



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

1 TIMOTHY: WAGE THE GOOD WARFARE



Study Number 4: The Gospel Saves Sinners

1 Timothy 1:15 *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.*

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion around the ideas in the sermon. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who missed the sermon on Sunday.
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?
- Why is this important and worth discussion?



THE BIG IDEA

In Paul, we can see a man whose life has been utterly reversed. The grace of God was revealed to him, and he was changed from a violent proud man to a humble servant of Jesus. Jesus “bemerced” Paul. He saved him even when he was warring against the very church that he gave his life for. He saved him to show us today that there are none outside the saving work of God. If God can “bemerced” Paul, he can “bemerced” anyone! None can claim to be too far gone or have sin that is too big. Our God is mighty to save. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and we are the foremost!

EXPLORE

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

RELEVANT SCRIPTURES

1 Timothy 1:12-17 ¹²I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 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. ¹⁶But 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. ¹⁷To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Exodus 3:10-12a ¹⁰Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” ¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” ¹²He said, “But I will be with you,

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ⁹But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

1 Corinthians 1:31b “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Philippians 3:4-6 ⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.



Luke 18:9-14 ⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.

UNDERSTANDING

1. From where does our ability to do what God has called us to do come from?
2. Why does God often save the worst sinners and use them for ministry, according to 1:15-17
3. Mike said that “WE are the foremost sinner”. How can this be true? (Leaders note: this is question is to get people to try articulate the truth of the severity of sin in our lives and that human comparisons of sin comes from pride. We are all helpless sinners in need of grace! None are less in need than anyone else.)
4. Discuss the attributes of God listed in 1:17, and each of their implications for our relationship with him.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. Where in your life are you relying on you? (i.e. your own strength and abilities)
3. Are you ever, like Paul, astonished that God would save, love and work through you? Why? (It may be a great idea to stop, pray and thank God!)
4. (Note: intense question!) Paul lists his pre-conversation sins in 1:13. What things have changed in your life since you met Jesus? Does this cause worship? Or do you pretend to be “awesome” and rob God of the glory he deserves for his grace?
5. Do you see yourself as the foremost of sinners? Where do you tend to compare yourself and your sin to others?
6. Do you sometimes think that your sin is too big or that you are too far gone?
7. How are you going to respond to his grace in your life?

PRAY

Close time in prayer.

Thank God for his grace to us in our lives; the way he has saved us and adopted us as sons and daughters.



HELPFUL NOTES (SOME FROM ESV STUDY BIBLE)

1 Timothy

- 1:12-13 – Note that these verse when read out of context seem to suggest that Paul earned the favour of God: “he judged me faithful” and “I received mercy because I acted ignorantly”. Obviously, reading these sections in context, it becomes much more clear that this is not his intention. This is a good example of not taking single phrases out of context!
- 1:13 – Paul received mercy because he acted ignorantly. The point is that his salvation was underserved; his ignorance did not excuse his sin or warrant God’s mercy. Most likely Paul is contrasting himself with the false teachers. When Paul so opposed Christ, he had not yet professed faith. These men profess to following Christ yet still live in an evil manner.
- 1:15-16 – As mentioned earlier, previous statements in this passage (12 & 13) seem to suggest that Paul viewed his salvation as resulting from his own faithfulness or even his ignorance. These two verses make it clear that Paul is marvelling at his conversion specifically because he knew himself to be so bad, for in his religious endeavours he had persecuted God’s people.
- 1:16 – Paul is an example of the effect of the gospel in someone’s life. The outcome is not idle speculation about the nature of God but transformation of lives by grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

- Paul says that God’s grace “is sufficient” in the present tense, underscoring the ever-present availability and sufficiency of God’s grace, regardless of circumstances (cf Romans 8:31-39).

Weakness and Power in 1-2 Corinthians

Verse	Weakness	Power (or Strength)
1 Cor. 1:25	The weakness of God	Is stronger than men
1 Cor. 1:27	God chose what is weak	To shame the strong
1 Cor. 2:3,5	In weakness and in fear	But in the power of God
1 Cor. 15:42	Sown in weakness	Raised in power
2 Cor. 12:9	I will boast ... of my weaknesses	So that the power of Christ may rest upon me
2 Cor. 13:3	Not weak in dealing with you	But ... powerful among you
2 Cor. 13:4	He was crucified in weakness	But lives by the power of God
2 Cor. 13:4	We also are weak in him	But ... live with him by the power of God
2 Cor. 13:9	We are glad when we are weak	And you are strong