

1 Timothy

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[0 : 0 0] I will speak from the first epistle of Paul to Timothy, the first chapter, the fifteenth verse. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am one. The first epistle of Paul to Timothy, the first chapter, the fifteenth verse. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am one. I felt a great desire this evening to preach a plain and simple gospel sermon. And, of course, the gospel is simple, but you mustn't mistake simplicity for shallowness. The gospel isn't a shallow gospel. It's a deep, rich, most blessed gospel, but it's very simple in its statement. And that is a feature of the things of God as they are set before us in the scripture, and especially of those essential truths that we must, for the salvation of our souls, receive believingly.

Those truths are expressed with the utmost simplicity. And yet, if we are led with spiritual understanding and experience into those simply stated truths, we find what a profound depth there is in them.

And, I regard this text as being of that nature. It is a plain, simple statement of the gospel. It is this, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. But the more, as I have said, that the Holy Spirit directs our understanding into this great mystery, the more it seems so deep and so profound and so wonderful. Well, now may the Lord help me to set forth these essential, deep, and simple truths before you this evening.

I regard this word, and such expressions as this, as being the bread of the gospel. You know that in our natural diet, we lack some variety. We don't think it's attractive to us to be continually eating the same type of food. We like some variety. But there always needs to be bread available to us. And so I feel with regard to the truth. There's a considerable variety in the word of God to feed our hearts. But we do need to be fed with the plain, simple bread. Now, my text is just that tonight.

The Lord feed our hearts with it again. I couldn't say anything tonight from a text like this that you haven't heard before.

[4 : 1 6] But I'm hoping that the influence of the Holy Spirit may so attend the word that it may be fresh, suitable, and savour to your spirit.

The Lord then direct our hearts into this word. The Apostle Paul always felt that he was, in his own case, an outstanding example of the sovereignty and the power of the grace of God that filled his ministry.

As he says in this context, How be it, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. In other words, what he meant was this.

I was one of the very worst of sinners. And that meant that the grace of Jesus Christ was more abundant to me than to any.

And he would say, The grace that saved me can save the vilest and vilest of sinners because it saved me. Of sinners, he said, I am chief.

[5 : 40] There's no doubt for a thought that. And with regard, of course, to his course of blasphemy and persecution and those ways in which he was so injurious to the church of God, perhaps he was, in some respect, an outstanding instance of the sovereignty and the grace of God.

But as he said, I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. I would just like a word on that. We are not to assume that the apostle obtained mercy simply because he did it ignorantly and in unbelief.

Well, unbelief is no excuse for anyone. unbelief is a sin in itself. Indeed, in many ways, it is one of the worst kinds and characters of sin, is unbelief.

But if I understand the apostle's meaning aright, it would be like this. Now, I did it ignorantly and so I obtained mercy through Jesus Christ.

But if I had not done it ignorantly, if I'd known who I was persecuting in the persons of his people, if I'd known that I was blaspheming the very name and person of God's dear Son, then I believe that would have been the sin against the Holy Ghost for which there would have been no forgiveness for him, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.

[7 : 39] But because he did it ignorantly, he was not that unpardonable sin and so he obtained mercy upon his repentance and faith in the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

But leaving that, I do feel that everyone who has much insight into the exceeding sinfulness of sin as it is in themselves will feel that in some sense they must say that they are the chief of sinners sinners.

And I tell you why. Because we only see the outside of other people's sins but we see the inside of our own.

We see their lives, we see our hearts and the inside is always the blackest. Always. the blackest.

And he who knows the inside of his own sinful condition, I mean from his own heart as he feels it in his own heart won't see anybody worse than himself.

[9 : 00] Because as I've said, they see the outside of others, the inside of themselves and that's always the blackest. But then against that comes this most blessed word that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save such as feel they are the very worst of sinners.

Because you see there's a background to this blessed truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and that's our own sinful case.

Everyone's own case as he knows it and feels it is a background in his experience to the blessed truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Let us consider first then that this text expresses to us a very wonderful fact. It is a fact that Jesus Christ came into the world.

There's no fiction about that. It's a real blessed fact. And then secondly we will dwell a little upon the purpose of his coming into the world.

[10 : 32] that it was to save sinners. And then we will consider that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

Even that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He came into the world.

And where did he come from? He had a preexistence before he ever appeared in this world. And we could never have known of that but by revelation that he was born in Bethlehem, born of a supernatural conception but a perfectly natural birth, was the only begotten Son of God, eternally so.

he was with the Father, who was one with the Father, in the glory and perfection of the Godhead before time began.

Harry Apostle John, in the opening of his epistle, by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, expresses this. He said, in the beginning, the word, and that is another name for the Son, the Son was the Word, and the Word was the Son, and eternally the Son, as eternally the Son, as the Father was eternally the Father, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

[12 : 21] He came into this world by being made flesh. flesh. Now, this needs to be rightly considered.

The Word was divine, the eternal Son, was made flesh. He was the only person in the glorious Trinity who ever was made flesh.

flesh. But, we must understand that it was not his divinity that was made flesh, because then he would have ceased to be divine.

It was the person of the Son who was made flesh, not the divinity of the person, but the person who was divine was made flesh, still remaining as divine as ever.

His divinity never at all ceasing to be divinity, but he was made flesh, and so he came into this world by being made flesh.

[13 : 38] And, there had been, as we know, previous appearances of Jesus Christ in this world, at least I feel, when we read such a history as that of Abraham, when there came one to him, as we read in the history, that was Jesus Christ in the pre-incarnate appearance, but he was not made flesh, he appeared in that form.

who was it, would you feel, appeared in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, that fourth person? Surely that was Jesus Christ, but he was not made flesh, it was an appearance only, and then he disappeared again.

And who wrestled with Jacob of his petals? That Jesus Christ in his pre-incarnate appearance, but he was not made flesh, he came and he went, but when the point in time was, he was actually really made flesh.

And Jesus Christ in this is entirely unique. There's no other person in heaven or earth that combines divinity and humanity in himself in so vital union.

he came into the world. But what a condescension it was that he came into the world where he came from a state of glory and majesty and honor in heaven and he came into a world of sin and sorrow and what a world it must have been to him, this world.

[15 : 48] And in this world he had no honor paid to him except by a very few. He met with much reproach. He was set at naught, many fairest claims denied, and counted him basely born.

But he came into this world of sin and sorrow and he came into this world to save sinners.

The Lord Jesus did much good in this world although he was so despised and disesteemed, there was so much enmity manifested against him but there was never any occasion for it.

He did much good in this world. He healed numbers, we know not how many, of sickness and infirmity. He taught very blessed truths and he set a beautiful example that he came into the world to save sinners.

That was the object, that was the purpose and that was the end, to save sinners. And how did he save sinners?

[17 : 15] Well, first and essentially he saved sinners by his death, the sinners, by the shedding of his most precious blood in death.

for he was born in Bethlehem and to walk this weary world, that was so often weary in it, must go to Calvary to save sinners.

He could not save sinners by his doctrine, though it was heavenly doctrine, nor his example, though it was a lovely example, nor by his healing powers, though, as I have said, so many benefited by them.

There was nothing else but to suffer and die to save sinners. Here is the truth that lies at the heart of the whole mystery.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. That's a certain, solemnly, unalterable truth. There is that, whether we can see it or not, doesn't alter the truth of the matter.

[18 : 39] There is that in sin, that nothing can purge away but blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.

blood. There is no remission, no remission apart from the shedding of blood.

and no blood could be shed that would bring remission of sins but the blood of that blessed person. And he shed his heart's blood to save sinners.

Oh, how precious was that blood. As it is written by Peter, forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things from your vain conversations, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ.

Let this simple, solemn, deep truth sink down into our hearts tonight. Jesus Christ shed his precious blood to save sinners.

[20 : 06] And that you may be sure of this, that if sinners could have been saved in any other way than by the shedding of that precious blood, Jesus Christ would never have been given up to it.

I know the question has been raised, but it's an abstruse and unprofitable question whether sinners could have been saved any other way.

That's not for us to ask. We know that God appointed this way. And when the Lord Jesus prayed that solemn, anguished prayer, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Surely that cup would have passed from him if it had been possible for sinners to have been saved without the shedding of that precious blood.

And that precious blood has never lost and never will lose its saving virtue and efficacy to save sinners.

[21 : 32] that fountain is open still and it flows with the same saving, cleansing virtue.

Dear dying lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power to save. Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more.

if I might put this simple truth to you tonight. Blood is not flowing from his deep, his dear wounds tonight.

That's long past. But virtue, saving, cleansing, virtue is flowing from that precious blood tonight as rich, as free, as holy, as effectual as when he died at Calvary.

And that virtue flows in the gospel and is made effectual in the heart through faith by the Holy Spirit.

[22 : 55] that precious blood is still saving sinners. And I hope and in my heart I verily believe that precious blood has saved me.

And that's why I stand before you tonight to give my testimony to what I believe and what I have found. For this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners by the shedding of his precious blood.

And I will tell you another thing. And that is that any convinced of their sin by the Holy Spirit will feel such a sense of sin and of the guilt of it as they will never get free of apart from faith in the precious blood of Christ and the application of the virtue of it to their consciences.

And then instead of fear will come freedom. Instead of guilt peace. And instead of condemnation deliverance.

it is helpful to believe this because there are times I believe at least there are times with me when I have to come back again and again to where I first felt pardon and peace in my soul.

[24 : 47] And in my simple way I have sometimes to pray like this and in our secret prayer we can be very simple and childlike.

I said Lord how badly I feel to need to be cleansed and pardoned and healed and to feel again that precious peace in my soul.

And I said Lord it is quite easy for thee to do this now. they'll pardon they'll cleanse my soul and it won't cost thee another drop of pain to do it another drop of blood to do it.

They'll not have to go back again to the garden with all its agony nor to the cross with all its curse. The nails will not have to pierce thy hands to the tree again and no sword need open the fountain of that water and blood again.

Lord all I need now is the application of its virtue blood and it will not cost thee another pain another drop of blood to do it.

[26 : 15] Well this is a faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners by his precious blood. blood that must be precious blood that can cleanse the blackest soul and not leave one single stain remaining upon it.

That can reconcile to God without a folly that blood that can cleanse the soul from every folly every folly.

And not only that but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners by the abundance of his grace toward them.

I take that point from this word and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus saves sinners graciously. That is to say there is such a fullness of grace in Jesus Christ as when it is made effectual by the Holy Spirit abounds over all our sins and all that which we might feel would stand out against it.

[27 : 47] this expression abundant has a very simple but a very suitable meaning. It means that which abounds over anything that would restrict it or contain it or hold it back.

You put a barrier across the stream you may dam the stream back for a little while but this water will only gather more and more against the barrier and presently sweep all over it.

Or if you can imagine a reservoir or some container into which water is continually flowing until it contained no more it throws over it all.

One early pastor would say something like this tonight he would say oh my sin was so great it would have seemed as though even the grace of God was not equal to him.

There were so many aggravations in my case but still nothing nothing could prevent the grace of God from abounding over it all.

[29 : 08] There was a deeper depth in grace than the depth of evil in my sin. A greater fullness in grace the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ abounded over it all.

Sovereign grace it was for sin abounding. And so that word is applicable by grace are ye saved wholly and entirely by grace and grace knows nothing of merit goodness.

The worst is on the same level if I might say so as the best in regard to that the best need as much grace as the very worst for grace knows nothing of any qualifications or degrees of sin or anything of that nature.

It's just pure free sovereign rich and abundant grace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was exceeding abundant.

Not only abundant but exceeding abundant until you come to a vastness that just cannot be measured.

[30 : 36] Now all that fullness of grace is poured into the salvation of sinners and they need it they need it but it's equal to their need no one can need more grace than there is in Jesus Christ to save them.

No one he is soulful of grace and truth and everyone who understands and in any degree can appreciate their own point of view of this truth will certainly say this oh to grace how great a better daily I'm constrained to be.

And again this is a faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners powerfully.

Now power is needed to save sinners when you consider the one thing that not only has sin such a blackness of pollution and such a heenelessness of guilt but it has such power.

Why my friends a sin is the strongest power in existence except the grace of God. I'm sure it is.

[32 : 11] No sinner can free himself from the power of a sin. Strugglers are humane he only struggles into deeper helplessness.

The more I strove against sin's power I sinned and stumbled but the more. But the Lord Jesus Christ has almighty power.

Oh there's no heart too hard for his power to conquer. There's no degree in which the power of sin holds the soul under its fatal grasp and Satan is the hand that grasps and sin is his awful tool and instrument but the Lord Jesus Christ is almighty to save.

It's very beautiful very simple very beautiful don't you feel he came into the world to save sinners by his precious blood and he saved sinners by the abundance of his grace and he saved sinners by his almighty power.

He came into the world to save sinners. Now because the time is limited this evening and pass over some things I would have put before you with regard to this salvation and come at once to the closing consideration and that is that this truth is a faithful saying and that it is worthy of all acceptation.

[34 : 03] What is worthy of all acceptation if this is not considering how true it is and how faithful God is in this world and what a faithful person Jesus Christ is.

It is worthy of all acceptation and how is this faithful saying accepted and received?

Well the preparation of the heart to receive or to use this word to accept well that's what it means it is an acceptation the preparation of the heart in man is of the Lord.

The Lord prepares the heart to receive this faithful saying by convincing it of its condition and opening the ear of the mind to this joyful sound and the door of the heart to its reception and it is worthy first of a believing acceptation oh it is worthy to believe my brethren this that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and as faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God so by the hearing of this faithful saying as God is pleased to make the word effectual faith comes to believe it it is the joyful sound of the gospel oh it is indeed there is the sound of compassion love mercy truth power pardon in this very sound of the gospel it is worthy to be believed if you fear you can believe it believe it if you fear you can receive it receive it for it is worthy to be believed and received and the

Lord help you to believe it and receive it because to believe it is to receive it and to receive it is to believe it to believe is to receive unbelief rejects it's the very nature of unbelief to reject it's the very nature of faith to receive when this faith was saying comes to us with some measure of light and life and power all how we feel we can believe it and receive it into our very hearts and it's worthy to be received like that and what is more it is worthy not only of a believing acceptance but of a praying acceptance here is something that is worthy to be prayed for suppose you say well

[37 : 29] I wish I could really know and feel that this gracious word has been a word of salvation to me well pray that it may be if you believe that Lord Jesus Christ saved sinners by his precious blood pray that precious blood may be made effectual in your own conscience it's worthy to be prayed over for if you believe that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is exceeding abundant pray that it may abound in your own experience of it if you believe that he is mighty to save pray that he will exercise that power in your own case and deliver you from all the bondage of sin that you feel to be in is worthy of a prayerful acceptance.

It is worth praying for, brethren. It is worth praying for that this salvation may be made effectual in our hearts. And similarly, this faithful saying is worthy of a most thankful acceptance.

Surely we should be more thankful for this than we are. The apostle felt that and broke forth into this expression concerning it.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. The gift of Jesus Christ is unspeakable, not in the sense that we cannot speak about it, but in the sense that it's beyond all words to adequately express it.

What a gift this is. What a gift of love to poor sinners this is. Now thanks be unto God for this, that there is such a person as Jesus Christ is, that he came into this world to save sinners such as we are, that he shed that atoning blood, that he manifests that abundant grace, that he exercises that almighty power.

[40 : 07] we have such cause to be thankful for this. And to praise God in it for his unspeakable gift.

And now there's something I want to say before I close tonight. If Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, then sinners are welcome to Jesus Christ.

You'll notice that this word is both definite and indefinite. It is definite in the sense that he came into the world to save sinners, but is indefinite with regard to sinners themselves.

Now I know that there are other truths behind this one. I know that God in his sovereign purpose has chosen some to this salvation.

I'm assured of that. And I'm sure that all that God in his sovereign purpose of grace has chosen none to salvation have been redeemed by Jesus Christ.

[41 : 27] and no others. And I believe that all that are deemed by Jesus Christ will certainly be called by his grace.

Those truths lie behind this word. But still, we must take this word as it stands. The text said, not Jesus Christ came into the world to save elected sinners, because we might say, well, how am I to know whether I stand in that case or not?

You may quite scripturally believe that the redemption that Jesus Christ accomplished by the shedding of his blood is special and personal and particular.

But still, you're not called upon to know that he shed his precious blood for you in particular to respond to this word.

You must take this word just as it stands. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Sinners.

[42 : 40] And if Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, then sinners surely must be welcome to him to save them.

No, they are welcome to him to save them. And he has never rejected one yet that came honestly, sincerely, and in a feeling sense of me, and in the exercise of faith, believing that he came into the world to save sinners.

He has never rejected one yet, and I'm sure he never will. Now, I want to close with this gospel word tonight.

Sinners are welcome to Jesus Christ. Welcome. Welcome to Jesus Christ. They're welcome to his arms of love to embrace them.

They're welcome to his heart of grace to receive them. They're welcome to the fountain of his precious blood to cleanse them.

[43 : 55] And they're welcome to the perfect role of his righteousness to clothe them. Sinners are welcome to Jesus Christ.

If it's in your heart to come to Jesus Christ, you can be assured of a welcome and bring nothing but your case as it is bring just your case as it is or in any case, neither you nor I can make it one whit better.

We must come just as we are or never come at all. I know how you would like to feel. You'd like to feel you can bring a humble, broken, contrite heart to Jesus Christ.

But if you cannot bring a broken heart to Jesus Christ, bring a hard one. Let him do the breaking. He can do that.

I know you'd like to bring a heart of love to Jesus Christ that you say, I can't feel it. Well then, bring your loveless heart to Jesus Christ.

[45 : 09] He can impart the love that you want to feel. He is all love, full of love, wonderful love, attracting love.

Bring your loveless heart to Jesus Christ. The love must come from him to you, not from you to him. Or if you cannot bring a comfortable conscience to Jesus Christ, bring a troubled one.

He is the one to relieve the conscience of his distress and to speak and to breathe that peace into the heart he has made by his atoning blood.

If Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, then sinners are welcome to Jesus Christ to save them.

If you feel you can go to him, go to him. If you feel you cannot, beg of him to give you a heart to come. If you feel you can believe, believe.

[46 : 15] If you don't feel you can, beg of him to give you faith to believe. If you feel you can repent of sin, pour your sorrowful tears at his blessed feet.

If you feel you cannot, beg of him to give you repenting grace. For this is a faithful saying unworthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

and the chief of sinners are just the ones for him to save. Because it brings more glory, more honour to his sacred name.

Amen. God willing, Mr. John Ralph will preach Thursday evening, and Mr.

Collier next Lord's Day, prayer meeting tomorrow evening. After this evening's service, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be attended to, when members of other churches of the same faith and order are welcome to come with us by giving their names to the deacons.

[47 : 42] Let us now close by singing hymn 570. The 570th hymn, 2 Belgrade, 100.

The Lord on high his love proclaims and makes his goodness known. To men deserving endless pains he gave his only son.

He gave his son their life to be, to save them from despair, from death and hell to set them free, in glory to appear.

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[51 : 18] The End The End We close this service with a prayer that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the communion, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit may abide with us all.

Amen. Amen.