

## Jesus Friend of Sinners – Saved FROM Sin FOR Service

3/31/19 – Pastor Randy

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### Acts 26: 9-18

*"I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene. Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities.*

*"One day I was on such a mission to Damascus, armed with the authority and commission of the leading priests. About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.'*

*"Who are you, lord?' I asked.*

*"And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.'*

### 1 Timothy 1:12-16

*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. **He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him**, even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus. This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the worst of them all. But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.*

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In these two passages Paul gives testimony to what Jesus Christ had done for him, and in, and through him.

### A. Jesus SAVED Paul from SIN

In 1 Timothy 1 Paul expresses his gratefulness to God for being patient and merciful with him in spite of his admitted blasphemy against Jesus and arrogant contempt for Jesus followers. Listen again to his words which expressed his realization of God's amazing grace in his life:

*"Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus."*

*"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the worst of them all.  
But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners."*

No one, not even Paul, is beneath or beyond the reach of God's grace!

### B. Jesus SAVED Paul for SERVICE

Acts 26

*For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness*

*"I am sending you..."* According to Acts 26, Jesus was going to send Paul:

- To turn people from darkness to light; from lies to truth.
- To turn people from the power of Satan to God
- So that they will receive forgiveness for their sins
- So that they will become children of God and part of the family of God.

1 Timothy 1

*But God had mercy on me **so that...***

*...Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.*

*...and **appointed me** to serve him... even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ.*

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Jesus saved Paul and sent Paul so that He could save other's through Paul's life and testimony. Jesus saves us from our sin for our personal benefit, but never only for our personal benefit. He also saves us for the benefit of others!!

**SUMMARY: Paul's conversion is a great example of the fact Jesus' came to save sinners; to SAVE us *from* SIN *for* SERVICE.**

He loved us so he came to save us from our sin. When we piece together the information from Paul's various testimonies we discover four changes that take place in the life of the sinner who has experienced salvation through faith in Jesus.

Salvation results in a new experience of God's presence; a new status and new identity as a child of God and member of His family, a new attitude of gratitude and a new profound purpose. When you have those four things you have LIFE!!!

### **1. A New Experience of God's Presence -**

Although Paul does not mention the Holy Spirit in these two testimonies we have from him recorded in Acts 26 and 1 Timothy 1, we know from the initial account of Paul's conversion, recorded for us by Luke in Acts 9, that Jesus sent Ananias to Paul to baptize him and so that Paul would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus came to save a sinner like Paul so that Paul could experience the empowering presence of God in his life on a day to day basis.

**2. A New Status** – One of the things that Jesus told Paul would happen when Paul took the message of salvation to the nations was that they would be given a place among God's people. That is another way of expressing that they would be accepted and adopted into the family of God; granted the dignified status of sons and daughters of The Most High God!

Jesus saves sinners, not just from the guilt of their sin but from the shame and the degrading consequences of their sin. We demeaned ourselves, but God has restored our dignity. He saves us and heals us of our insecurity.

**3. A New Attitude** – Gratitude for God's grace and mercy.

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In the span of nine short sentences in 1 Timothy 1:12-16, Paul expressed his gratefulness to God four times.

*"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord"*

*"But God had mercy on me..."*

*"Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was!"*

*"But God had mercy on me"*

**4. A New Purpose** – A meaningful, profound, purpose that affects eternity. Paul went from a man with a **depraved purpose** to man with a **dignified purpose**. \*Notice that the public perception of his purified purpose was not positive. Don't expect everyone around you to cheer you on when you decide to pursue God's purpose. In Paul's case he went from being a person of prominence who had the power to persecute others to a persecuted man who was treated with the indignity of a criminal.

Paul was a man on a mission before Jesus called him. But his mission was a life-taking one, not a life-giving purpose. After his conversion his life was infused with a profound purpose which resulted in a positive eternal impact.

Ananias was saved and then sent. Paul was saved and then sent.

Salvation results in a new experience of God's presence, a new status and new identity as a child of God and member of His family, a new attitude of gratitude and a new profound purpose. When you have those four things you have LIFE...the kind of life that John described as "abundant life"!!!

Pleasure, Prestige, Position, Power, Possessions are all very alluring and they bring a degree of temporary satisfaction, but not lasting satisfaction.

Adults – Your past does not disqualify you from receiving God's grace or being called into His service. Neither do you have to have been a notorious sinner and enemy of God for him to use you.

Paul has been celebrated by the church for his missionary work but it was an ordinary sinner saved by grace by the name of Ananias that God used to heal

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Paul's blinded eyes, baptize Paul in water, and prayed over Paul so he could be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The impact of Ananias' obedience to go when God sent him to Paul is as great as the impact of Paul.

God is still saving people like Paul. He still loves the worst of sinners and he still redeems the worst of sinners for service in His Kingdom.

The following story of one such notorious sinner was published in the NY Times two years ago. Click below to read this amazing testimony:

[The Jihadi Who Turned To Jesus](#)

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