

Paul here is in the middle of a parenthetical statement regarding the proper use of the Law and the boundless Grace of God that could save even one like him and use him in His service.

Yes, the Law is very tough, thorough and timely. After a 1400 year trial by God's chosen people Israel the jury was no longer out. Israel couldn't keep it. No one could, no matter how much they valued it and revered it's Giver, Jehovah. Then Jesus of Nazareth came along and not only kept it all but fulfilled it. That is what He came for and that is what He did. Because He did, all others became doubly condemned because they didn't and couldn't keep it. Yet Jesus, by keeping it, took away any possible excuse they might have been tempted to claim.

Even Saul of Tarsus, Pharisee of the Pharisees, blameless before men as he was, and more zealous for the law than any, **he couldn't keep it!** He cites his pedigree. Not an admirable genealogy of honorable ancestors but **chief of sinners.** This was not a mere emotional show of humility to make a point. He really thought he was, and he was. His resume included terms like "blasphemer," "persecutor," "injurious."

1Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

He points to himself not to call attention to himself but to the mercy of God and the grace of our Lord. Grace that was exceedingly abundant with faith and love. Faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Sometimes saints like to give public personal testimonies to the grace of God in saving someone as bad as they were. But they go off into detailed catalogue of their sins. They call more attention to themselves than to the grace of the One who saves them. And they defile many by speaking of things that ought not to be named among saints,

Ephesians 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

While this might be an exciting experience for the speaker and the hearers it does not truly glorify God. Paul here briefly calls attention to himself only to point to God's mercy and the grace

How could God act in such mercy to save men after they had crucified His Son? Because He is Love. In His sovereignty He deigns to call it ignorance.

Acts 3:17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

Saul looking on as Stephen was stoned heard this:

Acts 7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Jesus' words as he was being crucified opened the way for

grace enabling our salvation.

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

God chose to treat the death of his Son as manslaughter. He provides a way of escape for one guilty of manslaughter. In the Old Testament He provided for cities of refuge where one guilty could flee and be safe from an avenger. Paul claims one mitigating circumstance as allowing God to save him He did it ignorantly. Even so, he was still "chief" of sinners. He was saved by GRACE. How many times is that stated in scripture? How many more times is it illustrated in scripture? Paul presents himself as a supreme example of GRACE. Of God's longsuffering. Of God's mercy. Christ Jesus! Christ: anointed, selected, chosen. Jesus: "Jehovah is Salvation." He came into this world, from outside this world, from heaven, to SAVE SINNERS! IF PAUL CAN BE SAVED ANYONE CAN!

Paul cannot, and would not, restrain his outburst of praise glorifying God.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

We have in this doxology a marvelous declaration of the glory of God. May we give Him glory often, from hearts filled with gratitude and filled with HIM. Not in mere recitation of a form of words which may or may not express earnest heartfelt praise. God is REAL and these words really glorify HIM. Say it aloud, sincerely and often.

After this glorious diversion Paul resumes, in vers 18, stating the charge to Timothy he began in verses 4 and 5. Paul has first reminded Timothy of God's grace in not only saving him but counting him faithful and choosing to place him in a responsible, authoritative place of ministry (service) as an apostle to serve the Lord. If the Lord will use such a one as Paul, He will certainly use such a one as Timothy, who from his youth followed God,

2Timothy 1:5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Yet lest Timothy be overwhelmed with the work set before him Paul then reminds him of some prophecies already given regarding him. What is Paul here referring to?

2Timothy 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Was Timothy, as many think, an ordained Pastor over the church at Ephesus? No. Read scripture carefully. Be alert to what is not said as well as what is said. He was NOT "ordained" by men, by an apostle, by the assembly or by the elders. No one is. Nor had he received whatever spiritual gifts through men, by the assembly or by the

elders. Normally spiritual gifts are given by the Lord (Rom 12:6) and conveyed by the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 12:8-11). Apparently in Timothy's case a unique thing occurred. Paul in his authority as apostle of Jesus Christ publicly conveyed a spiritual gift to Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Timothy had received recognition and fellowship of the apostle and elders in the gift given him. They expressed this through laying on of hands (like a handshake, a right hand of fellowship), prayers and prophesying (speaking words of encouragement, edification and comfort as led by the Spirit). Many Old Testament servants of the Lord were given prophetic statements to prepare them for the mission given them and for what lay ahead. See Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1,4-10; and Ezekiel 2:1-3:11. John the Baptist (Luke 1:15-17) and Paul (Acts 9:15-16) were also.

1Corinthians 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Acts 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed.

5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure

Remembering what had been prophesied then would fortify him for the good warfare set before him. This is not like the Olympic Games Paul often refers to. This is a like a long term **military** campaign complete with persistent, vigorous opponents and all the attending hardships a good soldier must be ready to endure. A warfare involving holding faith and a good conscience and dependance upon God for every step of the way. Conduct that allowed him to go forward with nothing on his conscience that would condemn him. What he set out to do was to be true to God and not mere show. How liberating it is to have a clear conscience.

Yet how solemn to hear of some who had apparently intentionally thrust away a good conscience and made shipwreck as to faith. What a vivid picture of ruin. Shipwreck, both as to their faith and as to the faith. The journey embarked upon interrupted, the cargo and passengers lost at sea. All earthly usefulness destroyed. All this because of sin in word or in deed. Paul names two men whom he, in his apostolic capacity and power, has delivered to Satan. This is not necessarily delivering them to the Lake of Fire. It is said here, in this case, "that they might learn not to blaspheme." (One will NEVER learn

anything in Hell.) Earlier Paul delivered another to Satan for immoral conduct, 1Corinthians 5:5. We may not even really know if such a person is a true child of God but, either way, there is the intent that they might be saved in the day of the Lord. Being delivered to Satan is a terrible thing, whether a true child of God or not. In one sense all unsaved men are in Satan's realm, doing his bidding and suffering the consequences of sin. Believers are protected from Satan's malice unless specifically delivered to him. God is sovereign, and in control. He will even use Satan's hatred for His Son and His own to bring about discipline when needed.

Can we deliver one to Satan today? No. None but the Lord Jesus can do that. And He does so from time to time. His apostles had authority to deliver one to Satan because, as such, they were authorized to act on His behalf. Paul does not pass this authority on to Timothy, or to any other. Nor was the assembly ever given this authority. The assembly is authorized to, and given responsibility to, put away such a person from its midst. Both the Lord, Matthew 18:15-20, and Paul, 1Corinthians 5:2, 9-13, make this clear. Once put way, God judges. As part of this the Lord may deliver one to Satan, but it is His action not ours. The local assembly binds what has been bound by the Lord in heaven and looses what has been bound by the Lord in heaven. If He delivers one to Satan while they are still received by the assembly, the assembly may come under the same jeopardy. We need to be faithful to His Name and His honor. The Corinthians were not and Paul notices that because they did not judge themselves many were weak and sickly among them and some slept (had died), 1Corinthians 11:30.

What does it mean to blaspheme?

Greek: **blasphemeo** to vilify; specially, to speak impiously; defame, rail on, revile, speak evil.

One may blaspheme by speaking ill of God or a created being, human, angelic or satanic. One may use the Lord's Name in vain. One might curse God or another person. Vehemently denouncing or reviling another person is blaspheming. They are the image of God. Speaking evil of another is blaspheming. Beware of the tongue. Obviously the saints are not to tolerate this kind of behavior amongst them.

With these basics established Paul can begin his instructions and exhortations which Timothy was to impart to the saints, to us.

By Ron Canner, February 22, 2006