

1 Timothy 1:12–20

MPS: When Jesus gets bigger, our praise gets louder, and the battle gets stronger

PRAYER TIME

Psalm 117:1–2 (ESV) *1 Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! 2 For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!*

LORD, I praise you because _____

You are good in a fallen world, you are beautiful in an ugly world, you are kind in a malicious world, you are our/my refuge in a dangerous world.

2 For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!

LORD, I/we need your faithfulness toward me/us in _____

Family, finances, work, future, decisions to be made, health, marriage, parenting, school, bad head space – negativity, apathy...

LORD, we need your faithfulness grow us through our Gospel Fluency Academy Module October 5 – 26.

Gospel lights to come on, ability to know, apply and speak the gospel in every situation, true spiritual growth in all the participants, participants are equipped to better make disciples.

SERMON

INTRO

1 Timothy 3:15 (ESV) *15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*

OPEN

In The Chronicles of Narnia, the second of the series, Prince Caspian, C. S. Lewis tells us the story of when Lucy meets Aslan again after not seeing him for a while.

She rushes to him, and then she looks up into his face.

“Aslan,” said Lucy, “you’re bigger.”

“That is because you are older, little one,” answered he.

“Not because you are?”

“I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger.”

That is how mercy works. The longer you walk with Him, the larger He becomes.

Paul is saying that in this Text. He looks at his own life and the Jesus gets bigger. Then the praise gets louder. And then he puts a charge in Timothy's hands to fight the battle of faith.

When Jesus gets bigger, our praise gets louder, and the battle gets stronger

Now, Jesus is immutable. He does not actually get bigger. The Lion does not change. We do.

I am using the language of the story. Like Lucy, we grow—and as we grow, He seems bigger.

1. Louder praises (12-17)

***12a** I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful,*

Paul breaks out into a personal worship session here because Jesus is becoming bigger as he remembers.

- This is like a personal journal entry, so we get a peek into his praise; we get to witness his worship... and it starts with I THANK HIM!
- I thank him... what a place to start – it's a good way to start most conversations, prayers, days with God

a. Because Jesus strengthens the unequipped

***12a** I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful,*

- Paul is still mid flow of a conversation about protecting against false teachers and is contemplating what the TRUE gospel entrusted to him has CHANGED Him!
- “Judged” – to see, to think, to regard – an appraisal.
- It was only the faithfulness of Christ that Paul was united with that made him faithful. If not for that, he would simply be another false teacher. His praise was louder because Jesus strengthens the unequipped.
- But notice where his strength comes from – not his gifts, talents, skill – not his victories, ingenuities, originality or creativeness.
- His strength comes from HIM. Whatever you are called to in serving Him... He strengthens you to thrive in it. Being a mom, a dad, a teacher, in the military, in the

medical profession, finances, service industry, marketplace or ministry – whatever he has called you to, he strengthens you to do.

John 15:5 (ESV) 5 *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

- If you are having difficulty in that role right now, the first question to ask is am I depending on HIS strength or am I operating in my own strength – which might work for a season, but always runs dry.
- What you gain in the flesh, you must maintain in the flesh – But where you're led by the spirit you are strengthened by the Spirit.
- The only way to be equipped to accomplish His role for you is dependency of on HIM for strength – Jesus strengthens the unequipped.
- He's given Paul strength by HIS mercy and grace, and that fills his heart with praise

b. Because Jesus appoints the unqualified

12b *appointing me to his service, 13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,*

- Acts 8:3: Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.
- Acts 9:1: But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord...
- Acts 22:3–4 being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women.
- Acts 26:10–11...I not only locked up many of the saints in prison... and when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme.
- 1 Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
- “Ignorant” simply means Paul did not know the gospel. He did not understand it, and yet he thought he was doing what was right.
- That is exactly what Jesus predicted in John 16:2: “They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.”
- Paul thought he was serving God.

14 *and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

c. Because Jesus saves the unworthy

15 *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.*

- The false teachers' message was basically: you should be good enough, and God will accept you.
- And Jesus says, "I didn't call come to call the self-righteous to repentance. I came to call sinners to repentance.
- And the good news of the gospel today is that God can transform anybody; that no one is beyond the reach of God's saving grace
- 1 Corinthians 15:9 — written first, around the mid-50s.
"For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."
- Ephesians 3:8 — several years later, around AD 60–62.
"To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given..."
- 1 Timothy 1:15 — toward the end of his life, around AD 62–64.
"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."
- Notice the movement: least of the apostles, then least of the saints, then foremost of sinners. And in 1 Timothy he does not say "I was." He says "I am."
- The longer Paul walked with Jesus, the larger Jesus became—and the larger his sin looked—and the larger mercy appeared.

Illustration: Trampoline, the lower you go, the higher you go. "How many of you remember trampolines without nets? My people."

d. Because Jesus shows patience to the unrepentant.

16 *But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.*

- You are to look at Paul's life and say, "No one is beyond the reach of saving grace
- Don't presume upon the patience of Jesus. We celebrate the patience of Jesus, but there is a time when that patience will run out,

Now watch – as Jesus has gotten bigger, Paul’s praise is louder:

17 *To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

- Jonathan Edwards was an 18th-century pastor and theologian. He and his church in Northampton, Massachusetts, stood at the center of the Great Awakening—he is often called a father of that movement. People still know him for the sermon Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, the book Religious Affections, and his 70 Resolutions.
- But before all of that, he was a 17-year-old student with religion and little delight. Then he opened 1 Timothy 1:17: “To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”
- He later wrote, “As I read the words, there came into my soul... a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of scripture seemed to me as these words did.” He kept saying the verse over, almost singing it, and went to pray with a new kind of affection.
- That is verse 17. Mercy has already landed on a sinner. Then the sinner cannot help himself. He praises the King.

2. Stronger battles (vs 18-20)

18 *This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith,*

What is Paul doing? He is saying contend for the faith (belief in the gospel) in the midst of lies.

- Our enemy’s battle - is a battle against truth
- The believers’ battle - is a Battle for truth.

a. Battle of truth for the church

Acts 20:29–30 (ESV) 29 *I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

20 *among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

This is probably a reference to putting these two individuals outside the fellowship of the church and, hence, back into the world—the domain of Satan

The purpose of this excommunication, like that in 1 Cor. 5:5, is not punitive but, by the Spirit's convicting grace, restorative—that the two would recognize their errors and repent

Paul is telling Timothy: Be a pastor. A pastor is not merely a chaplain. A pastor protects the flock from wolves. He guards the people against false teaching that can destroy them. So he says to timid Timothy: deal with this. Do not look away.

b. Battle of truth for ourselves

By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith,

- Maybe Paul is thinking back on his shipwrecks – 2Cor 11 he says three of them.
- Luke records one of them in Acts 27

Paul is a prisoner on a grain ship bound for Rome. He warns them not to sail; they ignore him and push on. A northeaster hits. For days they see neither sun nor stars. They throw cargo overboard, then the ship's tackle. Hope of being saved is almost gone. Paul stands up: an angel of God has told him the ship will be lost, but every life will be spared if they stay with the vessel. Near land they run aground. The stern is smashed by the surf. The soldiers want to kill the prisoners. The centurion stops them because of Paul. He orders those who can swim to jump first. The rest grab planks and pieces of the ship. And all 276 make it safely to shore—and some came in on pieces.

- Do not be surprised when you go through storms. And do not be surprised when the storms get stronger as you live for Him. When Jesus gets bigger, the battle gets stronger.
- But some of you have already been in those storms—battles—without Him. No lighthouse. No good Captain. That is how a life becomes a wreck. Listen to me if that is you: the same Paul who gave that crew godly instruction in the dark is the same Paul giving you godly instruction today. God appointed him to speak, in His power, to you in this text.
- At the end of the story they made it to shore on broken pieces. The storm may have torn up your ship—your life. Only God can bring you home. It may be on broken pieces. It is still home. This is the household of God, the church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15).

CONCLUSION

- In The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Edmund sells his family for Turkish delight. The Witch has a claim on him. Deep magic says the traitor belongs to her. Aslan does not say Edmund should try harder. He does not say the other children were good enough to cover him. He walks to the Stone Table in Edmund's place.
- Because the strongest battle has already been won, you can face any battle – even if they grow with intensity.
- As you emerge from the battle victorious, you see Jesus bigger – which leads to worshipful praise

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS

1. Paul says Jesus “judged me faithful” and appointed him—after calling himself a blasphemer and the foremost of sinners. Where in your life are you still trying to become qualified before you depend on His strength, and what would it look like this week to serve from mercy instead of from self-reliance?
2. Some “made shipwreck of their faith” by rejecting faith and a good conscience; others in Acts 27 reached shore on broken pieces under God's word. What storm are you in (or pretending you are not in), and what would it mean—practically—to stay with the Captain and His household rather than abandoning the ship?