

INTRODUCTION

Why did Paul, terrible sinner that he was, receive mercy from the Lord Jesus Christ?
Why did we, who are His disciples, receive mercy from Him when we were still in our sins?
Why would you, still in your sins, receive mercy from Him?

Does a sinner receive mercy from the Lord because the sinner makes a choice?
Does a sinner receive mercy from the Lord because he does some required work?

No, it is not for those reasons that Jesus Christ shows mercy to a sinner.

It is for no reason we can know that a sinner finds mercy with the Lord?

No, the Lord has told us in the bible reasons why He shows mercy to sinners.

In this passage of scripture we are studying, the apostle writes of reasons why he received mercy from the Lord Jesus. Two of the reasons he states expressly here in 1 Timothy: that he received mercy "because" or that "for this purpose" he received mercy. The third reason is not expressly stated to be a reason, but does appear to be. These reasons why the sinner receives mercy from the Lord will be our contemplation today. But elsewhere in the bible, the most basic reason why a sinner receives mercy is stated very clearly and forcefully, so we'll look at that for a moment, to lay down a foundation for the rest of the study to stand on.

There are reasons for God showing mercy to sinners in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

TEXT

1 Timothy 1:12-17

BODY

There are reasons for God showing mercy to sinners in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

- I. A Sinner Receives Mercy for a Reason: It Is What God Wills
 - A. In any talk about why someone receives mercy from God, the bottom line is that a person receives mercy because it is God's will for him to receive mercy
 - B. Romans 9:14-21 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!
(15) For He says to Moses, "**I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOMEVER I WILL HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOMEVER I WILL HAVE COMPASSION.**"
(16) So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. (17) For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "**FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I HAVE RAISED YOU UP, THAT I MAY SHOW MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MAY BE DECLARED IN ALL THE EARTH.**" (18) Therefore **He has mercy on whom He wills**, and whom He wills He hardens. (19) You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" (20) But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to

him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" (21) Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

- C. I am about to talk to you about three reasons why a sinner receives mercy from God through Jesus Christ. Let everything I say rest on the foundation of what we read here in Romans 9

A Sinner Receives Mercy for a Reason: It Is What God Wills

II. A Sinner Receives Mercy for Another Reason: It Is What He Needs

- A. There was a blind man; the Lord Jesus opened his eyes so he could see. Why did the blind man receive mercy from the Lord? what was the reason?
1. to show in physical blindness the spiritual blindness of sinners, and the saving work of God - yes!
 2. to demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth was come from God, and that His preaching was the truth - yes!
 3. but don't overlook another reason just because it is obvious: Why did the blind man receive mercy from the Lord? because he was blind! for him to be able to see, what did he need from the Lord? to be left alone? to be paid what his sinful conduct deserved? no, if he was to see, he needed to receive mercy
- B. In a story that Jesus told, there was a traveller on the Jericho road, who was robbed and beaten and left for dead; he was shown mercy by a fellow traveler who was a foreigner to him, a Samaritan. Why did that man receive mercy from the Good Samaritan? what was the reason?
1. because the Samaritan loved his fellow man? yes
 2. but don't overlook the obvious reason: Why did the wounded man receive mercy from the Samaritan? because he was wounded and helpless and dying! For that man to live, what did he need from the Samaritan? to be left alone? to be paid the just reward for all his hatred toward Samaritans? no, if he was to live, he needed to receive mercy
- C. In Paul's case, he was persecuting Christ Himself through His church, dragging away both men and women to imprisonment and death; He was doing this in ignorance and unbelief. Why did Paul receive mercy from the Lord Jesus Christ? what was the reason?
1. because it was the will of God? yes
 2. but what is the reason Paul states in verse 13? because being ignorant he was acting in unbelief
 3. What did Paul need to be stopped from his mad crusade of persecution against the church? to be saved from the wrath of God to come on sinners? to be made a trustworthy man who could be entrusted as a steward with the treasure of the gospel? did he just need to be left alone? did he need to get what he deserved? to reap what he had sown? to be rewarded for his deeds?
 4. no, he needed to receive mercy
 5. and he did receive mercy; and when he received mercy, the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, producing in Paul faith and love which are in Christ Jesus
- D. You who are the disciples of the same Lord Jesus Christ, why did you receive mercy from the Lord?

1. you received mercy because you were dead in trespasses and sins; you were by nature children of wrath
 2. for God, who loves you, to be reconciled with you, what would you need?
 - a) to be left alone?
 - b) to be paid what your conduct deserved?
 - c) to be given a choice?
 3. no if the God who loved you with so great a love, would save you, you would need to receive mercy from Him
 4. and, indeed, God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ
- E. You who are still in your sins, what would be the reason for you to receive mercy from God through Jesus Christ?
1. it would be that you need mercy from the Lord to be saved from His wrath; and nothing else will do
 2. what do you need, if you are to enter the blessed kingdom of heaven on the day of judgment?
 3. do you just need to be left alone?
 4. do you need to have your good deeds measured against your evil deeds, and be paid what you deserve?
 5. no, indeed! if you are to be spared the lake of fire, and welcomed into the everlasting joy of the Lord, you must received mercy from God by the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ
 6. and that mercy is proclaimed to you in this message: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved! Repent be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins.

A Sinner Receives Mercy for a Reason: It Is What God Wills

A Sinner Receives Mercy for Another Reason: It Is What He Needs

III. A Sinner Receives Mercy for Another Reason: It Is What Shows Jesus Christ As Savior

1 Timothy 1:15-16 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; **of whom I am chief [G4413 *protos*]**. (16) However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that **in me first [G4413]** Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

- A. Paul wrote that of all sinners, he was chief, foremost, first
- B. What Paul means by that: This is not something subjective, that he feels he is the foremost sinner; or that to himself he seems like the chief of sinners. Instead, he realizes that he actually is the foremost sinner. He does not mean that he sinned more than anyone else, but that he is the most prominent, the most notorious, the most directly rebellious against Jesus Christ; he is the foremost sinner. His status as the foremost sinner, the first sinner or chief sinner, is because of how he was the foremost persecutor of the church, and so of Christ Himself. At the time Saul was mercied by Jesus Christ, he was the primary persecutor of the church of God. If someone thought of who was the foremost sinner, Saul would be the natural choice.
- C. How the two parts of the statement go together: *protos* is the word in both halves of the statement, which is captured correctly only in the ESV:
 1. 1 Timothy 1:15-16 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am **the foremost [G4413 *protos*]**. (16) But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as **the foremost**

[G4413 protoi], Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

D. What Paul receiving mercy shows about Jesus Christ

1. it was the purpose of Jesus Christ to save sinners.
2. it was the purpose of Jesus Christ to save sinners by being patient or longsuffering with them
3. His longsuffering or patience was best shown by showing mercy to the foremost sinner
4. so now Jesus Christ's dealing with the foremost sinner, Saul, is a pattern or an example for other sinners to see
5. Jesus Christ is so patient, so longsuffering, that even the foremost sinner may believe in Him and receive eternal life.

E. What our Lord Jesus Christ showed about his patience in dealing with the chief sinner then serves as a pattern or example for sinners all over the world to see

1. a man is sinful in whatever ways, even so far as being the foremost sinner
2. Jesus Christ is so patient, so longsuffering, that even the foremost sinner's sins do not exhaust His patience
3. a sinner, no matter how bad, even the foremost sinner, finally believes in Jesus Christ
4. that sinner, no matter how bad, even the foremost sinner, receives from Jesus Christ eternal life

F. Before we leave this thought, see how Peter teaches us this

1. 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering [ESV patient]** to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
2. 2 Peter 3:15 and consider that the **longsuffering [ESV patience]** of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

G. Summary

1. When sinners go on sinning, the world keeps on getting more and more sinful, and God doesn't seem to be doing anything about it, we could think that God is somehow slack in keeping His promises.
2. But the truth is that He is not slack but longsuffering.
3. And His longsuffering is salvation!
4. Because during His longsuffering sinners come to repentance.
5. This is born out in the case of the foremost sinner.

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A Sinner Receives Mercy for Another Reason: It Is What He Needs

A Sinner Receives Mercy for Another Reason: It Is What Shows Jesus Christ As Savior

IV. A Sinner Receives Mercy for Yet Another Reason: It Is What Glorifies God

1 Timothy 1:17 Now to...God be honor and glory forever and ever

- A. What is the appropriate conclusion to a testimony of how a sinner has received mercy from God through Jesus Christ? giving all glory to God, from whom all blessings flow;
- B. Paul was the person most unlikely to receive mercy from God through Jesus Christ; but because God showed mercy even to him, Paul gives all glory to God, and teaches us to do the same

- C. When God has been merciful to a sinner, and that sinner reflects on that mercy, and testifies of it to others, it produces in both speaker and listener the ascription of all glory to God, who has shown Himself abundant in mercy

CONCLUSION

This letter we are studying was written so we can know how we are to conduct ourselves in the household of God, which is the church.

We are to maintain sound doctrine in the church, by making sure that faithful men are entrusted with the gospel, to maintain that gospel, preach it, and entrust it to other faithful men, who will also be able to teach others.

We are to see that faithfulness not as something natural in a man, or merely the product of his own achievement, but instead as the product of the mercy of Jesus Christ bestowed on sinner who otherwise could never have been faithful servants.

We are to see our own salvation, our own conversion, our own being made the disciples of Jesus Christ, not as something we have produced by our decision-making or by our good works, but as the product of His great mercy toward us when we were blind, lame, even dead spiritually.

We are to take comfort in that, to find assurance in the knowledge that we are saved and will be saved in the end, not because we have done well, but because we were doing very badly, and the Lord Jesus showed us mercy.

We are to return to God again and again through Jesus Christ our high priest, to find mercy to help us in every time of need.

We are to speak to sinners, as God grants opportunity, telling of the hope we have, that it is in Jesus Christ as our Savior, which hope is well founded in Him, since He has shown He is longsuffering even with the chief of sinners.

We are to give all glory to God for our being saved; to speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

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A Sinner Receives Mercy for Yet Another Reason: It Is What Glorifies God

G3115 *makrothumia*

JRY:

It is not that I chose, or that I was promoted due to my own faithfulness
No, I was not faithful to Christ, but was persecuting Him
So I needed mercy, which I was shown, because I was ignorant and unbelieving

ARY:

Calvin's and others' idea may not be compatible with Paul describing himself as the chief.

WYC synful men...of whiche Y am the firste...schulde schewe in me first al pacience
TYN synners of whom I am chefe...that Iesus Christ should fyrst shewe on me
BB synners, of whom I am chiefe...that in me the first, Iesus Christe might shewe
GEN sinners, of whom I am chiefe...that Iesus Christ should first shewe on me
KJV sinners; of whom I am chief . . . that in me first Iesus Christ might shew
RV, ASV sinners; of whom I am chief...that in me as chief

MOF though I am the foremost of sinners...furnishing Christ Jesus with the chief illustration
RSV that in me, as the foremost
NASB so that in me as the foremost
ESV sinners, of whom I am the foremost...that in me, as the foremost
NKJV sinners, of whom I am chief...that in me first

Prelude: Grace 42 Eternal God Exalted - Dorita
Trinity 683 Praise Him! Praise Him! - Dorita
Trinity 76 With Grateful Heart (Psalm 138) - Camille
Grace 20 Beneath the Cross of Jesus - Anna
Trinity 713 I Am Thine, O Lord - Camille

Call to Worship: Psalm 57:1-3
Scripture Reading: Exodus 33 (Dillon)
Sermon: "The Reasons for Mercy" 1 Timothy 1:13-17; Romans 9:14-24
Benediction: Psalm 57:9-11