

A Pattern of Mercy

Radio Broadcast

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Bible Text: 1 Timothy 1:15,16

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Welcome to the Grace Abounding broadcast brought to you by the congregation of the Shreveport Grace Church that meets at 2970 Baird Road in Shreveport, LA. My name is Ken Wimer and it is my privilege to bring to you today a message that seeks to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious person and finished work of salvation accomplished for sinners at the cross. Please stay tuned.

I'm reading for you today from 1 Timothy 1:15-16 and I'd like to speak with you on the gospel pattern for those who believe. There is a pattern that is clearly defined in Scripture as to what the gospel is and how it is to be communicated. And this is how we read it here in 1 Timothy 1:15-16: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering," and here it is, "for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Now, in a world with so much profession in religion, how refreshing it is to have the Word of God to weigh every motive, manner and message against what is written here by this inspired Word of God especially where it regards men's testimonies. How do you know what is true and what isn't? There are many voices today that are speaking on behalf of God and much confusion as a result. One man will say, "Well, here's the pattern," and another one will say, "No, this is the pattern." Well, Paul here tells us that the way that he obtained mercy is a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on the Lord Jesus to life everlasting.

So, let's consider these two matters in this time that we have together today. First: how Paul's example is a pattern and then secondly, why Paul's example is a pattern. So, first of all: how? How is Paul's example of how it was that the Lord was pleased to deliver him, save his soul, how was that a pattern hereafter for all who should believe on the Lord Jesus to life everlasting? Well, the word for pattern that is used here in verse 16 of 1 Timothy 1, it means an outline or sketch. It's really two words in the original that are combined into one. It's made up of the word *bi* or under and then the second part of the word is to mark with a stroke or a blow or to print or form a figure by some blow or impression and that's what the word means.

So, why, then, is Paul's example given as a pattern? I believe there are a couple of points here to underline in reference to this point. First of all, we see it is a pattern of how God saves sinners and secondly, it's a pattern of why God saves sinners. Let's see how this is taught here. First of all, how God saves sinners. You see here that there has ever been only one means, one manner and one message of how God saves sinners. Now, I know this is not a popular statement today where many are saying you can't be exclusive and you can't be distinctive and you can't be absolutely sure of anything. Well, I do believe in the Bible as the Word of God and I trust you do as well. I believe it is the inspired Word of God and I believe it gives us the authority in all matters of faith and practice and doctrine and in it we find the pattern, the way, in which God has purposed to save sinners.

Just in the earlier part of 1 Timothy 1 in verse 11, Paul describes how God works according to, notice, "*the* glorious gospel of *the* blessed God which was committed to my trust." Two definite articles, *the* not just gospel but glorious gospel; that gospel that glorifies the Lord God in salvation from beginning to end and exalts his precious Son as the Redeemer and the Savior of sinners. It's *the* glorious gospel of *the* blessed God. He is to be blessed because salvation is of him from beginning to end. And so, we see an example here of not only the means or the way in which God saves sinners but also the manner or method in which he saves them. And we find the means described in verse 14 of 1 Timothy 1. I'm taking you back into the context; I realize that I began with verses 15 and 16 where Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." But the context is found up in verse 14 where the Apostle Paul describes the means or how, the way in which God saves sinners; giving his own testimony where he declares, "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

So, if you were to ask me, "What is the means or way in which God saves sinners?" The answer is, by grace alone. Or read again, verse 14, "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." He's the source of the faith, he's the source of the love but he's also the object of the faith and the object of the love which the Spirit grants to the heart of those that he came to save, but it's all based upon *the* grace, there again it's a definite article, *the* grace of our Lord and it's described as exceeding abundant. Grace that is greater than all our sin. It might be overwhelming to the sinner and impossible for that sinner, himself, to satisfy a holy God but here is *the* grace of our Lord that was made exceeding abundant and given to sinners such as we are that God might be just and declare righteous or just every one for whom Christ died.

So, this is how God saves sinners, it's by his grace alone. Grace is the undeserved, unmerited favor of God in Christ. But we also see the manner in which God saves sinners. So, both of these answer the how, how Paul's example and why he is a pattern. The how and the manner is described there in verse 15, it is through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone at Calvary. So, by grace alone and through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone at Calvary. It says that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. It does not say that he came to try to save sinners or try to save as many as possible, but to save. It was at the cross that every sinner that God has ever purposed to

save and has saved, he has once for all saved and delivered there through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was there at the cross that all that God redeemed, he justified – that is, to declare righteous – he sanctified, he set apart unto his holiness, he adopted and he reconciled to himself because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of those sinners that God chose in Christ from the foundation of the world were at one time reconciled to God and justified or declared righteous before God.

We find that confirmed in the epistle to the Hebrews in chapter 9. I'm going to read this for you. It's quite a lengthy portion but I'll read it because it underscores this point in this message, that there's one way and one manner in which God has saved sinners. So, Hebrews 9:12 it says, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" So, we see there that up to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ all of those blood sacrifices of goats and calves were but a covering in that it pointed to this one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ because verse 12 says, "but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

So, that's where redemption took place and as we continue to read in Hebrews 9:15 it says, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." When the Scriptures speaks of a testament think of a will and testament. If you have a will, it is a testament as to what should be done with your goods and you name in that will or that testament who it is that is to receive those goods upon your death. This is the pattern that we find in Scripture that shows how God saves sinners.

There is a message today that says it's up to each one of us but what we read here is that this is a matter that God has settled. We don't take and put our names in the other people's wills in order to receive of their inheritance. No, they take that matter and decide who it is that they're going to name in that will and if we give that choice or that liberty to men, why would we think it would be any less so with God himself that he himself should choose who it is that should share in that eternal inheritance and blessing and enjoyment of his Son throughout eternity. We don't deserve it. When our father Adam fell, this trial was over and we were put under condemnation because of his disobedience; there was an imputation of his sin to us even though we were not yet born.

And you say, "Well, how is that fair?" Well, I'm thankful that this matter of salvation is based upon imputation. It's not up to me to try to satisfy a holy God in order to find acceptance with him but he has sent his Son and the Scripture say in 1 Timothy 1:15, "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." So, why would any except they be rebels fight against how God has declared that he will give of that inheritance of eternal life to sinners?

“This is a faithful saying,” dear friend, “and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” And Paul takes his place as a sinner because he says, “of whom I am chief.” So, he is one of these that is described here in Hebrews 9:15 that would’ve been under the first testament, the law, and condemned until Christ paid the debt. And by that one debt it says, “they which are called,” *the* called, “might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”

So, it’s describing there why it is that Christ had to die and that speaks in verse 19 of when Moses and the law, “had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood,” and it says, “without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary,” here it is, “that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” Of course, it’s talking about the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, that’s how Paul and his salvation is a pattern to those that should believe. It’s by grace and it’s through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone at Calvary. And the message by which God reveals this salvation, is the gospel of Jesus Christ and 1 Timothy 1:15 sums up the gospel, Christ Jesus came into the world to save and having saved sinners, even the chief. So, we see here a message of mercy in the Lord Jesus that is unto life everlasting. This is how this a pattern.

Verse 16, Paul says, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy.” The message of the gospel is that of mercy and never merit. Paul establishes his own testimony as the pattern of saving grace and mercy for all who believe as a result of God’s sovereign grace and mercy towards them. This word “pattern” occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except for 2 Timothy 1:13 where it is rendered “form.” It properly means a form or a sketch or delineation just like an engineer might sit down and take a pen or pencil and sketch out a pattern of something that he intends to build. Well, in 2 Timothy 1:13 Paul said, “Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

So, that’s the message; we’re looking at how God is pleased to save sinners. What is the means, what is the manner and what is the message? So, it denotes a pattern or an example and here it means that the case of Paul was an example and that for the encouragement of sinners in all subsequent times. Look at it there in 1 Timothy 1:16, “for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” It was that to which they might look when any are brought by the Spirit of God to desire forgiveness and salvation. Sometimes you may stop and wonder how it is that God can save a wretch like me and many may, in the consternation of their own souls, wonder whether or not God could ever save them. Well, Paul gives himself here as a pattern of the chief of

sinners. He said, “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” And so, even as the Lord has been pleased to use this “in my own heart” to see that if he has saved the chief of sinners, then it must be that there is grace and mercy for one such as I.

So, in this sense, Paul sets himself as a pattern. But, secondly, it furnished the illustration and argument which any might need to show that there is forgiveness with the Lord through the death of his Son alone. And here, dear friend, I exhort you, do not look within yourself for any hope for peace; do not look around you but look to Christ alone because apart from his death, his doing, his dying, there is no hope. But put positively: in his death, in his doing, in his dying is all the hope that a sinner needs before a holy God because God himself has said that that shed blood of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the cause, the reason for him forgiving sins. And, indeed, because of being satisfied by the death of his Son, every sin of every one for whom Christ died has already been put away. That’s the cleansing, through his blood, that is already come. It’s not when the sinner confesses his sin that God forgives him but he confesses his sin before the Lord because it’s the Spirit of God that manifests in his heart or her heart that Christ has already paid that debt according to the Word.

Thirdly, it settles the question forever that the greatest sinners have received the most gracious pardon in the death of Christ. Christ said he did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. And Paul was the chief of sinners, so it proved that a case could not occur which was beyond the possibility of mercy if God is pleased to show mercy. O what good news! There is no case too difficult for God and it’s for sinners that Christ came.

So, we would do well to read and study his pattern rather than the modern day testimonies of men that are as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal and form to the truth. Here is a message of mercy in the Lord Jesus unto life everlasting and this is a message of mercy and of God’s longsuffering towards sinners for Christ’s sake. It says there as Paul declared it in 1 Timothy 1:16, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering.” His patient enduring with Paul as a vessel of mercy in distinction with those who are vessels of wrath and who will suffer the full weight of God’s wrath in their eternal condemnation. Yes, here again, is a message that is not popular and yet it is the truth according to the Word, that there are vessels of mercy and there are vessels of wrath. There are those that, from eternity, God has purposed to save and has saved by his Son and there are those that God leaves to themselves as he says in Romans 1, “is given over to their own reprobate minds.” And they live out their lives under God’s longsuffering but ultimately are condemned because they have no ransom, no one has paid their debt and they have lived to their own glory and satisfaction throughout their life.

The word “longsuffering” here in 1 Timothy 1:16 in the original, again, is a compound word that means that no matter how much you heat up an object it never reaches the boiling point. So, when Paul says that God “might shew forth all longsuffering” think of the highest possible degree of forbearance in order that a case might never occur about

which there could be any doubt. It was shown by his example, that of Paul, that there is mercy with the Lord Jesus for the greatest imaginable offender. When the Lord said to that thief on the cross that day that he himself lay down his life, “today you will be with me in paradise,” he required nothing of the thief. Some say, “Well, you have to raise your hand.” His hands were nailed to the cross. Some say that you have to walk an aisle. His feet were nailed to the cross. He was bound, completely tied to his condemnation and yet through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ he told that thief, “today you will be with me in paradise.” Ah, what a message of mercy and of God’s longsuffering towards sinners for Christ’s sake.

Thirdly, it’s a message of mercy unto faith. Notice the biblical order is mercy then faith. Paul said, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” When God brings a sinner to bow in submission to Christ and his righteousness imputed, it is not then that mercy is shown, the pattern is the reverse. It is the mercy of God in Christ that brings the sinner to bow much as looking in the eye of a victor and seeing his merciful countenance and intentions of showing mercy, the conquered foe bows the neck to the victor’s sword and pledges allegiance to his cause.

But, notice finally, that it’s a message of mercy unto life everlasting. We’ve been looking at how Paul was a pattern and why he was a pattern. And we’ve been looking at the means whereby God saves sinners, by grace alone, the manner which is through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone and the message, a message of mercy in the Lord Jesus unto life everlasting, a message of mercy and of God’s longsuffering towards sinners for Christ’s sake, a message of mercy which is unto faith. All those for whom God has purposed this mercy, he does, indeed, grant faith in time. But, finally, a message of mercy unto life everlasting. That’s what the Scripture says here in 1 Timothy 1:16, “to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” Here the words “life everlasting” are a reference to the enjoyment of God’s presence in Christ throughout eternity, from that point forward whom to know is life eternal. It’s not implying that faith comes first and then life is given. None could believe but what life is first given but it is unto a life everlasting that can never be taken away because of the glorious imputed and unchangeable merits of the Lord Jesus.

In other words, those whom God purposed to save, dear friend, were vessels of mercy first by his divine election. God chose them even before life was given them to be brought from spiritual darkness to life, God chose them. Now, election is not the life but it was a mercy unto life everlasting. Secondly, those for whom Christ died on the cross they were saved, mercy was shown there from the legal demands. They were saved from charges against them from the fall of Adam but at the time that he died, many for whom he died were already dead and many of the rest of us were not yet born. However, being born physically into this world, now, we were born already justified before God if Christ paid the debt and God’s mercy toward us was unto life everlasting. Such is the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I wonder, dear friend, is this the pattern that you have been taught to this point? I know that men confuse this subject by purporting to give you different ways of coming to God or being saved but there is but one pattern, Paul has given here as *the* pattern. How was it that he was saved? Well, it was through the mercy of God and his grace alone and through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. And if Christ has paid your debt, I can say with all certainty that even if to this point he's not yet by his Spirit revealed himself in you, he will because he's going to have every one for whom he paid the debt. O what grace! O what mercy! What a Redeemer!

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