



# “THE MOTIVATION TO GLORIFY GOD”

1 Timothy 1:12-17

**Theme:** *The Gospel is able to deliver any sinner from any sin.*

**Introduction:** Too often Christians look around and observe how bad things are getting – aghast at the sexual revolution, political malaise, educational morass, and general societal devolution and become depressed that things are out of control. They can become depressed and even cynical – tempted to “hunker down,” stick their heads in the sand, and hope to survive until the Rapture. Such a posture is insufferably deficient and below the dignity of our hope in the power of the Gospel.

Think of the most unlikely person to get saved ... a politician, boss, neighbor, sibling, in-law, or celebrity. Sometimes we can look at people and believe they are beyond hope. We think: “*They’ll never get saved!*” There are some who even believe this about themselves ... “*I’m so far gone – so addicted, so skeptical, so educated, so sinful, so worldly, so offensive to God, I’m beyond hope.*” Too many people believe the lie that their sin is greater than God’s grace – such naivety displays an ignorance of the Gospel. In our text today, we are given the personal testimony of a man whose life was viewed by everyone as beyond hope. One person and one person only knew that this man was able to be saved – the Person who saves! If God desires to save someone, there is nothing that will thwart God’s eternal purpose and commitment to that purpose of glorifying Himself by means of the salvation of even the foremost sinners of all. Our passage today demonstrates that **“the Gospel is able to deliver any sinner from any sin.”**

## I. THE GRACE OF GOD IS ABUNDANT – 1:12-14

### A. The Source of the Grace – v. 12a

1. As Paul has been exhorting Timothy to properly use the Law of God to confront sinners with their sin, Paul provides a personal testimony of how he was himself impacted by the Gospel.
2. He made the comment that when the Law is used “*lawfully,*” it is “*according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.*”
3. This stewardship of the “gospel” is something for which Paul is eternally grateful and immediately declares to whom He is grateful: “*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord ....*”
4. Literally, this reads: “grace [χάρις] I have in Christ Jesus” and this usage is an emphatic and is a euphemism in Greek providing an appropriate

response of gratitude for favor conferred by deity.

5. Hence, Paul is acknowledging yet again the divinity of “*Christ Jesus our Lord*” who is the source of this grace – cp. [John 1:17](#).

## **B. The Strengthening through the Grace – v. 12b**

1. Next, Paul mentions the sustaining impact of this grace given by the Lord “... *who has strengthened me ...*”
2. “*strengthened*” [ἐνδυναμόω] – “to cause one to be able to function or do something.”<sup>1</sup>
3. This grace that is so abundant is how we are able to fulfill the purpose of God in our lives – cp. [Philippians 4:13](#).
4. Paul is acknowledging the only way that he has been able to endure is by means of the grace that God has supplied – cp. [2 Corinthians 9:8](#).

## **C. The Service by the Grace – v. 12b**

1. Thus, Paul has been able to actively serve the Lord – “*because He considered me faithful, putting me into service.*”
2. The word “*considered*” [ἡγέομαι] – conveys the thoughtfulness by which Jesus put Paul into ministry – literally referring to an intellectual process of thinking through something.
3. As Jesus saw the devotion Paul possessed to the cause of Judaism, He saw a man who, by the exercise of grace, would pursue such devotion to the cause of Christ.
4. In the foreknowledge and eternal plan of God, He had Paul as a resource to the cause of Christ from before the foundation of the world – cp. [1 Corinthians 15:10](#).
5. The Lord “*put*” Paul into “*service*” – [τίθημι] – indicating a deliberate action of lay something into particular location – with a connotation of “an assignment.”
6. The “*service*” [διακονία] – into which God had placed him as one who is given for the purpose of functioning in the interest of the larger public, not himself – in Paul’s case, it is in the preaching of God’s Word – cp. [Philippians 1:23-25](#).

## **D. The Sin Overcome by Grace – v. 13**

1. All of this was despite the qualifications of Paul – as the rest of us can attest, Christ decided to save Him and put him into service despite all of the sinful behavior that disqualified him from such an honor as to be used to point others toward Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 333.

2. He declares *“... even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.”*
  - a) *“blasphemer” [βλάσφημος] - demeaning, denigrating words spoken against God - a demonstration that He had violated the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the Ten Commandments - to “love the Lord with all his heart ...”*
  - b) *“persecutor” [διώκτης] - a term that conveys the haste with which one seeks to pursue a person for the purpose of harassing or abusing them; a demonstration that he had violated the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Ten Commandments - to “love your neighbor as yourself.”*
  - c) *“violent aggressor” [ὕβριστής] - in fact, his zeal in abusing others is seen in this term which conveys the attitude when he “caught” a person who followed Jesus*
3. *“Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief.”* - Paul had been absolutely convinced that Jesus was an antichrist - a Messianic claimant who was a bane against everything holy and good - seeing the cult of “The Way” as a cancer in Judaism that had to be stomped out if Israel would remain true to Yahweh - cp. [\*Acts 9:1-2\*](#).

#### E. The Salvation through Grace - v. 14

1. Paul declares that despite the despicable and heinous ways that he had violated the Law, when God decided to exercise grace, it was more than enough - *“... and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, ...”*
2. The depth of sin and guilt that was so devastating was still within the bounds of the greater mercy and grace of God - cp. [\*Romans 5:20-21\*](#).
3. *“abundant” [ὑπερπλεονάζω] - emphasizes an overflow; the extraordinary running over of something that appears without exhaustion such as an artesian spring.*
4. The “abundance” of *“the grace of our Lord”* was manifested in the transformation in Paul’s life *“with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.”*
  - a) *Saving grace produces not only a belief in Christ, but a love for Him as well that results in absolute surrender to Him and an affection for everything associated with Him:*
    - (1) His Word - [\*Psalm 119:140\*](#)
    - (2) His Ways - [\*Deuteronomy 10:12\*](#)
    - (3) His Will - [\*Romans 12:2\*](#)
    - (4) His Witnesses - [\*1 Peter 3:8\*](#)
  - b) *Such characteristics represent the transformation from sin and a conformity to Christ which is the very end to which those who*

*believe have been predestined.*

5. We all have been saved by grace through faith – all of it is a gift from God – cp. *Ephesians 2:8-9*.

## II. THE GRACE OF GOD IS AVAILABLE – *1:15-16*

### A. The Focus of God's Grace – *v. 15*

1. Continuing to build on the emphasis of grace, Paul commends on what Jesus came to do – *“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ...”*
2. Jesus didn't come to affirm humanity in all its self-righteous, sanctimonious façades of morality and virtue, but to expose the defects of sinners so they might be saved.
3. Paul describes this as a *“statement”* that is *“trustworthy”* [πιστός] – worthy of belief or inspiring trust – again, a reference to the value of the Gospel over the false teaching promoted by those who were diminishing the superiority and sufficiency of Christ.
4. By saying that it is *“deserving full acceptance,”* Paul is declaring that:
  - a) *Everyone reconciled to God already agrees with the truth of this statement;*
  - b) *Anyone who needs to be reconciled to God must agree with this statement.*
5. The entire purpose of the incarnation was for Jesus to come *“to save sinners”* – cp. *Luke 19:10*.
6. Paul then expresses the very sentiment of every person who knows the mercy of the conviction of sin by means of the Holy Spirit's use of God's Word – *“... among whom I am foremost of all.”*
7. Anyone who feels that because of their sin they are unworthy of the salvation that God provides through Jesus' sacrifice for sin is essentially disagreeing with Jesus who declared that such sin is the very reason He came.

### B. The Fruitfulness of God's Grace – *v. 16*

1. Then he proclaims: *“Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”*
2. Essentially, Paul says: “If a person like me can be saved, anyone who will turn to Jesus can be saved!”
3. “The purpose of salvation, whether Paul's or ours, is to display God's grace, power, and patience and produce a true worshiper of God (John

4:21-24).”<sup>2</sup>

4. **“His perfect patience”** [μακροθυμία] - **state of remaining tranquil while awaiting an outcome**<sup>3</sup> - describes Jesus’ ability to put up with our sin to bring Him glory by means of our transformation out of such indulgences and into conformity to Him through the work of the Holy Spirit.

### III. THE GOD OF GRACE IS ADORABLE - **1:17**

#### A. The Attributes of the Savior

1. What is the appropriate response to the truth of the Gospel?
2. It certainly isn’t to grow so accustomed to it that we are dispassionate or even disinterested at its consideration.
3. Paul provides the Spirit-led response to the truths about the Gospel as he bursts into a doxological sidebar: **“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God ...”**
4. There are five characteristics or attributes of Christ Jesus provided for us in this brief statement:
  - a) He is **Ruler** - **“King”** - *is free to save whomever He wills* - cp. **Romans 9:18**.
  - b) He Is **Relevant** - **“eternal”** [τῶν αἰώνων] - *literally, “king of the ages” - His interest in saving is not for those in the past ages or even those in the future, but today is the day of salvation!* - **2 Corinthians 6:1-2**.
  - c) He Is **Reliable** - **“immortal”** [ἄφθαρτος] - *describing an imperviousness to corruption and death; meaning that His ability to save is constant and is not weakened with time or difficulty* - **Revelation 1:17b-18**.
  - d) He Is **Revealed** - **“invisible”** [ἀόρατος] - *not subject to being seen; that is, He must be trusted to reveal Himself accurately by means of His Word as the Savior He claims to be* - **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**.
  - e) He Is **Able or Resourceful** - **“only God”** - *He possesses all of the attributes of God including omnipotence to save whoever needs to be saved* - **Isaiah 59:1**.
5. It takes such a Savior - no human efforts can achieve the salvation that has been gained by the sinner through the work of God’s Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 612.

## B. The Adoration of the Savior

1. These attributes of the Savior produce an adoration of the Savior.
2. Paul expresses this adoration by saying: *“... be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*
  - a) *“honor” [τιμή] – the showing of reverence, respect, or esteem; the weight of great worth; preciousness.*
  - b) *“glory” [δόξα] – the radiant magnificence of God’s essential Being; the splendor that pours out of God as brilliant light*
3. Paul is essentially incapable of pondering the grace of God without erupting into such an outburst of worship, adoration, and praise for the work of Christ Jesus to save sinners of such wretchedness, debauchery, and depravity as he saw himself as being and we ourselves are.

## So What?

1. Opportunities to serve Christ in ministry are not only an honor, but opportunities to prove grace.
2. Saving grace is provided for sinners of every “severity” – do not believe the lie that you are beyond God’s saving grace ... He can and will save even you!
3. Another evidence you are saved is the desire to magnify Jesus Christ for not only what He has done ... but who He is!

**The Gospel is able to deliver any sinner from any sin.**