

1 Timothy 1:12-20

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[0 : 0 0] now as we continue then in this section of timothy we looked as we mentioned previously at the first half of first timothy chapter one and paul was explaining to timothy about the need whilst he remained at ephesus to to focus on the true gospel and the simplicity and the purity of it and not to get distracted with genealogies and fables and other things added to the scripture added to the gospel which would only serve to obscure it it's like if you're looking at it in a perfectly clear view on a beautiful day and you've got lovely scenery and then somebody puts maybe smoked glass in front of you or other things in the way and that they may be perfectly fine things in themselves but they're getting in the way you cannot see so clearly and this is what paul is warning timothy against anything that is effectively a distraction an obstruction to the purity and simplicity of the gospel then that is to be resisted at all costs and that the law which is good is to be recognized that it is to be to bring people to christ the law of itself is of not any particular use as a means of of righteousness or anything to somebody who is redeemed but it is intended to restrain the evil as we see there of verses 8 to 10 the law is not made for righteous man or lawless disobedient and godly sinners unholy profane and so on and it effectively goes through the different commandments there so paul goes on to say i thank christ jesus our lord who firstly it says has entrusted committed this gospel to my trust in other words he's underlining the fact that he did not receive it himself or he didn't seek it himself he was entrusted with it and i thank christ jesus our lord who hath enabled me for that he counted me faithful putting me into the ministry in other words he saw that i had faith having faith chapter 14 of acts uh we read it verse 9 when paul saw somebody in lystra the man who has was impotent in his feet the same heard paul speak who steadfastly beholding him and perceiving that he had faith to be healed that he had faith in him sufficient faith to believe and the lord clearly counts paul faithful in other words having faith it's just that it is so misplaced he thinks it's right to persecute the church thinks it's right to attack the lord's people but the lord sees the faith that is in him that in a sense his heart is in the right place and so he um if you like harnesses that faith that zeal instead of persecuting the gospel to cause it to serve the gospel but i want us to backtrack slightly and look at this word who has enabled me now the word the the greek word or the the root of the word which we have here in the term enabled is the same root of word that we have here in acts 9 when paul is first converted where we read that after he is uh goes into the synagogues and he uh he seeks to then proclaim the gospel we read saw increased the more in strength and confounded the jews which dwelt at damascus proving that this is very christ increased the more in strength it's the same greek word the root is the same greek word as what we have here enabled in verse 12 of first chapter timothy chapter 1 uh verse 12 and it's the sense is it doesn't just oh he made it possible he fixed it for me to be able to do it no there's the sense here of increasing the more in strength and this strength is not so much oh he enabled me like to go to the gym and build up my muscles and my strength and my spiritual strength increased by my own exercises no it didn't this requires an injection of god's strength of god's spirit paul increased the more in strength acts 9 22 why because

he had this access of the holy spirit coming into him now that wasn't there before there was only the keeping of laws and regulations and seeking to please god by falling into certain tram lines and taking certain boxes but it was not a living relationship with the god of abraham isaac and jacob in the way that this is now when he has a relationship with christ he increased the more in strength because this is a living faith a living relationship that grows when somebody becomes a christian when they when they're born again when they're converted it's not like you're giving a sort of membership card that's plastic or cardboard and you stick it in your wallet and you take it out five years later and it looks exactly the same it's almost like if you can say it readily to take an example being given a pot plant and you water it and water it and look after it and nurture it even the sun and

that's going to sprout and grow and spread leaves and blossom and so on five years down the line that is going to look completely different from what it was when you received it because it will have grown it will have spread it will have new leaves and shoots and buds and blossoms it is not like little plastic cards you take out your wallet it is exactly the same if you are in christ then your relationship with them your spiritual strength will be should be growing nurture it is an organic living thing because in and of ourselves you know as we read in romans 5 you know verse 6 when we were yet without strength in due time christ died for the ungodly man is by human nature by his ordinary nature he is without strength and so when it says i thank christ jesus our lord who has enabled me it means so it's enabled me to go on from strength to strength in the lord because this is a living relationship an ongoing relationship with the lord he has enabled me he's built me up day by day strength by strength that he counted me faithful he recognized faith in me or he gave me the gift of faith and built on it putting me into the ministry this service of the lord paul had no previous track record if you like of of uh of faithfulness or of service but the lord saw it or counted that faithfulness to him that which had been zeal against the church the lord counted as zeal that was meant to be you know thought it was serving god he had no previous track record of faithfulness but rather the lord is accounting this to him who before was a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious why is he a blasphemer if he thinks he's serving the god of israel because he is in fact attacking that very god's only son i am jesus whom thou persecutest that's all so why persecutest that me so in attacking god's son and his followers he's attacking the god that he thinks he's serving he becomes a blasphemer a persecutor and injurious but i obtained mercy because i did it ignorantly in unbelief now of course there are limits to how much ignorance will excuse us if you are if you're doing 60 in a 30 mile per hour area the police pull you over it will not save you to say oh i didn't realize i was ignorant i didn't know that that was a speed limit here you're still going to get booked you're still going to get done and ignorance is not an excuse in the eyes of the law but it may mitigate it somewhat you know when when jesus says to the uh the pharisees and those who don't believe in him in uh in john chapter 9 i think it is uh verse um towards the end of the chapter it's in verse 41 and he said jesus said that if you were blind you should have no sin it doesn't mean be sinners but he means you wouldn't be guilty of this particular sin of opposing him but now you say we see therefore your sin remain if you're saying you're not ignorant you're saying you know the law you know about the worship of god you know how he's to be approached you're saying we know these things we're the experts you jesus of nazareth you're the bumpkin you don't know what you're talking about if you if you were blind you shouldn't be guilty in this regard you have no sin but now you say we see wherefore our sin remaineth now of course there's limits as we say to the benefits of you can call it benefits of ignorance uh if we see in act 17 remember when paul is speaking to to those at athens where he talks about their ignorance he says the times of this ignorance god winked at he let it pass he did for the other nations yes it would still be that which would cause them to be condemned but he didn't if you like he didn't require it all so stringently there is one thing to be completely ignorant of the true god and you'll still be lost that way but it is another to have known the true god and rejected him the times of this ignorance god winked at but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent because he had appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man who he hath ordained would all be given assurance unto all men in that he had raised him from the dead now whatever the lord's attitude to the ignorance before now he's not going to allow that ignorance to continue and paul says i did pardon me i did it ignorantly in unbelief true in one sense he didn't know any better but he must still live with the consequences we must always live with the consequences of our sin our guilt is taken away our sins cleansed but you know as i use the illustration so often if you break a window and then the freezing cold comes through it and you think oh i'm really sorry i broke that window i wish i hadn't broken it now i wish i just not thrown that stone through that window and you may be genuinely sorry and if it's somebody else's window they may perfectly forgive you for it but you still have to live with the effects of the wind and rain coming through it it is still damaged the fact that it is still there and paul still has to live with the effects if you like the the the reality he still has to deal with the the after effects or the results if you like of his previous sin he must live with the consequences and the grace of our lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in christ jesus that means it abounded now of course we have this in in romans again chapter 5 says moreover the law entered that the offense might abound why would you want offense to abound because where sin abounded grace did much more abound it's it's like if you go to the doctor and something is wrong with you you don't know what is wrong and the doctor identifies what is wrong with you and if he said well

this is what's wrong you've got this very serious illness now by the time you go out the doctor's doorway you know that you are with him with a particular serious illness and it may be oh no i've got this awful illness i've got this awful disease and when i went in i didn't know i had it so i was always i was happier when i went in because i didn't know that i had this illness but the doctor was able to say right we're going to refer you for treatment to a specialist you're going to get this this and this this particular treatment this particular medicine and this is going to help the course of this particular antibiotic and we'll have another look at your format and see what's stated and hopefully it should be better by then because once he's identified the problem you'll know how to treat it and once you've been told what the problem is there's some hope that it can be dealt with this is partly the purpose of the law the law entered romans 5 20 that the offense might abound not that people become more simple but rather their sin is exposed the illness the disease is diagnosed it is seen for what it is sin against god separation from god is identified and as the illness is identified by the law so also the cure is identified and freely offered the law entered that the offense might abound but where sin abounded because it's now identified as the offense grace the free gift of god did much more abound it was more abundant this is what paul says the grace of our lord was exceeding abundant it abounded with faith and love which is in christ jesus it wasn't in himself but it was in christ jesus now what is the upshot of this when he says this is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptation that christ jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom i am chief and of course this is exactly the uh the good news of salvation luke 19 uh at verse 10 the son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost and this is one reason why paul is able to say to timothy i know the truth of this gospel i know the power of this gospel because i was lost i was completely against this particular gospel i was completely antagonist antagonistic to it i persecuted it but such is the grace and the power of god and the mercy through the lord jesus christ it completely changed me where sin abounded grace did much more about the grace of our lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in christ jesus i know this to be true because i used to be a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious but i thank christ jesus our lord who has enabled me he's enabled me to go on from strength to strength just as we read in acts 9 verse 22 there that he he builds up the strength he goes on daily growing in this strength because that is what christ does for him and this is the power that has changed him this isn't empty words and genealogies and fables and rules and ideas that these false teachers are bringing in this is the reality the power of the gospel paul says and one reason no doubt that the lord was exceeding abundant with his faith and love toward me i for this cause i have paid mercy that in me first jesus christ might show a long suffering for a pattern to them which should he after believe on him to life everlasting in other words that when we say oh this is a faithful saying and worthy of being accepted that christ jesus came into the world the same sinners of whom i am chief i am the living proof policy i am the reality i'm the evidence that somebody is completely against christ can be completely turned towards it this is the reality of the gospel and i'm the living proof he says and i suspect or i am teaching says that it's for this cause that the lord had mercy on me so that my example would be an encouragement to everybody else that nobody could think oh well there isn't power to change me or yes but i am such a sinner before that there's no hope for me paul wasn't just a sinner he was willfully deliberately bloodily against the lord's people he completely set all his considerable abilities and intellect and energies to exterminate this new way and teaching everything in him was cold-bloodedly directed against this jesus and the lord completely changed him around and turned him who was the persecutor into an apostle of that truth for this cause i obtained mercy that in me first jesus christ might show forth all long suffering if he can have this kind of patience with a persecutor a sinner like me he can do it with anyone he came into the world to save sinners of whom i am chief now of course every believer will be at some stage in their lives probably throughout most of their christian lives when they will be convinced that they are the absolute worst of sinners and one of the reasons they will be convinced is because they know that most people on the outside won't think of them as that bad and think of themselves they're not too bad you know they're reasonably devout and honorable and they're faithful in their their their duties and they they seek to be unsuitably uh diligent in the practice of their faith and religion and so on they're respectable they're not that bad so that's what people will think of me but if only they knew the me inside if only they knew what my heart is like if they only knew my mind and the things that go on there then they would hate me they'd despise me they'd run a mile they'd wash their hands after they touched me or shaken my hand they wouldn't want anything to do with me but god who sees into your heart and who knows everything about you he still loves you just as you are sinner

that you are because this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that this is why he came christ jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom i am chief and this cause i obtained mercy that the lord could show that in me paul says i can be converted by this power anybody can be converted this is the kind of power that the lord has this is the strength this is the grace whereby the lord changes lives changes hearts now remember of course that this is um this is ephesus that we're talking about this is where uh this is where the lord uh deliver those who have been in in involved in the occult in acts 19 remember we read this was known to all the jews and greeks dwelling at ephesus fear came on them all the name of the lord jesus was magnified many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds many of them also used curious arts that means the occult witchcraft and so on brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it 50 000 pieces of silver so mightily grew the word of god and prevailed now you've got to remember that books in those days were not downloaded off the internet not even churned out by the thousand on a printing press each one of those occult books would have been manually scraped out in parchment manually handwritten and then bound when those are burned they're gone they're lost completely this level of occult activity the worship of diana of the ephesians this is where timothy is based this is where the gospel has wrought such a change this is the threat to the pagan makers of silver shrines this is the power of god and the salvation and paul is saying i'm the living proof of this this is why you mustn't water it down you mustn't let this perfect vista this perfect view of branches get in the way or smoked glass put in front of it equivalent of you know because the pure gospel don't distract it with genealogies and fables and other stories as though you can somehow gild the lily all you're gonna do is you're gonna slow it down you're gonna water it down you're gonna dilute it you're gonna pollute it so therefore it has to be the pure true gospel according to his word now to the king eternal and immortal invisible difference between immortal and

[20 : 24] eternal immortal implies that you you have had a beginning you've lived uh but now you won't die now christ in the flesh is immortal uh he's not technically he's not eternal as far as his manhood goes his his deity his godhead is from all eternity there's never been a beginning there'll never be an end it is eternal from everlasting to everlasting but jesus manhood has a beginning it had a beginning in the womb of the virgin and because he has a beginning and then he became in the fleshly sense immortal he was able to die and he did die and then having risen again from the dead now he is immortal he cannot die now from that particular starting point the difference between eternal and immortal is negligent because they'll go on for all eternity but something which is eternal has had no starting point something which is somebody which is immortal who will have had a starting point but they'll go on now for all eternal eternity so king eternal immortal invisible we can't see him of course we all put our trust our faith and a god whom we have not set physical eyes on we walk by faith not by sound the only wise god be honor and glory forever and ever amen this is all the glories to god again the universe is god-centered not man-centered it's not about what i think what i want what paul does what timothy wants it's about the lord this charge i comment unto thee son timothy according to the prophecies which went before on thee that thou by them mightest war a good warfare now as far as prophecies are concerned we don't know explicitly of any prophecies concerning timothy we read going back to act 16 that when paul came to derby and lystra there was beheld a certain disciple there named timotheus the son of a certain woman which was a jewess and believed but his father was a greek which was well reported of by the brethren that were at lystra and iconium now well reported of it might just mean they spoke well of him that things were expected of him or hoped for him but it would imply that some people some church leaders maybe apostles had been given a particular word from the lord concerning him now there was that which was prophesied concerning him prophecies which went before on thee that thou by them mightest war a good warfare not because so-and-so said this about you or so-and-so spoke and said oh the lord told me to tell you this but rather if these prophecies or insofar as these prophecies are from the lord god does not lie and if he has set you apart timothy for these things then it is in the strength of that unchanging word that thou mightest war a good warfare of course the weapons of our warfare are not carnal they're spiritual therefore it has to be holding faith and a good conscience notice these two together and some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck so if you could either say they've let go of the faith but the likelihood is they profess the faith still but they no longer keep a good conscience in other words what they are either teaching or acting in their lives or living out in their lives is not consistent with the faith which they have professed which they have claimed to believe this is why paul says to timothy holding faith hold fast

the faith and the good conscience so that how you live and how you speak will not be at odds with what you have professed to believe they will be consistent and therefore holding faith and a good conscience you won't have any cause to be ashamed it's like somebody like it once to

a piece of wood which if you nail it into loosely onto another surface if you only put one nail in one end of a rectangular piece of wood then the other bit can sort of wiggle about the other end can go all round about that that nail move this way or that way but if you then nail down the other end then it is held firmly in place faith and a good conscience and likewise these two are in place there is the consistency of the walk of the word with the faith which has been believed which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck now it's not entirely in that verse whether it means concerning the faith they've ditched the faith they've forgotten about the faith and so they've made shipwreck or because their conscience is more likely their conscience is not in line with what they claim to believe their activity their outward walk and conversation does not match what they claim to believe they've made shipwreck of the faith now how can you make shipwreck if you're still believing still saying it well you can say oh yeah of course i believe yeah i'm still a christian yeah i mean i don't do this i don't do that anymore and i don't i don't follow this diligently and i i no longer bother to do this sort of that you know i used to but i don't now so i it doesn't matter now that my walk doesn't match what i claim i mean you don't have to do these things i'm not saved by these things so you know it's okay if i let it go it doesn't really matter too much and pretty soon if it doesn't dictate how you live your life and what your heart thinks then what is the power of this faith you claim what is its power to change lives to transform look at the power it exercised on paul look at the complete and total change from black to white that it turned on paul look at the effect it has on those who are truly born again they become effectively different people the same but completely different and so we have you can't just have it partially a bit you know the faith but my conscience doesn't need to match it it's okay if it shifts a bit some having put away concerning faith have made ship wreck now once a ship is wrecked you can't exactly put it back together again if a ship may loop into port and it's damaged then you can repair it you can get it get it patched up you can get the bits repaired and the engine sorted again and put it back out to sea but if it's wrecked then there's nothing you can do for it you may be savage it for pieces or for for for junk metal or whatever it is but you can't do anything more with it it's wrecked and the problem with a faith that we think we have but don't live out is we think we're still okay and this is this is partly you know what it what it means in hebrews where there's that that um chilling passage uh where it talks about those who haven't tasted uh the good fruit and the good effect of the gospel having turned away it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the holy ghost did some operations of the spirit and have tasted the good word of god and the powers of the world to come if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance seeing they crucify to themselves the son of god afresh and put him to an open shame we put the lord to shame when our life and witness and conduct does not match what we claim to believe we're saying it doesn't really matter it's okay it's it's not a problem and having tasted of the good word of god we think yeah i tasted it that's okay but you know a lot of things taste good as well and i i doesn't mean i have to be rigidly held by this you know um having tasted of it we think well other things are just as good too and we fall away from it we don't give it the priority we once did at one time it was flavor of the month but now you know the months have moved on so other flavors that we have and of our faith we make ship leg and there's

no way of convincing such a person that they have to turn and repent and believe us i've already done that i've already believed i'm already you know professing to be a Christian i already accept all these things that's why what's the problem the problem is that they are no longer holding faith and a good conscience of some some concerning have made shipwreck of whom is hymenus and alexander whom i have delivered unto satan that they may learn not to blaspheme now these are individuals that crop up in other places if we if we turn to second timothy for example in chapter two uh at verse seven we reconsider what i say and the lord give thee good out of this for 17 i beg your pardon uh says their word will eat as doth a canker of whom is hymenus and philetus he's got a different partner in crime now but it's unlikely to be a different hymenus so there's alexander and hymenus and hymenus is mentioned in second timothy chapter two at verse 17 and then again in chapter four verse 14 alexander the coppersmith did me much evil the lord award him according to his works now of course it could theoretically be different people but if you've got a hymenus and alexander mentioned in first timothy and you've got these individuals mentioned a couple of

chapters apart in second timothy which remember was the last letter of paul which we still have the last one he wrote that we've still got nothing wrong then clearly these people are still a problem by the very end of his ministry they haven't gone away you know like they used to say about the ira after their their ceasefires and then one of the representatives say well they haven't gone away you know they're still there and hymenus and alexander they haven't gone away they're still there still eating away like a canker at the truth of the gospel there are always going to be such remember these are apostolic days this is the church in its pristine apostolic purity this is the church in the days when the power of god is at work to such an extent that literally thousands are converted in one day when a persecutor like paul is transformed literally overnight from a persecutor to to the spiritual equipment literally a blinds of like pussycat finger who can't hurt a fly until he is his his the scales fall from his eyes he's baptized he takes some food and now suddenly he's a proselyte for the truth that's the kind of power that's a kind of change that was at work in those apostolic days and yet even then the devil was at work if he couldn't stamp out the truth he would work underneath in its soft underbelly of whom is hymenus and alexander now when it says whom i have delivered unto satan that they may learn not to blaspheme well clearly they didn't learn not to blaspheme but what is it what do we understand by that well if we go to acts 46 we see at verse 18 there it says you know delivering thee from the people this is what the lord uh says to to paul when he's recounting his his um his conversion on the road to damascus delivering thee from the people and from the gentiles unto whom now i send thee to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of satan unto god that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me to turn them from the power of satan in other words those to whom paul brings the gospel what they at the time when he brings it to them they are under the power of satan what does that mean it means they are in a state of unbelief it means that whether they are jew or gentile they do not yet believe in the messiah the savior jesus christ and if they are in that condition they are in a lost condition they are in a condition whereby satan has the hold over them and it is to deliver them from the bonds of satan that paul is to bring them the good news of salvation and what is he saying here i have delivered them on to satan what he means is i have turned them over to unbelief i have left them as it were in their unbelief this is what they have chosen let them student like it says in a i think it's the prophet uh either ebos or hosia i can't remember what he says ephraim is joined the idols let him alone leave him to it and this is what i've done with hymenus and alexander i turned them over to satan they wanted unbelief i've just i've consigned them as it were to unbelief i've delivered them to satan that they may learn not to blaspheme how are they going to learn that in a state of unbelief it is hoped just like with church discipline for example the purpose of which is to reclaim the offender it is hoped that in that state of no longer being in communion with the lord they would learn by bitter experience just how cruel a master satan is just how hopeless life is without the lord just how much they needed the lord just how sweet it was to have been converted and saved and which now they have lost it's rather like you know a few people who love each other they have an argument and one goes in this direction the other goes in that direction and they sort of stomp off from each other and they're not going to speak to each other and after a little while they begin to realize you know just just how many good points the other one does have and how you know they're missing them a bit and now yeah it probably isn't worth this kind of argument and then eventually they make up maybe they've got a bit of arguing still to do but they make up because they come to realize that you know life without the other one isn't going to be a bed of roses it's going to be sorrowful it's going to be filled with with misery and unhappiness and they want to come back together this is the hope when one is delivered to satan that they will realize that being under the thrall of satan is bitter it is dark it has nothing to recommend it but clearly by the time of second timothy this is not a lesson that has been learned by either hymenus or alexander there are some who do not learn it there are some who do turn away from the truth some who do turn away even from the lord himself remember at the end of john 6 where jesus said it's the spirit of the quickenut the flesh prophet of nothing and there's some who said this is a hard sin who can do it and from that time it says many of his disciples went back and walked no more with them and the implication is that it was a crowd and the crowd turned away and jesus says to the trouble ye also go away and simon peter as you know says lord to whom shall we go thou hast the words of eternal life and it is these words of eternal life coming from the one who is the word made flesh which changes lives which converts souls of which paul is a living witness and testimony and he says to timothy you have known this you have experienced this this

charge i commit to thee son timothy that thou mightest war a good warfare holding faith and a good conscience some putting that away have made shipwreck don't you do that hold fast to the faith and live it out faith and a good conscience put it into practice and then you too timothy like the lord enabled me all to go from strength to strength that will be your experience too timothy in your living faith and living relationship with the lord may it be so for each one of us amen