



## Least of All Saints

***To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ ([Eph 3:8](#))***

Without a doubt, the Apostle Paul was used by God to bring the gospel to more people than just about anyone in history. His call to take the gospel to the Gentiles likely resulted in you and I having it today! Paul was totally committed to the Lord and fully surrendered to His will, and because of this Christ has been proclaimed across the globe. This type of surrender required extraordinary humility of the heart.

Paul was educated under a prestigious Pharisee named Gamaliel and in strict accordance with Jewish law (see [Acts 22:3](#)). He had incredible credentials in religious circles (see [Phil 3:4-6](#)), but when Christ Himself called Paul to preach the gospel, he had to leave all that behind. Like the other disciples, when Jesus calls to you and says, “follow Me,” you drop everything and go (cf: [Matt 4:18-20](#), etc). Paul did this by walking away from all he had worked for and earned as a Jewish Pharisee. His religious qualifications no longer meant anything, and he counted it all as loss for the sake of Christ ([Phil 3:7-8](#)).

In our passage today, Paul said he was the ***very least of all saints***. In a similar sentiment, he told Timothy, ***“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”*** ([1 Tim 1:15](#)). Maybe you have flippantly said something like this before while noting your lowly position or an obvious sin. I know I have. But Paul’s true, deeply rooted humility and genuine acceptance of his utter depravity were key to being a fruitful messenger of the gospel.

This is further demonstrated by what Paul said next to Timothy: ***“Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost [sinner], Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”*** ([1 Tim 1:16](#))

Paul recognized that he was indeed a sinner rotten to the core, and that only by God’s unfathomable and unmerited grace was he saved and given this ministry to the Gentiles. He understood that his profuse and grave sins prior to salvation were being turned into an example of God’s great mercy and patience. As someone who had previously counted himself righteous by his own works, this was a drastic and astonishing transformation that can only happen when the Holy Spirit changes a heart and a person lives in a posture of surrender.

Jesus reminds us of this need for complete surrender and dependence on Him when He says, ***“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever***



***abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*** ([John 15:4-5](#))

Each of us should prayerfully deliberate this truth in our own hearts. Am I abiding in Christ in this way? Am I completely dependent on Him for my sustenance both physically and spiritually? Am I really surrendered to His will even if it means walking away from something I worked hard for? Am I viewing myself as Paul did – a wretched, broken, sinful human saved only by God’s unfathomable grace and mercy? Am I counting my position, my education, my accomplishments, my lineage, even my ministry, as anything of value apart from Christ?

The temptation to take pride in our works, knowledge, or accomplishments is one most of us will likely struggle with all our lives. It’s one of Satan’s most effective tools for extinguishing a Christian’s ministry and witness, and brings great displeasure to our Lord (cf: [Gen 3:5-7](#), [Prov 16:18](#), [21:4](#), etc). We should constantly bring this powerful temptation before the Lord, set at His feet in prayer, and ask Him to keep us from it.

Using Paul’s life as an example, we can see that God often uses the most selfless, meek, and humble hearts to do the heaviest lifting and make the biggest impact for His kingdom.