

God's Mercy

1 Tm 1:12-17

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about a mother going to Napoleon, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p 240.
- B. Mercy is just that—receiving a pardon we do not deserve.
- C. Although we deserve to be lost, God, out of his mercy, has saved us.
 - 1. Ps 86:5.
 - 2. Eph 2:4.
- D. This morning, we want to examine God's mercy.

RECEPTION OF MERCY, vv 12-14

- A. Paul thanked the Lord, v 12.
 - 1. The Lord had enabled Paul.
 - a. The idea of enabled is “make someone strong.”
 - b. The Lord gave Paul the strength he needed to carry out his ministry.
 - 2. The Lord counted Paul faithful.
 - a. “Faithful” means trustworthy.
 - b. Even though Paul had persecuted the church, the Lord knew him to be trustworthy.
 - 1) Whatever Paul did, he did to the best of his ability.
 - 2) Before his conversion, Paul persecuted the church out of his great zeal; he was blameless concerning the righteousness in the law (Phil 3:6).
 - c. The Lord showed Paul that he considered him trustworthy by putting him in the ministry—The Lord did not just forgive Paul; he made Paul an apostle.
- B. Paul had lived a life of sin, v 13.
 - 1. Paul describes his sin in detail.
 - a. He was a blasphemer.
 - b. He was a persecutor.
 - 1) Before his conversion, Paul actively persecuted the church.
 - 2) The Scriptures speak of Paul the persecutor.
 - a) Acts 8:3.
 - b) Acts 9:1.
 - c) Acts 9:13-14.
 - c. He was an insolent man—This means that Paul persecuted Christians for the pleasure he received from torturing them.
 - 2. Paul obtained mercy because he acted ignorantly in unbelief.
 - a. Paul had acted ignorantly.
 - 1) He really believed he was doing right—Paul lived in all good conscience (Acts 23:1).
 - 2) We, too, can act in ignorance.
 - a) The one who acts in ignorance shall receive a lighter sentence than one who acts willfully (Lk 12:48).
 - b) The Jews ignorantly crucified Jesus (Acts 3:17).

- 3) We need to pay careful attention to Scripture so we do not act ignorantly; God no longer overlooks ignorance (Acts 17:30).
- b. Paul had acted in unbelief—He really did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.
- C. The grace of Jesus was exceedingly abundant toward Paul, v 14.
 - 1. God has abundant grace.
 - a. Eph 1:7.
 - b. Rm 5:20.
 - c. God had enough grace to save Paul.
 - 2. Grace abounded with faith & love in Christ Jesus; Paul received mercy because of the faith & love had had in Christ.
 - a. “Faith” contrasts with “unbelief”—Although Paul had once been an unbeliever, he was now a believer.
 - b. “Love” contrasts with “blasphemy”—Paul had once blasphemed the Lord, but now he loved him.
- D. Even though Paul had lived a life of serious sin, God showed him mercy.
 - 1. God will show us mercy, too—Heb 8:12.
 - 2. Do you know God’s mercy?

REASON OF MERCY, vv 15–16

- A. Christ came to save sinners, v 15.
 - 1. This is a faithful saying; this was more than likely a common saying in the early church.
 - 2. The faithful saying is that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
 - a. The Scriptures affirm that Jesus did come to save sinners.
 - 1) Mary & Joseph were to call their Son “Jesus,” because he would save his people from their sin (Mt 1:21)—The name “Jesus” means “Yahweh saves.”
 - 2) Lk 19:10.
 - b. Since Jesus came into the world to save sinners, he can save you from your sins.
 - 3. Paul referred to himself as the “chief” of sinners.
 - a. “Chief” refers to being the foremost, most prominent.
 - b. Paul says that he feels like the worst of sinners; sometimes we, too, feel like the worst of sinners.
- B. Paul obtained mercy so that Christ might show all longsuffering.
 - 1. “Longsuffering” refers to patience; Christ showed Paul patience.
 - 2. Christ extends his patience to us, too.
 - a. For many years, God was patient with the Israelites (Neh 9:3).
 - b. 2 Pt 3:9.
- C. This longsuffering serves as an example to us.
 - 1. The message Paul gives here is that if God could save him, God can save anyone.
 - 2. Indeed, God has a history of saving individuals mired in sin.
 - a. Peter offered forgiveness to those who had crucified Jesus (Acts 2:36-37).
 - b. Paul listed many sins the Corinthians had committed prior to conversion (1 Cor 6:9-11).
- D. Regardless of what you’ve done in your life, God can save you.

CONCLUSION

- A. Paul praised God for showing mercy, v 17.
- B. We, too, need to praise God for his mercy.
 - 1. We need to praise him in worship.
 - 2. We need to praise him in daily living.
- C. Are you praising God?