

**1 Timothy**  
**A.) The Church and its message**  
**2. 1:12-17 The message in the present**  
**1:12-17**  
**“From Blasphemer to Believer”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 12-13 Before and after**

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**I. Introduction**

Paul knew that instruction on the use of the 10 Commandments in the Christian life was not enough, he needed a personal example of its proper use. But where could he find just such an example? **He need look no further than the mirror and who better to be that example than one who prior to knowing Jesus was the greatest miss user of the law known.** Paul writes about his own conversion some **6 times** in the New Testament **not** because he thought highly of himself but because he thought highly of the Lord who had saved a wretch like him. What a stark contrast to the 1967 a New York Times bestseller that remained on that list for 20 years. Its title and content obviously appealed to the populace at large. The title of this book by Thomas A Harris MD was “*I’m OK, You’re OK*” and became the bible for the popular “*self-esteem*” movement. Reading the section before us would completely contradict this very popular notion as a basis of self-esteem instead Paul’s title would have been “*I’m not OK, and neither are you*”!

## II. Vs. 12-13 Before and after

Vs.12 Timothy's work was no small task:

- Rome under Nero had begun to crack down upon those idolaters who refused to worship Caesar as God.
- In Ephesus years earlier there had already been a riot caused in the name of Christ because so many people had abandoned the worship of Diana for Christ and there is little doubt that they didn't have good feelings towards this so called sect.
- The Jews also were not in favor of Christianity largely because they felt that it was a threat to their way of life.
- Then within the church there were those who influenced by the above kept wanting to tweak the message to accommodate others.

No wonder Paul had to keep on encouraging Timothy to do the work God had called him too as he faced so much opposition.

Paul tells Timothy when you are experiencing doubt do to opposition to, "*Thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*" It was God's enabling that sustained Paul and caused him to stick at the task in spite of extreme opposition. Timothy had experienced firsthand how Paul had been treated upon his evangelistic outreaches. *There was no positive media campaign, no launch luncheon hosted by the important business and political figures of the city.* No, Paul was greeted by hostile crowds of folks that were committed to killing him. What powered Paul on was the love of the truth that since God had transformed him, He could transform anyone! Timothy's home town of Lystra was an example of the Lord strengthening Paul as he and Barnabas went into the city and at first were well received then the crowds turned on them and took Paul outside the city and stoned Paul until they believed he was dead; the church prayed over Paul and he went back into the same city and continued teaching about Jesus. That is one of the invisible realities of the truth of the gospel... "*Compelling evidence that those who carried the truth about Jesus were so*

*convinced of the reality of Jesus life and work that they risked everything for no earthly reward or benefit”.*

Of further encouragement to Timothy was that the “*Lord counted him faithful putting him into the ministry*”. That realization puts the responsibility of success fully upon the Lord and not upon Paul. **God in spite of his personal failures called Paul into His service.** The interesting truth is that based upon Paul's testimony in verse 13 is that it is often the negative destructive aspects to our life that God uses.

Vs. 13 Paul’s own testimony of the gospel is that he “*was **formerly** a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a insolent man...*” The 10 commandments **hadn’t** changed him, the basis of his transformation was Jesus. In fact as a young man he was blinded by the Law and failed to understand that what he was using to hound others should have been hounding him. How incredible is the gospel that in spite of confessing that he was a “*blasphemer, a persecutor and an insolent man*” that he had “**obtained mercy**”.

### III. Vs. 14-15 Happy to be lost

Vs. 14 As another example of the superiority of the gospel to the 10 commandments Paul offers up the “*exceedingly abundant grace and love he encountered in Jesus Christ.*” In Paul’s letter to the Romans (5:5) he wrote that “*where sin did abound grace did much more abound!*” The law pointed out that sin, did abound but it offered no solution it only directed him towards Christ. Paul expounds on **three things that Jesus gave him that the Law never did:**

1. **Grace:** No greater comparison between what the work of the 10 commandments and the work of the gospel can be found as **the Law demands justice for those actions** whereas the gospel through faith in Christ enables a person to not only “**NOT** get what they deserve, which is the **definition for mercy** but “**get what they don't deserve, which the definition of grace**” because Jesus has received upon Himself what the Law demanded. Paul describes this grace with two very

descriptive words “*exceedingly abundant*” which tells me that even though his debt was great the supply was far beyond his need.

2. ***Faith***: Jesus provided “**FAITH**” which is **best defined** as the “***ability to see things realistically, the way they really are***”. Jesus gives every believer the ability to see and experience LIFE as it really is. This reality ***isn't pessimistic*** in fact it is the opposite as it is ***extremely positive*** as we are more than conquerors in Christ.
3. ***Love***: Finally where the 10 commandments offers judgment ***Jesus offers LOVE***. Not just of Him but because of Him for others as well. We are no longer into ***comparing*** ourselves with others we are into ***compassion***. Our obedience isn't to appease Jesus instead we desire to obey because the Love of Christ constrains us and enables us to say no to ungodliness.

Vs. 15 Too further illustrate the superiority of the Gospel verses the Law of Moses of the 10 Commandment's Paul again uses himself as the example this example is to look not at the before and after picture alone but rather to understand the difference in the aim of the Law of Moses verses the Gospel.

- The aim of the Gospel is: “***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief***”!
- The aim of the 10 Commandment's is to: “***Reveal that we are sinners in need of being saved***”!

Paul employs a Jewish way of expressing himself that was meant to call attention to what he was about to say much in the same way that Jesus did when he would say “*Truly, truly, I say to you...*” it was their way of say, “*All right now pay attention, this is very important!*” Five times in Paul's two letters to Timothy he uses this same way of getting Timothy's attention. “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*” Many people miss understand the purpose of Jesus' first coming: “Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. The difficulty is not in His coming but rather that those that He is seeking to save don't want to admit that they are lost sinners. Some folks just believe that they are not in need of being saved but Jesus puts everybody in spite of education, environment and religious expression or the lack there of in the same boat which is ***sinking! Fallen***

**humanity becomes obsessed with casting their fellow ship mates overboard instead of realizing they are in the very same boat!**

Furthermore Jesus' coming is more than just recognizing our **ONE TIME** need to be saved as Paul is very careful to say: "*Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom **I am** chief.*" The important revelation with regards to Paul's need to be saved is not at one time he saw himself as the worst sinner he had ever the displeasure of knowing. No, the amazing truth is the use of the words "**I AM**" which tells us that Paul wasn't looking backwards at his past life but viewing himself in his present condition and he still found that he was the worst sinner he had ever met and was in just as much a need to be saved NOW as he was prior to his relationship with Christ. This two word phrase must be placed in the context of his other letters where he wrote in:

- Galatians 2:20, "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God*"?
- Second Corinthians 5:17: "*If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come*"?

Paul had not forgotten his transformation, neither is this some humble exaggeration. Paul meant every word as he is thinking in terms of still having to deal with his own flesh that needs to be crucified with Christ, to be recognized as dead. This old nature of ours still gives us fits and Paul found that dealing with his was a full time job. **Our areas of weakness can return to us in an instant no matter how long we have been a follower of Jesus, how much of the Bible we have memorized or how much time we have in prayer! After 30 plus years of walking with Jesus, 26 years of studying His word I still remain my biggest prayer request!**

#### IV. Vs. 16-17 Praise for God's patience

Vs. 16 Having made his confession about his present and continual need for Christ Paul makes yet another startling claim for the superiority of the Gospel when compared to the Law of Moses as he says; *“for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all long-suffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”* **God looks for not the best candidate but the person in the greatest need, the proudest person, and the fellow that was voted “least likely to ever become a follower of Christ.”** The reason for this is that God can use that person to be an example to others who were voted *“least likely to ever become a follower of Christ.”* Much can be said of the mercy of God, the Love of God but have you considered the **“patience of God”**? God's transformation of our nature must have **“patience”** at the beginning as He knows how many times we will fail and we will need to fall afresh upon His grace and mercy to restore us. Timothy may have been pondering his own failure when facing such opposition and Paul's words would have come as a glass of water to a parched man. We know this to be the context as the words *“for this reason”* speak of the present and continual need of Christ that Paul daily realized.

Vs. 17 Having written out the superior benefits of the gospel in continual transformation Paul can't contain himself and breaks forth in spontaneous praise!