

## 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy Ch 1:12-20

“Time For A Testimony”

Peter tells me, and tells you that you're to, *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.”* 1 Peter 3:15 and Though there are a number of ways we can do this, be it through reasoning about the depravity of man, or engaging that individual in theological truths of the bible, or even simply sharing God's Word in a straight forward manner, all of which can be effective and even necessary on a given situation. But I believe that sometimes the most effective thing we can do for an individual who asks us a reason for the hope that lies with in us is to simply share our testimony.

We find this happening throughout the scriptures. You recall in Ex ch 12 when God was giving Moses the ordinance concerning the Passover that He said to the children of Israel, *“It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' That you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'”* Ex 12:25-27 In other words when your kids ask you why you do what you do, when they're curious about the lifestyle you're leading share with them your testimony. Tell them where you were, and the great things that God has done for you in order to deliver you from that place, that now out of your love for God, because He 1<sup>st</sup> loved you, you've chosen to serve Him all the days of your life.

My son knows that daddy hasn't always been a Christian, I've told him that I used to do things that now I'm ashamed of, things that only bring hurt, things to try and fill an emptiness and a void that was in my heart. But God in His great love and mercy, by His grace reached down into my life and yanked me out of that pit of despair, and has set me upon the solid rock of Jesus Christ and now I want to serve him my whole life, and with my whole heart.

Ps 66:16 says, *“Come and hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul.”* You recall when Jesus delivered the man who was demon possessed, had no less than 2,000 demons in him (it would seem by the text) *“Legion, for we are many.”* After the Lord cast them into the herd of swine and the man was found sitting at Jesus feet in his right mind we read where the man wanted to be with Jesus, wanted to stay with Jesus and follow Him wherever He went. But we read that Jesus didn't permit him to stay with them but rather He said to him, *“Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”* *“And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.”* Mark 5:19-20 He didn't tell him to run off to Bible College so that he could be equipped to share God's Word, make sure he had a solid grasp on the Pentateuch, OT history, poetry, and the major and minor prophets being able to divide them inductively before he tried to minister.

He said, “Go today, and tell your friends what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He’s had compassion on you.” Now I’m not knocking Bible College, it can be a wonderful thing, but don’t think that Bible College is what equips you for the ministry; Jesus Christ is the only One who can do that. (and We’ll see that today), but often times when people are considering going on a short term missions trip or something one of the primary concerns seems to be a feeling of being ill equipped for the work. They feel as though they don’t know what to say, and I always try to encourage them that if they know Jesus Christ then they have something to say; we won’t go there but read John ch 9 sometime.

There you’ll see where Jesus healed a blind man and the Pharisees were cross-examining this man about what happened, and the man shared his testimony, they kept badgering him, and badgering him and finally he just says, “Look, one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” and You all (who know Jesus Christ) have that much to say, “I don’t know much, can’t even answer all your questions, but this one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see, and this man named Jesus is the One who changed my life.”

This morning, Paul having shared the need for sound doctrine, that is the doctrine of the grace of God vs the Law, the glorious gospel that was committed to his trust. It drives him to share the reality of how the gospel (in truth) Jesus Christ having risen from the dead making Himself real to Paul not through the Law, but by grace, changed his life. and As Warren Wiersbe states, “The mention of the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, (literal translation, 1:11) moved Paul to share his own personal testimony. He was “Exhibit A” to prove the Gospel of the grace of God really works.”

As I overview our text I see with in it (dipping into last weeks text just slightly) 6 points that I want to draw your attention to, though we won’t spend much time on them I would like for you to see them. 4 of them dealing with Paul, the results being the other 2 which deal with Timothy. If you take notes, 6 words that touch our text today are #1 Entrusted, (vs 11) #2 Enabled, (vs12) #3 Enlisted (Vs 12) #4 Example (Vs 16) and #5 Encourage and #6 Endure, both of which are sort of simultaneously wrapped up in vs18, the things that Paul shares with him are meant to encourage him and exhort him to endure.

#1 I’m not going to spend any time on outside the fact that we need to acknowledge it as we see it there in vs 11. Paul says there flowing out of the context of the need for the Law being for the lawless (read).So the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the sin of the world, and righteousness before God being found in *Him* rather than in the *Law*, was “Entrusted” to Paul.

## Vs 12-13

The 1<sup>st</sup> thing that I want you to see here (though we'll weave in and out of our points previously mentioned) is the fact that Paul was a thankful man. Now anyone who knows anything about Paul knows that if anyone had the right to grow bitter about their lot in life, it was him. (Look quickly at 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch 11 vs 23-28)

I mean this is a man who from the inception of his calling was said of the Lord, *"I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."* Acts 9:16 Not "might suffer" but "must suffer", This was just his lot in life, now I don't know about you but I think I might become bitter if my whole life was marked by one hardship after another, but I think that in here lies the key to overcoming bitterness and feelings of resentment. Be thankful, Paul was continually thanking God, and exhorting us to do likewise, it didn't matter if he was in a prison cell, he was singing praises and offering thanksgiving, he knew he deserved hell, but God had given him everlasting life. So he said, *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* Rom 8:18 and *"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."* 2 Cor 4:17 You see here was a man who knew the heart of God, and trusted God with his life, and so he was thankful to God regardless of what was happening in the present moment, he said (vs 12).

So not only was Paul *thankful* but he was *faithful*, he was trustworthy, it didn't matter if it was much or if it was little, whatever task was committed to his trust he was found faithful with it. and Paul said of a steward, *"It is required in stewards that one be found faithful."* 1 Cor 4:2 His faithfulness resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 points of the 6. Because he was faithful, the Lord "entrusted" him with the gospel "enabled" him to perform the tasks that he would be called to, and "enlisted" him into the ministry. So already in vs 12 we see 2 qualities that the apostle possesses that the Lord looks favorably upon, he was thankful, and he was faithful. and Out of that the Lord entrusted him with the gospel, he "enabled" him to carry out his responsibilities.

Now this is worth considering for just a moment, Christ is the one who enables us to do that which He calls us to do, seminary is not what enables us, a good support team is not what enables us. Jesus said very clearly, and very candidly, *"Without Me you can do nothing."* John 15:5

But conversely (as you well know) Paul also understood that *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Phil 4:13 Why, because it's Christ who enables me, I wish that we could take to heart those 2 vs and let them have their way in our hearts and in our lives. We intellectually and theologically consent that those things are right, but so often we don't practically abide by them. We try and do things on our own, with out Christ, and then when He calls us to do something we feel as though we can't. But Christ's callings are Christ's equippings; it's Christ Jesus our Lord who *enables* us to carry out that which He has *entrusted* to us.

Because of that He selection process is much different than ours, we so often look on a résumé' for the most qualified individual, we want to know how much skill they have, how many yrs of experience they've acquired, who seems to be the most qualified for the job so that we don't have to mess with training people. But God is just the opposite, He looks for the least qualified man, the least likely woman, and then He enables them, enlists them and gets all the glory. and Such was the case with Paul, if you were to look around in the world that day, Paul was the least likely man that you'd have ever imagined God using for His glory, but God enabled him, and then God enlisted him into the ministry.

Again no man places us into the ministry, we often say that the ministry isn't a career choice it's a calling, and that's exactly true. Not just anyone can place you in the military, you have to be enlisted, and then once you are, you're expected to carry out your duties. You don't entangle yourself with the affairs of this life, but you seek to please the one who enlisted you as a soldier. The same is true with the ministry, once we give our hearts to Christ, we don't entangle ourselves again with the things of this world, so that we might be dedicated and consecrated, well pleasing to Jesus Christ who enlisted us as soldiers that we might fight the good fight of faith. God honors faithfulness. So be faithful with what God's placed before you, again be it your family, your spouse, your employment, or the area in which you serve and God will entrust you with more. But if you're always looking for a way out, or are into convenience only, then don't expect God to entrust you with greater things. I tell the people that serve here, God honors consistent commitment, not convenient commitment, in short, faithfulness, God's into it, why; because He's faithful...Paul was faithful (vs 13)

You can read the book of Acts and get a head's up regarding the type of man that Paul was, but he tells us right here that he was a blasphemer, he denied the deity of Christ, he was a man who breathed threats and murders against the Christians and before he would have them put to death he sought to compel them to blaspheme. He was a persecutor, would enter into Christians houses and drag them off against their will to be put to death for their faith in Christ, when Stephen the 1<sup>st</sup> martyr was killed Paul (Saul at the time) held everyone's coats while they stoned him. and Even though Saul of Tarsus prided himself on keeping the letter of the Law, in his blasphemes he violated the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 in violating his relationship to God, and in persecuting the Christians he violated the last 5 regarding his relationship to man who has been created in God's image.

He was an insolent man, which in reality means he was an arrogant know it all who was driven by violence. But he says I obtained mercy because he was ignorant and unbelieving, this doesn't mean that ignorance is an excuse, but it does mean that ignorance invites God's mercy. Everyone here who knows Jesus Christ is a testimony to that fact, before you came to Him you led your life doing the things you did out of ignorance, in unbelief regarding the person of Jesus Christ and who He really is. But when you were made aware, not just in your head, but in your heart as to who He was, and you responded to that reality, you were shown mercy, (notice vs 14)

## Vs14

Notice what we're seeing in vs 13-14. "Mercy", "Grace", "faith", and "Love" all of which are exceedingly abundant in Christ Jesus, and lavished upon us in Christ, and then in turn become the characteristics of those who are in Christ, we're to be merciful to one another, even as Jesus has been merciful to us. We're to be exceedingly and abundantly gracious, forgiving and being forgiven by one another, trusting God for even the details of our lives, or to sum it all up to exude the Love of God, by the Spirit of God, for the fruit of the Spirit in your life, is love. Jesus said, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* John 13:35 I was driving down the road the other day with this vs on my heart and God just sort of whispered to my heart something to the effect of this; "Why is the divorce rate the same in the body of Christ as it is in the world?" and I thought, it's our lack of love for one another, and then I was reminded again of this vs, Jesus said that it's our love for one another that will show the world we're His and though we're careful to try and display in these 4 walls, how quickly that evaporates in our homes. But we need to realize that love isn't simply an emotion, or an infatuation, those things come and go, but it's a willful choice to die to self and live for the other. What a sad indictment against the church, so many not even able to love the one whom God has given them to cherish all the days of their lives.

## Vs15

This is the good news right here, the gospel in a nutshell. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, the 1<sup>st</sup> thing we need to see is that Christ Jesus, "Came into the world" His existence (unlike us) didn't begin at His physical birth. He existed long before this world ever did, outside of space and time in the realm of the eternal. Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."* John 8:58 As in Moses saying, "Who should I say sent me?" When speaking to God in the burning bush, and the Lord answered, "I Am that I Am." The eternally present One, the apostle John from the very begin is careful to make clear that Jesus had no beginning and He has no end, the Word was with God, and the Word was God, He was in the beginning with God, and all things were made through Him and with out Him nothing was made that was made. Now if "all" things were made through Him, then how could He Himself be created as the J.W.'s purport? Jesus Christ is the eternal God come into the world for an express purpose, and that purpose is this, "to save sinners."

Again John tells us in the very words of Jesus, *"God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* John 3:17 You remember that the angel announced to Joseph that the male child who was in Mary's womb would "save His people from their sins." Again Jesus said, *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* Luke 19:10 Again, Matt 9:13 *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."* Now that doesn't imply that there's anyone who's righteous by their own merit, but what Jesus is saying is there are those who think they don't need Jesus, they're just fine on their own. They're self-righteous and un-open to the fact of the matter of them being sinners like the rest of us, so they refuse to respond to the call of Jesus to come unto Him and rest, or to quench the thirst of their souls by the torrents of living waters that He offers to all who are thirsty.

But the bible says that, “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” Rom 3:23 That we all like sheep have gone astray, the bible says that, “*There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.*” Rom 3:10-12 There is not a person who has ever walked the topside of this earth (outside of Jesus Christ) who has not sinned, we’re all sinners!

Which brings comfort to my heart, how so? Because that means I qualify to be saved, if you’re not a sinner you can’t be saved! So many people are worried that God will never accept them because their wretched sinners (as if there’s any other kind) but if you aren’t a sinner, you aren’t a candidate for salvation, because Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. But you may say, “That maybe Jeff, but you don’t know me, I’ve got to be the worst.” Sorry that positions already been filled, the Holy Spirit qualified Paul for that position, so if God’s already saved the chief of sinners, then you’ve got nothing to fear. and That’s exactly why God saved Saul of Tarsus, the blasphemer, and persecutor, breathing threats and murders, being arrogant, feeding on violence; God hating all of those things. But He saved Paul that he might serve as an example, or as a pattern to us to say, if God can save this man, I know He can save me.

Vs16

God patiently waits on us, and He waited on Saul of Tarsus as a pattern, or as an “example” (Pt # 4) to show the extent of His patience, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Knowing the kind of man that Paul was before he met Christ, and seeing that God would wait on him and receive him once he repented should serve as hope for anyone. and You know, that’s why God saved you, and that’s why God saved me, to give glory to Himself and offer hope to everyone else. So that people would say, “Man, if God will accept Jeff, He’ll accept anyone!” God didn’t save you to get you out of hell, or to get you into heaven, (those things are benefits no doubt, but not the primary reason). He didn’t save you in order that He might love you more, that’s impossible, it’s impossible that God could love you more than He did before the world began, it’s God’s love that caused Him to give His Son for you, but it’s not the means that enables God to love you, that’s the expression of His love for you. The primary reason you were saved was to bring God glory, we read in Eph 2:7 that the reason we’ve been made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ is so, “...*that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*” So that in eternity to come you might be, I might be a trophy of His grace, that people would say, “Just look at Jeff over there, what a demonstration of the exceeding riches of the grace of God that he’s here, what kindness God has shown him in Christ, glory to God!” We were saved to bring glory to God, and to be an example to others that God can save anyone.

Having dwelt on the reality of who God is, and reflected on what He's done on his behalf, and how He's changed his life, Paul can't help now but erupt in this spontaneous moment of praise.

Vs17

Eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, Prov 21:30 tells us, "*There is no wisdom or understanding Or counsel against the LORD.*" He alone is wise, and to Him be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Vs18

So having shared his testimony, Paul would have Timothy be, #5 "encouraged" as he exhorts him to be committed to this charge, and that he might #6 "endure" by waging the good warfare.

Timothy evidently had a propensity to waver through intimidation when it came to the call of God upon his life. and Paul is reminding him that God has a plan for his life, that it's been laid out very clearly for him and that he's to stick to it, that he might wage the good warfare and fight the good fight of faith. and Apparently his call to defend the faith and tend the flock, to nurture and feed the sheep was part of the calling that had been uttered through the laying on of hands and prophecy, and Paul is reminding him here of that, saying in essence, "Don't forget the word of the Lord for your life, I know you feel like ducking out, but stick in there, because God is faithful and He's going to see to it that the office He's established you in will stand." Later on in ch 4 we'll see again where Paul admonishes him, "*Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.*" 1 Tim 4:14 So even though things seem crazy out of control, like you're in a no win situation, you hang on to the word that God has spoken to you. and The same is true for you, even if you've maybe never been the direct recipient of prophetic utterance that's proven itself against the word of God, you have all kinds of it right here in God's Word, more than you can absorb in this lifetime, and you hang on to it.

Vs19

Faith, and a good conscience, 2 key elements in waging the good warfare; faith we've spent time on, it's our shield which quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one, it causes us to trust God and believe in His Word regardless of how things appear, because things aren't always how they appear. Read 2 Kings ch 6 for commentary on that, but this primarily speaks of "the faith" speaking of the pure teaching of the Word of God. and We're to have right doctrine, and a good conscience is critical when it comes to fighting the good fight. Our conscience being that which accuses or excuses us, you might say that the conscience is to the soul what pain is to the body, and as to where pain warns us that the body's well being is threatened, the conscience is that which warns us that our souls well-being is threatened. and To keep it simple, pure living grants us a pure conscience, and pure living accommodates pure doctrine, they're inseparable.

Many times the reason people teach wrong doctrine is to accommodate their sin, and if you reject the conviction of your conscience long enough it becomes seared as with a hot iron (the bible says). To reject faith and the conviction of your conscience will render you spiritually shipwrecked, we need to receive the conviction of our conscience rather than reject it. and If our conscience fails to convict us but God's Word is clear on an issue we need to be quick to repent and ask God to remove the calluses that have built up on our hearts that we might once again sense the Holy Spirit's conviction on our lives, lest we become shipwrecked.

Vs20

Whether this is an apostolic discipline the commentaries debate, but one thing seems evident and that is they were removed from fellowship and taken out of the protective hedge that the body of Christ offers, and apparently any form of spiritual hedge that God would supply to the believers. So not a favorable place to be, but sometimes necessary so that in the end repentance might come about, 1 Cor ch 5 alludes to this being the giving someone over to the desires of their flesh so that as they experience the corruption of the flesh they might repent and though they may physically die, their spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Because Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, so the call goes out, *"And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."* Rev 22:17

So if you're here today and you're able to admit that you've erred in your life, that you don't measure up to the holy standards of God, then Christ Jesus is standing here waiting to save you, if you'll only take hold of His hand and invite Him into your life.