

THE SHOWCASE OF GRACE

1 Timothy 1:12-17

INTRODUCTION

- A. Trophy Cases – Home and Abroad.
- B. The Holy Spirit had a word for the idea of “trophy case.”
 - 1. The idea of showing something off inside of something else.
 - 2. Directing attention to something inside the perimeter of a given thought.
 - 3. It is to demonstrate, prove, or display.
- B. Paul used this idea of a “trophy case” when writing to the Corinthians.
 - 1. 2 Cor. 8:24 – *“Therefore show the proof of your love.”*
 - 2. He wanted the Corinthians to show off, prove or demonstrate their love by their giving, 2 Cor. 8:1-5.
 - 3. They had a trophy case called “Love” and all of the gifts they had given were inside that trophy case as proof of that love.
- C. Paul used this word when he wrote about himself, his conversion and the difference God’s grace made in his life, 1 Tim. 1:12-17.
 - 1. Paul placed himself inside *“The Showcase of God’s Grace.”*
 - 2. He used his own experience to prove what the mercy, the love and the kindness of God can do.
 - 3. We see it in Paul’s “Past,” “Present,” and his “Purpose.”

I. PAUL’S “PAST.”

- A. *“Formerly I was like this.”*
 - 1. He was a “Vocal” enemy of Jesus, a “blasphemer,” vs. 13.
 - a. One who speaks disrespectfully or demeans or maligns another.
 - b. Paul had in mind speaking disrespectfully of the Lord.
 - 2. He was a “Vicious” enemy of Jesus, a “persecutor,” vs. 13.
 - a. One who pursues and harasses others.
 - b. Thirteen times the N.T. mentions Paul persecuting Christians or the church.
 - c. He had declared war on the church, hunting down Christians, putting them in prison and helping to execute them.
 - 3. He was a “Violent” enemy of Jesus, an “insolent opponent,” vs. 13.
 - a. One who is violent, out to inflict pain for the sheer joy of doing so.
 - b. Persecuting and killing Christians.
- B. He threatened, he murdered, and made “havoc.”
 - 1. He tried to destroy the followers of our Lord, Acts 9:1, 21.
 - 2. Listen as he describes before King Agrippa, Acts 26:9-11.

II. PAUL’S “PRESENT.”

- A. God’s grace helped him change.
 - 1. Grace empowered or gave Paul “strength” to become what he became, vs. 12.
 - 2. Grace appointed Paul to God’s “service” as a table-server in the kingdom, vs. 12.
 - 3. Grace granted Paul “salvation” through the redemptive ministry of Jesus, vs. 14-15.

- B. He had been “foremost” in the line of sinners, vs. 15.
 - 1. “Foremost” is to be “first.”
 - 2. Grace had “overflowed” or increased beyond measure to him.
 - a. This changed his heart, his life, and his destiny.
 - b. 1 Cor. 15:10.

III. PAUL’S “PURPOSE.”

- A. Paul’s entire perspective changed.
 - 1. He found a new purpose for living.
 - 2. He went from being an “opponent” of Christianity to a “proponent” of Christ.
 - 3. He went from being foremost of all “sinners” to foremost of all “saved.”
 - 4. He went from being an “antagonist” to Christ to an “evangelist” for Christ.
- B. For that reason, he saw himself as a perfect “example” of all grace can do for a person.
 - 1. Paul’s word for example is found only here and in 2 Tim. 1:13.
 - a. This word is translated “pattern” [ESV].
 - b. NAS – “standard,” lit., under pattern.
 - c. Does not allow for deviation.
 - 2. Paul saw himself as a “pattern” or “standard” others could study.
 - 3. “A sample of the kind of sinners that Jesus came to save.”

CLOSING

- A. Before he was blessed by the grace of God:
 - 1. Paul was a “privileged” Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, Phil. 3:4-5.
 - 2. Paul was a “prodigy” in whom Israel took hope, Gal. 1:14.
 - 3. Paul was a “Pharisee,” trained by a Pharisee, Acts 26:5.
 - 4. Paul was a “Persecutor” of the church,” Gal. 1:13.
- B. After his encounter with God’s mercy, love and kindness, he became:
 - 1. A “Penitent,” disturbed about his past, Acts 9:1-9.
 - 2. A “Preacher” of grace, Rom. 1:13; 3:23-26.
 - 3. A “Penman” used by the Holy Spirit to reveal the mysteries of Jesus, Eph. 3:1-5.
 - 4. A “Persecuted” missionary who gratefully suffered for Jesus, Acts 13: 50-52.
- C. No wonder his remark in 1 Tim. 1:17, *“To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*