

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday - August 16, 2026

Preached By: Matt Alexander

“Enabled By Grace”

Message #2

“Set In Order: God’s Design for His Church” 1 Timothy Series

1 Timothy 1:12-20

Homiletical Bridge:

CIT: Paul glorified Christ for how He enabled him to serve in gospel ministry.

Thesis: We should glorify Christ for how He has enabled us to serve in gospel ministry.

Proposition: I want Fusion Church to glorify Christ for how He has enabled us to serve in gospel ministry.

Probing Question: How has Christ enabled us to serve in gospel ministry?

- 1. The Calling of Grace — v. 12**
- 2. The Compassion of Christ — vv. 13–17**
- 3. The Commission to Faithfulness — vv. 18–19**
- 4. The Consequences of Apostasy — v. 20**

Before You Begin

Open your time together in prayer, asking God to help your group move from simply hearing the Word to being shaped by it. Encourage group members to have their Bibles open to 1 Timothy 1:12–20 throughout your discussion.

Key Takeaways

These are the central truths from this week's sermon to keep in front of your group:

- Ministry is not evidence of our greatness. It is evidence of Christ's grace.
- Christ saves undeserving sinners and then entrusts them with His gospel.
- Grace does not lead to passivity. Grace leads to faithfulness.
- Doctrine and life belong together. Neither can be neglected without consequence.
- God's warnings are themselves a form of grace, calling us back to faithfulness.
- The glory for anything accomplished in gospel ministry belongs entirely to Christ.

Getting Started

Use one of these questions to help your group ease into conversation before moving into the deeper discussion.

1. Think about a time when someone trusted you with a significant responsibility. How did that feel? What did it motivate you to do?
2. When you hear the word "ministry," what comes to mind first? How has your understanding of that word changed or developed over time?

Discussion Questions

The Calling of Grace — 1 Timothy 1:12

3. The pastor described ministry as being like a tool in the hand of a master builder, saying, "A hammer does not boast about the house. The glory belongs to the craftsman who held the hammer." In what ways does that image challenge the way Christians sometimes talk about their own ministry or service?
4. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10 that by the grace of God he is what he is. How does understanding grace as the foundation of ministry change the way we approach serving? What does it protect us from?
5. The sermon asked two contrasting questions: "How important am I?" versus "How faithful can I be with what Christ has entrusted to me?" Which of those questions tends to drive your thinking about your own role in the church? Be honest.

The Compassion of Christ — 1 Timothy 1:13–17

6. Paul does not minimize or soften his past. He calls himself a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent opponent. Why do you think it matters that Paul is so direct about who he was before Christ? What would be lost if he downplayed it?
7. The sermon stated: "Paul's life became a trophy of grace. A trophy points beyond itself to a victory that has been won." How does Paul's testimony function as a trophy? In what ways can our own testimonies function the same way?
8. The pastor said, "If Christ could save the persecutor, Christ can save the person you think is hopeless." Is there someone in your life you have quietly written off as beyond reach? How does Paul's story challenge that assumption?
9. Paul's response to remembering Christ's mercy is an eruption of worship in verse 17. He moves from personal testimony directly into praise. What does that tell us about the relationship between good

theology and genuine worship? When did you last find yourself moved to worship simply by thinking about what Christ has done for you?

10. The sermon challenged the congregation: "We should never get over being saved. The longer we walk with Christ, the more amazed by grace we ought to become." Do you find that to be true in your own experience? If not, what do you think gets in the way?

The Commission to Faithfulness — 1 Timothy 1:18–19

11. Paul tells Timothy to wage the good warfare by holding faith and a good conscience. The sermon described these as two rails beneath a train, with sound doctrine on one side and a sound life on the other. What happens when a person is strong in doctrine but their life does not match it? What happens when a person lives morally but has drifted from sound doctrine?
12. The sermon said, "Christ saves us and then entrusts us with His gospel." What has Christ specifically entrusted to you right now? Think concretely — a relationship, a role, a responsibility, a season of life. How are you stewarding that?
13. The goal Paul sets before Timothy is not fame or recognition but faithfulness. What are some of the cultural pressures — even within church culture — that make faithfulness feel less appealing than visibility or recognition?

The Consequences of Apostasy — 1 Timothy 1:20

14. Paul describes spiritual drift using the image of a shipwreck, noting that "a ship does not suddenly find itself wrecked while it is tied to the boat dock." What are some of the small compromises or subtle drifts that can eventually lead to serious spiritual damage? What early warning signs should we be watching for in ourselves?
15. The sermon pointed out that even the severe discipline Paul describes in verse 20 had restoration as its goal. What does that tell

us about how God views discipline? How should that shape the way a church community approaches accountability?

16. The pastor listed four practical applications from this section: do not play games with your conscience, do not excuse secret sin, do not treat doctrinal compromise as harmless, and hold tightly to Christ and His Word. Which of these lands most personally for you right now, and why?

Bringing It Together

17. The sermon began and ended with worship. Paul opens with thanksgiving in verse 12 and reaches the climax of his testimony with the doxology in verse 17. The pastor said that truth should lead to worship. As you look back over this passage and this discussion, what is one truth that you want to respond to in worship this week?
18. The sermon closed with an invitation centered on 1 Timothy 1:15 — that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Is there someone in your group, or someone you know, who needs to hear that Christ came for sinners and not for people who have cleaned themselves up? How can your group be praying for and reaching that person?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice this week:

- Write out your testimony with the same honesty Paul demonstrates. Do not minimize who you were before Christ. Then identify one person you could share it with this week as a trophy of grace, not a story about yourself.
- Audit your service. Reflect on how you are currently serving in your church or community. Ask honestly: Am I serving out of a desire for recognition, or out of gratitude for grace? Bring what you find to God in prayer.

- Examine your two rails. Take time this week to evaluate both your doctrine and your life. Are you in God's Word consistently? Is there an area of your life that is out of step with what you say you believe? Identify one concrete step toward alignment.
- Guard your conscience. Identify one area where you have been making small compromises or dismissing quiet conviction. Confess it to God and, if appropriate, to a trusted brother or sister in your group. Do not let the drift continue.
- Memorize 1 Timothy 1:15. Commit the core of the gospel in this passage to memory and look for one opportunity this week to share its truth with someone who needs it.

Closing Prayer

Close your time by praying together as a group. You may want to model your prayer after Paul's doxology in verse 17, giving honor and glory to God for His mercy, His grace, and His faithfulness to save and use undeserving sinners. Ask God to make your group a people who never get over the gospel and who steward faithfully whatever He has entrusted to each of you.