

1 TIMOTHY October 23, 2022

1 Timothy 1:12-17

¹² I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, 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, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 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.** 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. ¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. ¹

If you were to peruse your news feed of choice it would not be difficult to collect headlines and stories that highlight bad news, shootings, murders, sexual abuse, theft, political uprisings, wars, rumors of wars, and so on.

There will be some good news stories as well because even those who put such information out know the populace needs that. Yet, those stories rarely get the big headline or gain trending status. While some may blame the media machines for that, it is truly just a window into human nature. These bad news stories exist for one basic reason – because there are a lot of bad news stories.

It becomes very clear how easy it is to become cynical, negative, pessimistic, and frustrated with...just about everyone and everything. Woe is us.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Ti 1:12–17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Some here today may be struggling as much now as ever with what feels like swimming through mud, as you fear the state of the world, the morality of your children and grandchildren, the political realities of our nation and community, and all that is continually fed through the now ever-present 24-hour news entertainment machine.

In fact, some of you likely gather for prayer under the banner of “It’s never been this bad. Woe is us! Something has to change.” Can I be honest with you? Some of you need to quit watching Fox News. Or if that’s not your flavor, quit watching CNN. Stop tuning in to MSNBC. Listen to me now. I’m not calling for your collective ignorance, but I am seeking to guide you with wisdom for your own health. Check the latest news. Read headlines. But turn off the continual feed that will perpetually fuel fear. And, by doing so, you won’t have to be reminded every fifteen minutes that there’s a lawsuit going on for everyone that ever was stationed at Camp Lejeune.

Bad news is **EVERYWHERE**.

That’s what makes good news so good.

It is rare.

It’s like finding a precious jewel in the midst of muck.

And for the redeemed, for the followers of Christ, for the collective family members who have new names, new identities, new focus, new hope, it is **EVERYTHING**.

Bad news is **EVERYWHERE**.

Good news is **EVERYTHING!**

In Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus through the pastor Timothy, he is clearly overwhelmed with this goodness. It’s amazing that only a bit through what we have designated as chapter one in this letter, the author,

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God does not back down when calling sinful behavior sin. He does not water down his message when instructing Timothy to deal directly with the false teachers who have joined the church, caused division, focused on myths and extra-biblical writings to such a degree that they portend to hold secret knowledge for those desiring deep thinkers.

So as he is giving clear instructions and calling out sin, and listing some of the sins that were evident in the church and community, he shifts. One commentator calls it a digression into glory.

It is almost like a side bar in a trial.

It is in this passage that Paul states who Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God the Son, second person of the Trinity, truly is.

And this is amazing.

Jesus the Judge

¹²I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,²

Jesus judged Paul.

We always hear it from those who are angry at the church, angry at Christians, who have encountered angry Christians that God doesn't judge. You've heard it. It's a lie, but it sounds good.

Perhaps you have seen the \$100 million advertisement campaign called "He Gets Us."

There has been quite a bit of traction for it recently, which is not a surprise since there's \$100 million behind it.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Ti 1:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

NBC News ran a story titled “He Gets Us ad campaign aims to rebrand Jesus.”

The Washington Post stated “A \$100 million campaign aims to fix Jesus’ brand from followers’ damage.”

Those headlines may resonate with many. Perhaps with you. Some of you are likely thinking “*Yeah, we need that. Christians and so-called Christians have really messed up Jesus’ message.*” That may be true and likely is in many ways as Christ has been coopted by political pundits, brand managers, false religions, heretical teachers, and simply...really bad examples of Christians.

But, believe me, God is not in heaven thinking “If only we had a big advertisement campaign to fix Jesus’ image.”

He Gets Us is not something I would endorse. It is clear the money has been used well to get the word out. Their commercials are great. Their website is solid. Their hashtags are trendy. But their Jesus is not Jesus.

One of the issues we face in this bad news world is that when the good news is before us we often edit it to make it more acceptable to our already defined versions of good and bad, right and wrong, holy and mundane.

Jesus is a judge. And that doesn’t play well in the “No one can judge me” world.

That doesn’t make for good advertising.

But it does make for righteousness.

Jesus judges us.

He said as much.

John 5:22-23

²² For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.³

All judgment has been given over to the Son. And Jesus will not ignore sin.

In Paul's case, he states that Jesus judged him faithful and appointed him to a position of authority. This is amazing...especially what we know about Paul, right?

Here's why Paul was judged faithful.

JESUS IS OUR JUSTIFIER

Paul would not have categorized himself worthy but for Jesus. The next verses clarify.

¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Everyone in here likely could come up with a list of the most evil, hateful, undeserving of grace, carnal people throughout history. Paul could too, but his list started with himself.

Paul did what he did under a false piety, convincing himself he was protecting the faith, the law, the identity of God from those who would attempt to change it. Yet, his self-aggrandizement was little more than compensating for his dark, bad, sinful mind and actions.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 5:22–23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Hughes and Chappell state in their commentary that “he was a callous, pious, self-righteous, bigoted murderer hell-bent on full-scale inquisition.”

That’s not an overstatement.

Paul was fueled by hate. Hate was pushed forward by fear. Things had gone too far so he was taking things into his own hands and was responsible for the murder of Christians, the jailing of others, and the destruction of faith families seeking to worship Christ.

Paul, called Saul, was the hunter of blood.

Don’t minimize that.

In 1918 in Tokyo Tokichi Ishii was hanged for murder. He had been sent to prison over twenty times. He was tough. He was insolent. He was a bad dude. He was evil. The list of things he had done just got worse and worse. He was feared.

So, he’s in prison and awaiting his punishment and two Christian missionary women come to visit him. They brought him a New Testament. He reads, listens, and is overwhelmed by the grace of God and surrenders his life to Christ. He is a new man – transformed! Then he is sentenced. His execution would soon come.

He stated that he accepted that as “the fair, impartial judgment of God.”

He wrote this after reading Paul’s second letter to the Corinthian church:
“The certainly does not apply to the evil life I led before I repented. But perhaps in the future, someone in the world may hear that the most desperate villain who ever lived repented of his sins and was saved by the power of Christ, and so may come to repent

also. Then it may be that though I am poor myself, I shall be able to make many rich.”⁴

Paul can relate.

1 Corinthians 5:9

⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.⁵

Ephesians 3:8

⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁶

The unworthy become worthy not by obeying the law (not possible fully on our own) and not by being a good citizen, or a nice person, or a friendly person, not by turning over a new leaf, not by joining a support group, not by anything in human power...but only because of the grace of God who through the son justifies the sinner.

And Jesus the judge makes all things new because Jesus is the justifier.

This reality should overwhelm us right now. This should make clear who we are, for those who are in him.

For...

JESUS IS OUR JOY

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

⁴ R.Kent Hughes & Bryan Chappell, *1-2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway), 46.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Co 15:9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Eph 3:8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Paul, the self-described chief of sinners reminds the reader and all of us today that if anyone was too far gone for the grace of God it would have been him.

But Paul was.

And now Paul is.

Did you catch that?

This saying is trustworthy!

This saying, this truth, is deserving of FULL ACCEPTANCE.

This is the good news. This is the gospel. This changes EVERYTHING.

If Paul used Twitter, this would have been pinned on his account. This is the gospel in a nutshell. This is the truth.

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.

Jesus came to judge. He came to justify the sinners who would repent. He came to save. And that is our JOY. That is grace.

That is Paul's story. That is Tokichi Ishii's story. That is my story. And that is your story Christian.

I fear we get so inundated with the bad news machine pumping out story after story that robs our hope that even as Christians we end up shells of what we are created and redeemed to be.

Grace is glorious. Good for the undeserving. Grace for the was, so that the be can live.

Amazing Grace...how sweet the sound.

Do you know this Jesus? The Judge, justifier and joy of our lives?