16,  
2Corn. 5:17-19

# Introduction

- Paul is writing this first letter to Timothy his son in the gospel. Paul was planning to return to Ephesus shortly when he wrote this letter. 1 Tim 3:14, but matters in the church were so urgent that he dared not delay advising his associate. This letter is one full of encouragement to Timothy who was facing many difficult problem in a big church.
- Timothy wanted to resign. Paul's first burden was to encourage him to stay on and finish the task. 1Tim 1:3
- He had many issues challenging him in the church in Ephesus, here are some; pastoring older people 5:1-2, and, neglecting his pastoral duties and his own personal devotion 4:13-16 He had a tendency toward asceticism that was hurting him physically 5:23. youthful temptation plagued him 2Tim 2:22
- Almost every Christian worker has wanted to quit at one time or another. Paul encourages young Timothy in this chapter by reminding him of his position before God and of the fact that God would see him through to victory. 1Corn. 15:57-58
- The one thing needed within the church is the royal ministry of making disciples, of nurturing men and women as sons and daughters of the faith. In seeing the relationship that existed with Paul and Timothy, we should be challenged to make disciples—to get to the task of growing leaders within God's church. Matt. 28:18-20

# Your Call To Ministry Is From God

- **1 Tim. 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;**
- Jesus Christ puts Paul in the ministry. This is a critical fact. Paul says that he did not make himself a minister nor did other persons choose him to be a minister. He did not choose the ministry because he thought it would be a good profession. He was in the ministry for one reason only: Christ Jesus had chosen him and put him into the ministry. John 15:16, 2Corn 5:17
- Jesus *enabled* Paul. The word enabled means to strengthen and give power to. 2Corn. 4:7, 1Corn 2:2-4.
- Paul's strength did not come from his...trying to stir up power within himself...trying to shout power into his preaching.
- No person has the power to do spiritual warfare; no person can penetrate the soul and spirits of other people. If a person is to minister to people, he must be empowered by Christ, for only Christ can penetrate the souls and spirits of people. Heb. 4:12
- Therefore, the minister must possess the power of Christ. Because no person can carry on a successful ministry in his own strength, not a ministry that truly reaches people for Christ and delivers them from sin, death, and the judgment to come. Only Christ can do this.

# What Were You Guilty Of?

- [13] Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.
- Paul mentions three terrible sins of which he had been guilty.
- Blasphemy: he had insulted, cursed, and railed the name of Christ.
- Persecutor: he had been so angry at Christ that he had set out to wipe the Lord's name off the face of the earth. Acts 8:3
- Injurious: to treat and use others spitefully; to be brutal and violent and to enjoy it.
- That is what Paul was once like in regard to the Christian Church. He was not content with just legal persecution, he went to the limit of sadistic brutality in his attempt to stamp out the Christian faith.
- However despite all this evil, God had mercy upon him. Mercy is not getting what you deserved. Paul deserved death for the crimes he committed against God and humanity. But God's mercy gave him life. We must come to understand that the mercy of God operates outside the limits of human justice.
- Paul had not known that Christ was the true Messiah. Therefore, when Paul attacked Christ and His followers, he did it ignorantly in unbelief. The point is this: We were all ignorant and guilty before God until God had mercy on us Rom. 3:23. Despite yours or Paul's terrible sins, God has mercy. Titus 3:3-8

# Mercy And Grace Can Be Scandalous

- [14] And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.
- The church in Paul's day had a big problem with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? God poured out His grace upon Paul the most undeserving person of his day, after all he persecuted the church and blaspheme the name of Christ. We must come to understand that the grace of God operates outside the limits of human justice too.
- Do the church have some issues with Gods grace? Rom 2:4
- Remember the man that had two sons. Luke 15:11,25-32. Remember the two men that went to the temple to pray. Luke 18:10-14
- Remember: grace means getting what you don't deserve. That is the favor of God apart from works or performance. Rom 4:1-5
- If you come to him with nothing in your hands, you can receive Gods salvation of grace full and free. Ephesians 2:8
- Christ favored and blessed Paul *exceedingly and abundantly*, because he wanted to. Christ did two things for Paul. Christ stirred *faith* in Paul: the faith to believe and trust and to serve and to keep on serving no matter the trial, problem, or fatigue. Christ stirred *love* in Paul: the love to still reach out and do all he could for people even when they rejected, ridiculed, abused, and persecuted him. Gal. 5:6

# Jesus Saves The Worst Of Us

- [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.
- This is a faithful saying or statement. It is a true message that can be trusted, and the glorious message is worthy of everyone *accepting* it. Not a single person should reject or ignore the message.
- Christ actually left the spiritual world to come into the physical world in order to save the human race. He saves us from sin, death, and the judgment to come. No matter how sinful a person is, no matter how great a sin he has committed, Christ Jesus came to save him.
- The point is this: every true minister has been saved by Christ or else he is not a true minister. Every person needs to be saved, and once he has been saved—no matter how terrible his sin—Christ can put him into the ministry. Christ Jesus has now saved the chief sinner.
- The worst sins in the world are the sins of...blasphemy: being filled with anger and malice against Christ; cursing and blaspheming His name with a bitter hostility...persecuting believers or what we would call today, ethnic cleansing, trying to annihilate them off the face of the earth; being brutal and violent against the church and enjoying it.
- This had been Paul, but note the wonderful truth: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” And Paul was the chief sinner; therefore, Christ Jesus had come to save him. Matt. 9:12-13, Luk 19:7

# Paul Is An Example Of Gods Longsuffering

- [16] Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.
- Christ Jesus saved Paul as a pattern of His great mercy. Paul is the prime example...That any sinner, no matter how terrible his sin, can be saved—if he will only receive Christ and begin to follow Him day by day...Matt. 16:24
- Paul is an example that any believer can be delivered from sin and from the power of sin, no matter how strong the enslavement is—if he will only receive the power of Christ and follow Him with a renewed commitment. Rom. 6:6
- The point is this: Paul is a pattern of the Lord's great longsuffering.
- The pattern of what? Of longsuffering—that God's mercy can save anybody. Paul had been the arch-persecutor of the church, storming into the homes and arresting and murdering the followers of Christ Acts 8:1-4, Acts 9:1-2. But God, who is longsuffering and not willing that any should perish, reached down and had mercy upon Paul. God forgave Paul and saved him. 2Peter 3:9
- When God saves you, He saves you forever. John 5:24, John 10:27-30

# The Real God

- [17] Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- Thinking of the glorious salvation that Christ had given him led Paul to break forth into praise. This is a great doxology:
- God is “the King eternal”: the word eternal is literally *ages*. God is the King, the sovereign majesty of the ages, both this age and the age to come. Heb. 13:8
- We are his Ambassadors appointed by the king to serve. 2Corn 5:20
- God is immortal: that is, incorruptible. He has no seed of corruption, no seed of aging, deterioration, or decay within His being. God cannot die. He alone has immortality. 1 Tim. 6:16
- The spirit that you are born of in Christ Jesus is also indestructible. 1Peter 1:3-5, Heb. 7:25-27, 1John 3:9, Rom 7:15-24
- God is invisible: that is, He cannot be seen by people, not with physical eyes in the physical dimension or world. John 4:23-24. Moses wanted to see God face to face, however, God only showed Moses his back parts. Ex. 33:17-23
- God is the only wise God: that is, he is the only living and true God, the only God who actually possesses intelligence and wisdom, who can truthfully interact with the world and save men. John 3:16



# We Have A Charge To Keep

- [18] This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;
- Paul is giving a “charge” to Timothy. The word means a command, a military command. It is a command that lays upon a person the most urgent and critical obligation. The ministry is not a trifled matter, but an order from the commander-in-chief. A charge is always a command from a superior that is to be transmitted to others; that is, this charge—the charge to fight a good warfare—is to be given to Timothy and he, in turn, is to pass the charge on to others. 2 Tim. 2:2
- Timothy had a strong testimony for Christ before the church and his community. 1Tim 4:14, 2Tim 1:5-6 Acts 16:1-3.
- The Christian ministry is the the call that puts a person right in the midst of spiritual war that fights for the souls and minds of people. When a person is called by the God, he must do exactly what Paul says: jump right into the midst of the battle and fight a good warfare
- Note: Paul is recommitting this charge to Timothy. Apparently Timothy needed to be recharged. He was facing the critical issue of false teaching in the church at Ephesus, and he was shrinking from it. But God’s call was clear: he was to fight a good warfare—to struggle even to the point of death if need be. Rev. 12:10-11

# A Sacred Trust

- Marketplace believers must never forget: the ministry is a sacred trust, a sacred commitment. God has taken the most precious and sacred thing to Him—the very gospel of His dear Son—and placed that message into the hands of men.
- Therefore, the minister must not fail. He must arise and charge right to the forefront of the warfare, the spiritual warfare that is being fought for the souls and minds of people.
- A spiritual warfare is being fought for the minds and souls of people. The minister of God is to be right in the middle of the conflict. He is God's instrument to teach men—to teach them the way to God and righteousness.
- If God's ministers do not fight and struggle to lead men to God, then literally millions of souls will perish without ever knowing the way to God—without ever knowing that a person can actually live forever in the presence of God.
- This is the reason ministers must arise and lead the charge into the battle for the minds and souls of men. So much depends upon the minister of God—so many souls, the hope and lives of so many—that he must be faithful and fight a good warfare.

# Keep The Faith

- [19] Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:
- The weapons of spiritual warfare—faith and a good conscience. The word holding or hold means to: **keep** the faith and to **keep** a good conscience.
- “The faith” means the truth of Christ and of the Word of God. *The faith* of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Word of God is your life.
- As we fight the spiritual battles of our life, we must cling to the commands, instructions, and words of his commander-in-chief. Matt 4:4, Ps. 119:105
- The minister is to hold “a good conscience” Conscience can be put away, and faith can be shipwrecked. “Put away” means to push away with force. It is a willful and deliberate pushing away of conscience. Conscience says that something is wrong and should not be done, but conscience is ignored and turned away from and denied. Rom 2:14-15
- When a person *continues to push his conscience away*: his faith is shipwrecked. A person must live as Scripture dictates: righteously and godly. Titus 2:12
- If he does not live righteously and godly, then he weakens his faith and soon is living a life of worldliness, sin, and seduced by false doctrine. John 8:31-32, John 7:16-17

# Two Examples

- [20] Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.
- Paul gives two specific examples of men who pushed their conscience away and shipwrecked their faith.
- Hymenaeus was the man who taught that the resurrection had already taken place 2Tim. 2:16-18. Alexander was the coppersmith who opposed Paul and did much evil against him. 2 Tim. 4:14.
- Remember why he disciplined them: they had continued to reject the guidance of their conscience and to turn away from the faith.
- Therefore, Paul had delivered them to Satan. What does this mean?
- The discipline means more than excommunication. It is the miraculous subjection of the person to the power of Satan, to be tormented by him that they might repent and return to Christ.
- People are chastised for sin and spiritual failure. In fact, it is impossible to sin and escape chastisement. Men reap what they sow. There is a spiritual power that inflicts punishment upon sin. However, this should not be surprising in our day, for modern medicine and psychology tell us that misbehavior causes physical, emotional, and mental punishment. 1 Cor. 5:3-5; 1 Cor. 11:27-30; 1 John 5:16
- The two men were disciplined for the purpose of correcting their sinful behavior..that they might learn not to blaspheme.