

## Why Saul?

Franklin Church of Christ  
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PM Assembly

### Introduction:

We have all read the accounts of Saul's conversion in **Acts 9, 22, and 26**. But have you ever wondered why God chose Saul, a blasphemer and persecutor, to become the apostle Paul? Were you aware Paul explained why in **I Timothy 1:12-17**, giving three reasons, each of which provides important lessons for us to impact our service and understanding.

### Discussion:

- I. "Because He considered me faithful" (**I Timothy 1:12**).
  - A. While I do not want to establish some kind of standard to tell the difference between who will obey the gospel and who will not or who will be a good Christian and who won't, Paul's point demonstrates what God looks for in His servants. He looks for faithfulness. Being faithful here does not refer to being a true believer, for Paul was anything but. However, Paul was faithful.
  - B. Perhaps the best description of this faithfulness is found in Jesus' parables involving stewards.
    1. In **Luke 12:35-48**, the faithful steward is loyal to his master. He is busy about his work, whether his master is present or not. He is ready, waiting and on the alert for his master's needs or desires in order to serve him.
    2. In **Luke 16:10-13**, faithfulness is contrasted with lack of justice, that is, with dealing deceitfully. The faithful are honest regarding their charge. The faithful are so with small and large matters. The faithful are so with matters of their own property and with matters of their master's property. The faithful are single minded in their devotion to their master. They are not distracted by other masters but intent on serving the one.
    3. In **Luke 19:12-27**, the faithful steward wisely uses what he has been given to serve his master. He does not hide his abilities, resources and opportunities or blame others for not using his abilities, resources and opportunities.
  - C. God chose Paul because these were Paul's qualities. Paul had done wrong because he did not understand his Master's will. He continued to follow the defunct Judaism because he did not have faith in Jesus. However, Paul was faithful. He was loyal, busy about his work, ready and waiting to do his master's will and honest in his dealings. So God declared the truth to him, offering him the opportunity to choose life.
  - D. We need examine ourselves through the mirror of these scriptures. Clearly, faithfulness is key in being right with God. If God were looking to handpick a servant for a particular cause and His requirement was this faithfulness, would we qualify? Are we single minded in our devotion? Do we make wise use of our God-given abilities, opportunities and resources? Are we busy doing the work we can? No doubt, we can all grow in this area. But can we be remotely considered faithful?
- II. "Because I acted ignorantly in unbelief" (**I Timothy 1:13**).
  - A. How many have we seen in the world around us that are sincerely and faithfully devoted to error? How many of them are so because they are ignorant of the truth? We could probably each name somebody in that condition. How often have we asked or been asked about whether or not God will extend grace to those who don't believe because they weren't brought up in a Christian family? After all, it seems unfair to us because it just isn't their fault. It isn't fair that no mercy be shown them based on their family background.
  - B. I am here to tell you unequivocally and without fear of successful contradiction that God shows mercy and grace to those who act ignorantly in unbelief. Those who are sincerely and faithfully devoted to error because of ignorance will receive mercy. That is exactly what Paul says happened to him in **I Timothy 1:13**.
  - C. However, we must note how that mercy was demonstrated. Paul was not left in his error until he died and then on judgment passed over and allowed to enter heaven because of his ignorance. Mercy was shown to Paul by bringing him face to face with the truth and granting him opportunity to choose whether or not to accept it. **Acts 9:6** explains God did not just save Paul despite himself on the road to Damascus. Rather, Paul, like everyone who has ever been saved was offered the Gospel through a teacher and had a choice of whether to accept or reject it. God will

show His grace to those whose devotion to false religion today is through ignorance. He has created the world in such a way that all can see His existence and must follow Him (**Romans 1:18-20**) He has given His word so they may study for themselves like the Bereans of **Acts 17:11**. The mercy has been extended, we pray that all will accept it.

- D. There are three points of impact for us from this lesson.
1. We must recognize we have the Bible and on the Day of Judgment we will not be excused for believing false doctrine because we simply followed our parents, preachers or teachers.
  2. In like manner, neither will our friends be excused for being a part of false religion just because of their family background. God has offered His mercy so they can overcome ignorance by giving them His Word which contains all they need to be perfectly equipped for every good work (**II Timothy 3:16-17**).
  3. Recognizing God extends mercy to the ignorant by allowing them to hear the truth, we must not sit in our pews feeling sorry for those in false religion. Neither should we sit here silent and afraid to speak. Rather, we must be willing to be God's instruments of grace and mercy, teaching anyone and everyone we can.

III. "So that... Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience" (**I Timothy 1:16**).

- A. Amazingly enough, God chose Paul not just because of Paul, but because of us. Paul explained he found mercy so Christ's perfect patience would be seen by all who will believe in Him for eternal life. That is, Paul was chosen so we can have confidence in our salvation.
- B. We have all sinned (**Romans 3:23**). Some of us are filled with doubt regarding whether or not God will save us. Paul stands as a shining example that God can forgive us, desires to forgive us and will forgive us if we turn to Him for that forgiveness.
- C. I don't know all you have done, but have you ever blasphemed Jesus? Have you ever been a willing accomplice to murder someone, just because they believed in Jesus? Paul had and yet God forgave him and washed his sins away when he was baptized (**Acts 22:16**).
- D. I don't know your personal situation, but I do know God sent His Son to die for you, even knowing all the sins you would commit (**Romans 5:8**). There is not one single person about which God has ever said, "Whoa, I didn't see that one coming when I sacrificed My Son. I think I will pass over them." Once you have submitted to Jesus, faithfully obeying Him in repentance, confession and baptism, you need not fear that some of the sins are still "sticking". They are all washed away and you are raised in newness of life to serve the Lord (**Romans 6:4**).

### Conclusion:

God is looking for a few good men and women. His search is to find those who are faithful, who will be loyal, single minded, devoted workers who will be ready and willing to do His work. His mercy has been extended through Jesus' death and the revelation of the Word. Won't you turn to Jesus for forgiveness? Submit to Jesus in faithful obedience, confessing your faith in Him, repenting of your sins and being baptized for the remission of your sins (**Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38**). If God would forgive Paul, He will forgive you too. Why don't you let Him right now?