

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: September 24, 2017

Sermon Title: The Power of the Glorious Gospel

Sermon Series: First Timothy

Text: 1 Tim. 1:12-17

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: September 24, 2017
Title: The Power of the Glorious Gospel (1:10, 11)
Text: 1 Tim. 1:12-17

Introduction:

[THE MOVIE UNBREAKABLE] OPENING STORY OF A SELF-RELIANT, UNBREAKABLE, NEED NO ONE PERSON WHO COMES UNDER THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.]

You take the one person you believe will never get saved and you see them get saved and you can hardly believe it. Paul uses himself as the example of the one person you would never had suspected of getting saved, of being reached by God and God does it.

“If God can do that, there is nobody out there, no heart so hard, no anger so bitter, that it remains outside the reach of God’s patient mercy.”¹

I will come back to this at the end of our study, but we are to take heart concerning our own loved ones and co-workers who we think are so hard and indifferent that nothing and no one can reach them. Friend, God can and Jesus did.

Paul continues to point out the contrast between strange teaching and sound teaching. Strange teaching places the emphasis on you. Sound teaching places the emphasis on God. This section in Timothy is strongly autobiographical. This occurs by the first person pronoun.

THE BIG PICTURE:

I wish us to expand on our understanding of the word Paul uses to explain strange teaching in 1:3. This particular Greek word [Heterodidaskaleo] occurs twice in the NT. Both occurrences are used by Paul in 1 Timothy (1:3; 6:3).

Notice how Paul uses this word in Galatians 1:3-9.

- ³ “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen. ⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a **different** gospel; ⁷ which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and **want to distort** the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, **he is to be accursed!** ⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!” (Gal. 1:3-9).

Unfortunately, we allow and ultimately embrace a gospel that is not the gospel at all. This is our tragedy and to our eternal detriment.

This I believe is the point of 1 Corinthians 3:5-15. For the pastor to lay any other foundation than the gospel is to build a church with wood, hay, and stubble and that church will not last.

“It is certain that in the very earliest ages of the Christian Church **there were several spurious gospels in circulation**, and it was the multitude of these false or inaccurate relations that induced St. Luke to write his own. See Lu 1:1. **We have the names of more than seventy of these spurious narratives still on record**, and in ancient writers many fragments of them remain; these have been collected and published by Fabricius, in his account of the apocryphal books of the New Testament, 3 vols. 8vo. In some of these gospels, the necessity of circumcision, and subjection to the Mosaic law in unity with the Gospel, were strongly inculcated. And to one of these the apostle seems to refer.”

Let us remember the simplicity of the Gospel *Story*: You can't, God can, Jesus did.

Strange teaching twists this around. Strange teaching says, “You can, God enables you, and Jesus shows you how.” We call this autosoteric, “Self-salvation.”

Strange teaching appeals to the Law as if it is a standard to be kept and you can keep it. The intent of the Law is to show us, “We can't, God can, and Jesus will.” The outcome of strange teaching is a falling away from the faith. Why? Because no one can keep the Law!

“It is called a gospel, but it differs most essentially from the authentic narratives published by the evangelists. It is not gospel, i.e. good tidings, for it loads you again with the burdens from which the genuine Gospel has disencumbered you. Instead of giving you peace, it troubles you; instead of being a useful supplement to the Gospel of Christ, it perverts that Gospel. You have gained nothing but loss and damage by the change.”²

“According to this, the design was to state that what they taught had none of the elements or characteristics of the gospel. It was a different system, and one which taught an entirely different method of justification before God. It seems to me that this is the true sense of the passage, and that Paul means to teach them that the system, though it was called the gospel, was essentially different from that which he had taught, and which consisted in simple reliance on Christ for salvation. The system which they taught was, in fact, the Mosaic system--the Jewish mode, depending on the rites and ceremonies of religion--and which, therefore, did not deserve to be called the gospel. It would load them again with burdensome rites, and with cumbrous institutions, from which it was the great purpose of the gospel to relieve them.”³

Sound teaching on the other hand, throws itself at the mercy and grace of God. Thanking Him that it is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Sound teaching has a single boast, “Christ crucified.” Another other boast is “strange.”

Listen to how A.B. Simpson summarizes the gospel.

A.B. Simpson has said that the gospel “Tells rebellious men that God is reconciled, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner canceled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed,

the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone. (Evangelism, A Biblical Approach, M. Cocoris, Moody, 1984, p. 29)⁴

That is the good news of “It is finished!”

One of our difficulties is thinking the gospel is only in our justification and not in our sanctification. As evangelicals, we believe we get in through the gospel, but we mess this up when we believe we stay in through works righteousness. Thus, we speak of the means for our sanctification like Bible reading, prayer, witnessing, good works, holiness, obedience, and church attendances and the like as if these are the “keys” for Christian advancement. This is wrong. Tragically, we have received freedom from one law only to come under the bondage and weight of another. According to Paul, this is a strange teaching.

All of those “things” are fruits of the gospel. They are not things we add to the gospel, but take from the gospel. This is why we say, “From start to finish and everything in between it is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.” This is what that means.

With our present paragraph, I would like to note two parts. The first part Paul speaks is a personal word (vv. 12-14) and the second part is God’s powerful work (vv. 15-17). We will begin with Paul’s personal word.

Outline:

I. Paul’s Personal Word (vv. 12-14)

- ¹² “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:12-14).

A. Paul’s present ministry (v. 12)

The word service in verse 12 is **diakonia**. It occurs only once in 1 Timothy in this form. The same word [**diakonos**] in a different form occurs in 1 Tim. 3:8, 12 and 4:6. We see the same usage of these words in Acts 6:1 when speaking of those who “serve” people and those who “serve” word.

1. God strengthened me

Three times [**endunamoo**] in the pastorals (1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 2:1; 4:17).

- “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath **enabled** me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1:12).

- “Thou therefore, my son, be **strong** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1).
- “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and **strengthened** me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (2 Tim. 4:17).

2. God considered me

3. God put me

- “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, **putting** me into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1:12).
- “Whereunto I am **ordained** a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity” (1 Tim. 2:7).
- “Whereunto I am **appointed** a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim. 1:11).

Because I believe in God’s overarching providence, I believe like the apostle Paul each of us have been placed, ordained, appointed to our positions in life. We live in a context where there is much horizontal movement concerning vocation, but Paul and his peers did not.

B. Paul’s past debauchery (v. 13)

“The meaning is, that he had reviled the name of Christ, and opposed him and his cause--not believing that he was the Messiah; and in thus opposing he had really been guilty of blasphemy. The true Messiah he had in fact treated with contempt and reproaches; and he now looked back upon that fact with the deepest mortification, and with wonder that one who had been so treated by him should have been willing to put him into the ministry.”⁵

“Paul adds an interesting note, similar to what he says about his fellow Jews in Romans 10:2, 3: he was acting ‘ignorantly, in unbelief’. Just as Jesus had prayed that God would forgive the Roman soldiers who were nailing him to the cross, because they didn’t know what they were doing (Luke 23:34), so Paul looks back and sees that he had had no idea what he was really doing.”⁶

This does not dismiss or excuse their actions, it does, however, explain why they might have done what they did.

1. I was formerly

a. A blasphemer

The word is transliterated without translation. It is translated in Titus 3:2 where we read, “To speak evil.”

The noun occurs in the following passages.

- “Who was before a **blasphemer**, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13).

- “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, **blasphemers**, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (2 Tim. 3:2).

The verb occurs in the following passages.

- “Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to **blaspheme**” (1 Tim. 1:20).
- “Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not **blasphemed**” (1 Tim. 6:1).
- “To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not **blasphemed**” (Titus 2:5).
- “**To speak evil** of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men” (Titus 3:2).

If we remember the *Story* [You cannot, God can, Jesus did], then blasphemy is denigrating any part of those pieces. Teaching the Law strangely says, “You can.” Teaching Jesus strangely says, “Jesus did not.” A strange teaching says, “You can, God won’t, Jesus didn’t.” That is not the gospel; that is not good news.

b. A persecutor

Paul always remembered his past so that he might celebrate his present. It is only as we understand the abject darkness of our past that we can see the glorious gospel. Notice the following passages where Paul remembers himself as a persecutor of the church.

- “But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison” (Acts 8:3).
- ¹“Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. . . ⁴ and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ ⁵ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting’” (Acts 9:1-5).
- ⁴“I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, ⁵ as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished” (Acts 22:4, 5).
- ⁹“So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities” (Acts 26:9-11).
- ⁹“For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me” (1 Cor. 15:9, 10).

- ¹³ “For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; ¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. ¹⁵ But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood” (Gal. 1:13-16).
- “as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless” (Phil. 3:6).

Friends, let us never forget the pit from which we were pulled.

c. A violent aggressor

The “violent aggressor” compliments “persecutor and blasphemer.” Paul then interjects the contrast with **alla**. The small Greek connector **alla** sets two things in opposition.

2. I was shown mercy

Two things happen in our text. First, God shows Paul mercy. God withholds the judgment Paul justly deserves. He deserved to remain spiritually dead and separated from God forever. God extends this same mercy to everyone. Common grace enables people time to repent of their sin and turn to Jesus. The second thing in our text is God extending a super abundant grace to Paul. This brings us to Paul’s powerful delivery.

C. Paul’s powerful delivery (v. 14)

I recognized the formula, but notice the text.

1. By grace alone

“The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant. The original is very emphatic, that grace of our Lord, **uperepleonase**, hath super abounded-it manifested itself in a way of extraordinary mercy.”⁷

2. Through faith alone

“And, as always in Paul, faith in turn becomes the key to membership in ‘the age to come’, the new age for which the Jews had longed. Paul had originally supposed that the blasphemous nonsense of the Christian message might hold back the day when God’s new age would dawn for Israel and the world. Now he sees that the message is actually about this new age, dawning in Jesus and now spreading its light to all the nations.”⁸

3. In Christ alone

The Gospel does magic. However, unlike our magic which are by sleight of hand and nothing actually changes. God's magic takes blasphemers and makes them worshippers. God as it were takes our "filthy rags" and snaps / shakes them clean. The gospel can take those in verse 9 and make them the children of God. He can change us from what we were into something entirely new.

Anselm, "There is powerful magic at play here."

II. God's Powerful Work (vv. 15-17)

- ¹⁵ "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. ¹⁶ Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1:15-17).

There is a natural progression in this section. God's purpose in sending His Son into the world is to save sinners (v. 15). Verse 16 then shows God's pattern in doing so. He saves sinners! Finally, verse 17 gives us the outcome of His purpose, God's praise. He is worshipped for His powerful, glorious, and super abundant grace.

A. God's purpose for His work (v. 15)

God's purpose in sending His Son into the world [to save sinners].

- "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).
- ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:16, 17).
- ⁹ "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. . . ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:9, 14).

The verses speaking to this idea are endless. This is sound teaching. Anything that takes away from our Lord's redemptive activity is strange / **heteros**.

The formula Paul uses [It is a trustworthy statement] accents / highlights what is about to follow. It is almost creedal. It is a commonly held confession, as we will see in 3:14-16 in the early church.

"He had thought he was doing God's will. Sincerity is clearly not enough."⁹

“Chief (prôtos). Not ên (I was), but eimi (I am). "It is not easy to think of any one but St. Paul as penning these words" (White). In 1Co 15:9 he had called himself "the least of the apostles" (elachistos tôn apostolôn). In Eph 3:8 he refers to himself as "the less than the least of all saints" (tôi elachistoterôi pantôn hagiôn). On occasion Paul would defend himself as on a par with the twelve apostles (Ga 2:6-10) and superior to the Judaizers (2Co 11:5; 12:11). It is not mock humility here, but sincere appreciation of the sins of his life (cf. Ro 7:24) as a persecutor of the church of God (Ga 1:13), of men and even women (Ac 22:4; 26:11). He had sad memories of those days.”¹⁰

B. God’s pattern in His work (v. 16)

When God saves sinners, He exhibits His perfect patience or “longsuffering” toward them/us. Peter perhaps states it best in the following two passages.

- “Which sometime were disobedient, **when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah**, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Pet. 3:20).
- “**And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation**; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you” (2 Pet. 3:15).

God can end the *Story* at any time, but He waits with perfect patience for the salvation of sinners.

“In me as chief (en emoi prôtôi). Probably starts with the same sense of prôtos as in verse 1Ti 1:15 (rank), but turns to order (first in line). **Paul becomes the "specimen" sinner as an encouragement to all who come after him** [emphasis added].”¹¹

“The Christians, doing their best to hide from his violent attacks, would surely have regarded im a way beyond the scope of God’s mercy.”¹² Let us read Acts 9:13-17 together and see if we cannot sense and feel their anxiety over Paul’s conversion.

We began by noting how strongly autobiographical this text is. “As so often, the passage which seemed to be all about Paul is in reality all about God and his grace and love. So it’s quite appropriate that Paul ends it with an outburst of praise to the one true God (v. 17).”¹³

Paul speaks of his conversion as a type or pattern. This particular word occurs twice in the NT.

- “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a **pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Tim. 1:16).
- “Hold fast the **form** of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13).

It speaks of a sketch or pattern to be traced and transferred. What God did in Paul, God does in every sinner who believes in Jesus. Notice the natural consequence of God’s redemptive *Story*.

C. God's praise from His work (v. 17)

"This burst of thanksgiving and gratitude to God, naturally arose from the subject then under his pen and eye. God has most wondrously manifested his mercy, in this beginning of the Gospel, by saving me, and making me a pattern to all them that shall hereafter believe on Christ."¹⁴

This is the end game of God's *Story*. God created you and me so that we might know and experience the joy He has within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We can know and experience this joy only in His presence. Through our joy, God is glorified.

I struggle with quantifying God's pleasure / glory, but this is why the Westminster Confession reads, "God is most gloried when we are most satisfied in Him." It is their attempt to capture this idea. Verse 12 and 17 appear to form "bookends" to Paul's personal word and God's powerful work. God's redemptive purpose in us and through us leads to a two-fold outcome. A first response is one of gratitude. The second response is one of worship.

As difficult as life might appear at times, where would we be had Jesus not come and save us from sin and death? Furthermore, when meditating on such things our response is two-fold: gratitude and worship.

That is a reason why we gather regularly as His people -- to publicly give Him thanks for His redemptive work in us and through us to those around us and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Are you, have you, and will you?

Let us pray.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Who is it that you are praying for to be saved that you think is beyond the scope of God's redemptive purpose?
2. Who is it that you need to pray for to be saved that you think is beyond the scope of God's redemptive purpose? [i.e. the persecuted church]

¹ N.T. Wright, *Paul, the Pastoral Letters*, 12.

² *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on Galatians 1:7.

³ *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on Galatians 1:7.

⁴ <http://kevinpierpont.com/teach-sound-doctrine-1-timothy-13-11/>

⁵ *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary* on 1 Tim. 1:13.

⁶ N.T. Wright, *Paul, the Pastoral Letters*, 13.

⁷ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Tim. 1:14.

⁸ N.T. Wright, *Paul, the Pastoral Letters*, 13.

⁹ N.T. Wright, *Paul, the Pastoral Letters*, 12.

¹⁰ *A.T. Robertson's NT Word Pictures* on 1 Tim. 1:15.

¹¹ *A.T. Robertson's NT Word Pictures* on 1 Tim. 1:16.

¹² N.T. Wright, *Paul, the Pastoral Letters*, 13.

¹³ N.T. Wright, *Paul, the Pastoral Letters*, 14.

¹⁴ *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Tim. 1:17.