

Text: I Timothy 1:15-17

Title: “Jesus ... All I Need for Salvation”

INTRODUCTION

Open your Bibles to I Timothy 1:15-17. We’re in a season where people are thinking about “all I want for Christmas.” If you’re not thinking about that, you might be consumed with what your loved ones want for Christmas, and what you can afford to buy for them. We’re pushing back against that materialistic pressure and thinking, not about “all I want for Christmas,” but “all I need for life.” And the message of Christmas is that God knows all we need for life ... true life ... and He has wondrously provided for that need in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Now throughout this season you’ve heard at least parts of the *story* of what happened in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. And in my preaching through this month I’ve tried to help us better understand the *significance* of the *story*. And today we come to one of those great passages in the Bible that goes beyond the *what* of Christmas to the *why* of Christmas. Read text.

Jesus is all I need for salvation ... *all* I need! There are three things I want you to see in this short passage. They will help us prepare for the Lord’s Supper which we will observe in a few minutes. It starts with...

1. A TRUSTWORTHY STATEMENT (v.15)

1 Timothy 1:15 - Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...

This phrase “trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance” is the first of five times Paul will use this phrase in his letters to pastors here in the NT. That phrase seems to be the way that Paul drives home certain bedrock truths that pastors are supposed to communicate to their churches. And this is certainly a big one. This is a statement that is to be counted as absolutely true. You can rely on this. Take it to the bank. It deserves to be accepted by all people of all ages.

ILLUSTRATION – Now obviously not all statements that are made are trustworthy. The weather forecasts are not “trustworthy” statements. It’s not that the weatherman intends to mislead you: “O boy. I’m going to tell them it’s going to be 90 degrees today so they’ll go out in shorts and a tee shirt. Won’t they be surprised when it’s 35 degrees?” It’s not that the weatherman intends to mislead you; it’s just that he isn’t capable of making a dependable, reliable statement. Weather is fickle, and it’s hard to predict.

But this is a trustworthy statement, not because Paul said it, but because God decreed it. “Saying” is the Gk. word *logos*. The word most often used in the NT to describe God’s revelation of Himself in Christ and in the written Scriptures.

And what is the statement?

1 Timothy 1:15b - Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...

Just look at the name here ... “Christ Jesus.” Christ” = His name of *promise* i.e. the coming of the Messiah. “Jesus” = His name of *fulfillment* as He came in human flesh to save us from our sins.

Christ Jesus “came into the world.” So Christ existed before He came into the world. We talked about that last week. God the Son was eternally in the presence of the God the Father when He was sent by the Father to go into the world on a mission. And what was that mission?

“To save sinners” = Here is the purpose of Christmas. Sinners are people who fall short of God’s glorious perfection. And we’re all in this category apart from Christ. Sinners need to be saved. That’s a great word ... saved. That’s what happens when a sinner puts their trust in Jesus Christ. They are saved. Jesus came not just to set an example or to teach wisdom or to show what love is. Jesus came to salvage wrecked, ruined sinners.

He did that by perfectly fulfilling God’s righteous law, then dying on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of every person who ever lived or lives. And the Bible says He rose again, victorious over sin and death. So when you and I put our trust in Christ we are saved and rescued from the awful penalty of sin, and raised up to a new life in Christ.

So that is the trustworthy statement. Next there is...

2. AN UNWORTHY SINNER (vv.15b-16)

1 Timothy 1:15b - Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

Paul is saying, “If God has all the sinners lined up in order of those most in need of mercy, I would have to be put at the front of the line.”

Paul, who, when we’re first introduced to him in the book of Acts is called Saul. He was a vicious opponent of Jesus Christ and the followers of Jesus Christ. He was involved in the killing of the great preacher Stephen. Saul pursued and harassed Christians. On one of his trips to arrest Christians, Saul Himself was arrested by Christ. Christ revealed Himself to Saul on the road to Damascus, and he would never be the same. Christ came to save sinners, and Saul said, “Sign me up for that. I need it worse than anyone.”

But notice Paul doesn’t say, “I *was* the worst.” He says, “I *am* the worst sinner ... the one in greatest need of mercy.” He never got over the realization that He needed Christ to save Him, and to keep Him saved.

1 Timothy 1:16 - But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

Paul is saying, “If God can save me, He can save anyone.” The Bible says that where sin abounds, grace abounds even more. There’s no life that so deep in sin that they can’t be pulled out by the rescuing love, mercy and grace of Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:16 - Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example...

Paul says, "I am an example ... a specimen ... of what God's grace and mercy can accomplish in a person's life."

ILLUSTRATION – At the Colonial Country Club there is a room that displays some of the memorabilia and trophies from the career of the great golfing legend Ben Hogan. Fort Worth was home for Mr. Hogan, and his amazing golfing career is part of the history of our city. So in this room there are displayed many of his trophies and awards. You walk through the room and you are amazed at the tremendous achievements of this athlete.

And many people think that's the way the Christian life works. Do your best to fill up a room with all your religious achievements. Perhaps it will be enough to impress God; if not, it will at least impress other people.

No! It's just the opposite. The fact is that in the Christian life we don't have a trophy room. God alone has a trophy room. And you and I as Christ-followers are trophies to God's amazing grace and power to save.

So the life of a sinner becomes a display case for the glory of God ... and part of the glory of God is his unlimited patience. That word "patience" is a powerful word. It means to suffer long with someone. God's righteous wrath against the sinner was held back by the dam of God's great love for the sinner. So God is patient ... He suffers long, not wanting that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth.

Friend, if you've rejected Christ, you need to know that God is being patient with you. And that's not the patience of an overly permissive parent. No, you are living in very real danger. And the only thing that stands between you and eternal death is the patience of God.

What are you to do? Two things: Believe and receive.

1 Timothy 1:16 - For those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

Note: I've heard motivational speakers say, "What you believe you can achieve." Now that may be true with many things in life, but it isn't true of eternal life. It's not a matter of achieving anything. It is a matter of putting your trust in what God has achieved in Christ ... what God has done for you in Christ, and then receiving, as a free gift, this amazing life that lasts forever.

So this trustworthy statement is believed and received by an unworthy sinner which results in glory to...

3. A PRAISEWORTHY SAVIOR (v.17)

1 Timothy 1:17 - Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

It is customary for us to think of Christ as our Savior. But we must remember that this entire plan came from the heart of God our Savior.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 - God our Savior ... wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

One of the great things that should happen in the life of every believer is that we come to understand more and more of what God has done for us in His Son Christ, and that our lives continuously explode with praise to God.

He is the King eternal ... the ruler of all the ages. He rules sovereignly throughout all of human history.

He is the King immortal. He will never die or be corrupted in any way.

He is the King invisible. The Bible says that God is spirit. His presence is like the air around us. We cannot see Him, but we would perish without Him.

He is the King ... the only true God. God is one of kind ... unique. He is the *only* true God. Stop chasing after false and empty gods in this world.

And what belongs to Him is “honor and glory forever.” What God has done for us in Christ deserves our praise in this life, but that’s not enough. We need all eternity to give Him honor and glory.

Again I say, one of the great things that should happen in the life of every believer is that we come to understand more and more of what God has done for us in His Son Christ, and that are lives continuously explode with praise to God.

And the Lord’s Supper is one place where this happens for us.

LORD’S SUPPER – There are two “pictures” that Christ has given to His church to help us remember and rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ. The first is believer’s baptism. When a new believer is baptized we get a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It also pictures our immersion into the life of Christ and our connection to the Body of Christ. The second picture is the Lord’s Supper. It pictures the sacrifice of Christ’s body and blood to atone for our sins. The Lord’s Supper is a time when we come to say with Paul:

1 Timothy 1:15b - Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.