

Bible Reading Plan

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

WEEKLY READING: 1 THESSALONIANS 5; 2 THESSALONIANS 1-3; 1 TIMOTHY 1

PASSAGE REFERENCED: 1 TIMOTHY 1:15-17

¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. – 1 Timothy 1:15-17

If you've been following our *Bible Reading Plan* this year, what Paul is saying to Timothy in the verses above is nothing new. We've seen Paul say similar things over and over again in just about all of his other letters we've read so far. And the reason for that should be clear to us now. Just like Paul, we were sinners, whom Christ saved. And that only happened because of God's grace and mercy towards us. We didn't earn that salvation; it was a free gift.

I love how Paul sets this truth up: "*here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance.*" (v15) That opening functions as a reminder that what follows is simple, important, and something we should remember and accept. I also appreciate how Paul points out in verse 16 that Jesus' transformative work in our lives can be an example for others who don't know Him yet. We can reflect God's patience, love, mercy, and grace. But the question is, do we do that? Do we live in a way that fosters transparency and honesty? Do we show others our shortcomings, mistakes, failures, and limitations? And do we live in a way that reflects God's goodness, power, love, kindness, and presence?

I want the answer to those questions to be yes. But I fear that's not always the case. Maybe that's because we want to appear put together, or we don't want to appear weak. Whatever the reason, we often wear masks (no, not the COVID kind) where we hide the truth of what's really going on.

But think about what it's like when you catch a glimpse of others being real. It's refreshing and encouraging, right? And we can often easily judge whether others are being fake or authentic with us. But somehow, we think we can get away with faking to others, that they won't notice. But that's obviously not true. They can see that something isn't right. So why do we keep hiding and pretending that everything is ok? When we do that, are we limiting God? Are we limiting the witness of His kindness, love, and grace? Yeah.

So how could God use us and our vulnerability to reach the world around us? It seems easier said than done, right? Yeah, it is if we're trying to do it on our own. But our faith journey is about surrender. When we surrender to God, the Spirit goes to work, growing and shaping us. And using us to reflect God to those around us. Surrender is hard, but it is worth it – for us and the world around us. Just imagine what could happen if we surrendered to the "*King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God*" (v17), and let Him work. We really would bring "*honor and glory [to Him] for ever and ever. Amen.*" (v17) – Sarah Neel