



# SUNDAY EVENING AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

**Title:** Mercy for the Worst of Sinners

**Passage:** 1 Timothy 1:12-16

**Speaker:** Pastor Dan Preston

**Introduction:** The grace of God in Christ Jesus is so abundant that it can transform even the worst of sinners—like Paul—into grateful servants, proving that no one is beyond the reach or purpose of His redeeming mercy.

*“While Newton believed that human beings were wretches, in desperate need of a Savior, these 20th-century adapters clearly believe that they and their congregations are perfectly nice people. They are not wicked; they merely have a handicap—a dysfunction—from which they hope to recover...Grace is amazing because it saves wretches, not because it puts a final polish on nice people. You cannot be saved if you are not lost. You cannot be freed unless you are enslaved.” — Brian Abel Ragen*

Paul had experienced both God’s saving and strengthening grace. Yet this passage isn’t just his personal story —it’s a pastoral reminder. He writes to Timothy, a young pastor in a difficult place, surrounded by proud, self-assured teachers. In contrast, Paul points to what true Christianity is: humble, grateful, mercy-shaped service. His message is simple—“Timothy, don’t be swayed by clever words or impressive people. The real evidence of grace is a transformed life—and if God could change me, He can change anyone.”

## I. Happy to Serve (Verse 12)

What a Christian needs for ministry is not natural talent or education but divine enablement.

*“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13)*



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The God who calls is the God who enables.

Whatever your place of service—at home, in the workplace, or in the church—God has placed you there by grace. Don’t lose heart. The God who saved you will strengthen you.

### II. Grace Abounding (Verses 13-14)

*“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...” (Titus 3:5)*

“Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
Grace, grace, God’s grace,  
Grace that is greater than all our sin.” — Julia Johnston

Whoever receives Christ receives everything that comes with Him—faith to believe, love to obey, and mercy to live again.

No past is too dark, no guilt too heavy, no life too far gone. Grace abounds where sin once reigned.

### III. The Chief of Sinners (Verse 15)

Even as a redeemed man, Paul remains aware of his sin. The closer he walks with God, the deeper his awareness of unworthiness becomes.

*“Those who are most pessimistic about man are the most optimistic about God. Those most aware of guilt are most confident in grace.” - Paul Tournier*

Christ didn’t come to save good people—He came to save sinners. Until we see ourselves as the worst of sinners, we won’t grasp how wonderful the gospel really is.

### IV. The Prototypical Convert (Verse 16)



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Paul stands as the prototype of divine mercy. His story tells every sinner: “If God can save me, He can save you.”

*“Although my memory is fading, I remember two things very clearly: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior.” — John Newton*

God’s patience is not weakness — it’s mercy on display.

**Conclusion:** This is not just Paul’s testimony; it is the pattern of the Christian life. The grace that saves us also strengthens us. The mercy that found us also sends us.

### 1. Grace Should Produce Gratitude

Paul never got over the wonder that he was saved.

The Christian who remembers mercy will never grow cold in worship.

### 2. Grace Should Produce Humility

Paul remembered what he was before Christ — “a blasphemer, a persecutor, an insolent man.” He never excused it, but neither did he live in shame. Grace had covered it.

### 3. Grace Should Produce Endurance

If you’re discouraged in service, weary in well-doing, or tempted to think your efforts don’t matter — remember who it is that put you in the ministry. The same Lord who strengthened Paul will strengthen you.

### 4. Grace Should Produce Witness

Tell people what Christ has done for you. Tell them that there is mercy for the worst of sinners. You don’t need to be eloquent; you just need to be honest. A heart that has truly met grace will never run out of something to say.



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