

## A Savior for Sinners

“The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost” (**I Timothy 1:15**, ESV).

Imagine what a comfort that was to Paul. According to **I Timothy 1:13**, he had been a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. According to **Romans 7:8**, his major downfall was covetousness of every kind. According to **Exodus 20:17**, the kinds of covetousness include coveting your neighbor’s house, your neighbor’s servants, your neighbor’s goods, even your neighbor’s wife. Despite being a Pharisee and even blameless (**Philippians 3:6**), Paul knew his own sinfulness. And like so many of us, he believed his sins were the worst. But he had one comfort. Jesus came to save sinners.

Jesus didn’t come to save perfect people. Jesus didn’t come to save righteous people. Jesus didn’t come to save good people. Jesus came to save sinners.

On the surface, that ought to make each of us happy. But it presents one amazing problem. To be saved by Jesus we have to come face to face with our sins. We have to realize exactly how awful we really are. Further, we have to recognize that there is not a single thing we can do about it. We can’t make up for our sins. We can’t pay for our sins. We can’t dismiss our sins. We can’t ignore our sins. We can’t hide our sins. We can’t justify our sins. We can’t negotiate our sins. We can’t fix our sins. We are stuck in our sins. As **Ephesians 2:1** says, we are dead in sins.

But that is exactly what we try to do sometimes. We try to do something about our sins. We try to act like they aren’t that bad. Even if they are bad, we excuse them because everyone does it. Or we try to find someone who is worse than we are. We are afraid to face ourselves honestly because we know if we look into the yawning abyss of our own sinfulness we will discover how truly unlovable and unacceptable we are.

We even try to help one another out with this. If someone comes clean about some sin, confessing to us, we often try to gloss over it. “Oh, I understand, it’s not that bad. You should hear some of the things I’ve done (or he’s done, or she’s done).” “Oh, it could have been worse, at least you didn’t do...”

The story is told about a woman who came to confess to a preacher. She told him how awful she was, what a wretched mother and wife she was, what a terrible sinner she was. She had been used to being coddled when she berated herself. However, this preacher took a different approach. “Sister,” he said, “the very sad thing is, you are much, much worse than even you realize.” What a shock!

And yet there is comfort. Jesus came into the world to save people who are much, much worse than we realize. He came into the world to save us even though we are sinners. We don’t have to prove to Him that we are good enough. We don’t have to get our lives in order first. We don’t have to show Him that we really can be better. We simply need to come to Him.

What’s even better is we’ve already seen the proof of this love. We don’t have to wait until the end of time and hope it works this way. He has already shown His desire to save sinners. As **Romans 5:6-8** says, Jesus died for us while we were still weak, ungodly, sinners. He didn’t wait until we got our act together. He didn’t wait until we proved we would get it right. He didn’t wait until we showed Him we were better than our sins. He simply loved us, even in our sins, and died for us.

What comfort.

Oh, in some senses it is a hard road to Jesus Christ. We have to come face to face with the dark side of ourselves. We have to be completely honest about our wretchedness, and none of us really wants to face that. But here is the key. Jesus has already come face to face with it and came to save you anyway. If He was able to look your sinfulness in the face and still die for you, why don’t you look it straight in the face and bring it to Him to destroy?

The wonderful thing about this is when we come face to face with our sins, then the doorway to overcome sin is opened. As long as we are hiding from our sinfulness, we will always be overcome by it. The path to victory starts with honesty about our defeat. As Jesus said in **Matthew 5:3**, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

So, don’t try to hide your defeat. Don’t try to hide your sinfulness. Don’t try to put your best foot forward with Jesus. He didn’t come to save good people; He came to save sinners...like you and like me. Praise God for that!

--Edwin L. Crozier