

Salvation and Service

Family of Faith, 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Introduction

- As we talked about last week, false teaching today is anything that alters, distorts, or obscures the gospel message.
 - That includes minimizing the seriousness of sin by:
 - Blaming it on other people or difficult circumstances.
 - Emphasizing some sins while downplaying others.
 - Neglecting certain portions of the Bible to avoid certain sins.
 - This is a key part of the gospel because you don't need a Savior if you're not really a sinner.
 - That includes minimizing the awesomeness of the Savior by:
 - Shrinking Him down to a good teacher or a social reformer.
 - Denying His supernatural actions, especially His resurrection.
 - Transforming Him into everybody's "best friend."
 - This is a key part of the gospel because you can't get saved if you don't have a Savior!
- God's people must avoid false teaching, but they must also embrace correct, sound, or healthy teaching. (Read passage)
- In these verses, we see that **salvation & Christian service are all of God's grace.**
 - The Apostle Paul shares from his own experience how his call to ministry & his conversion to faith came through God's abundant grace.
 - I've shared this story about Colombia in several circles, but not yet from the pulpit. One afternoon we visited a park, and I was struggling internally with self-doubt. It had just rained, and there weren't very many people there; I didn't know if the people who were there would be receptive; and as the team leader, I wanted everyone on the team to have a productive ministry experience. As our team fanned out to engage people, I spotted a young man and what I assumed was his mother taking their dog into an enclosed area for dog training. I had greeted them earlier in Spanish before asking questions about the dog in English. In time, I was able to strike up a conversation with the young man and then pass him off to some of my younger teammates who talked to him about all kinds of things, including his spiritual life. Later on, I learned the thing that piqued his interest, which was my bad Spanish. He was not interested in being in the park that day, but he was interested in practicing his English. When he heard my bad Spanish greeting, he knew that I was not a native speaker, and he wanted to learn more. I don't think this is an excuse for poor language preparation, but it was a reminder that our ability to minister to others is a gift from God.
- *In these verses we'll find 3 reasons why it's true – **that Salvation & Christian service are both, all of God's grace.** These reasons are all important to help us make the most of God's work in our lives.*

Body

I. We can't serve the Lord in our own power. (v. 12-14)

- A. The "strength" here is probably the power or ability to serve in ministry.
 1. In Paul's case, that included serving as an apostle and a bi-vocational missionary-church planter.
 2. That includes the assumption that every member of God's family will serve in some way. ("We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works." Eph. 2:10)
- B. Paul didn't find ministry on his own; he needed a merciful touch from God.
- C. Professional athletes do things with their bodies that the vast number of us can only dream about – catch a game-winning TD pass, hit a 90-mile-an-hour fastball. The athletes who keep their edge are the ones who remember that they have a rare gift & it won't last forever.

II. We can't save ourselves in our own power. (v. 15-6)

- A. The "trustworthy statement" would have been a truth that Paul's readers were well acquainted with.
 1. God's Son, Jesus Christ, is the One who brought salvation.
 2. Sinners are the ones who benefit from Christ's activity.
 3. As a representative, Paul claims to be the biggest sinner of all, not the smallest sinner.
- B. Once again, Paul shares his personal experience of someone who was touched by God's mercy and went from unbeliever to believer.
- C. Saving faith is the difference between what you are doing and what Jesus has done. (Person and tense)
 1. The level of perfection in His sacrifice allows it to cover any sin.
 2. His personal level of perfection makes His sacrifice available to all.

III. God's grace is worthy of our praise. (v. 17)

- A. The King in view is none other than God Himself.
- B. He is praised for His superior attributes, including His grace.
- C. The only reasonable response is worship & gratitude. If it's missing, then there's a problem!

Conclusion

- We cannot separate our conversion from our calling to serve – they are both all of God's grace to us!
- So what are you doing with them in your life?
 - Are you trusting in what Jesus has done or are you trusting in what you are doing to...?
 - Are you serving somewhere in the kingdom or are you content to have others serve you?
- We can gather, and sing, and raise our hand and say "Amen," but the real is how God's grace is being worked out in our lives from day to day and week to week.