

Yes, Even Me

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[0:00] 1 Timothy chapter 1 we read in verses 15 and 16 this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief albeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which you have to believe on him to life everlasting now in a sense these two verses sum up what our forthcoming and all we might say communion seasons and about we focus upon the coming of our Lord the death of our Lord and the purpose of that death upon the cross and what Paul is saying here to Timothy in these two particular nuggets of gold we might say in this first chapter not that it's all not good it is all the inspired word of God but these two verses especially I would suggest speak to us at this particular time of preparation first of all this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that which has been said that which has been repeated amongst the church or the church as we might say even at that first apostolic age worthy of all acceptance remember that until the New Testament scriptures were actually inspired to be written down until they were written down the church and the apostolic age only had the Old Testament they had the Old Testament scriptures and they had a certain amount of oral transmission that which the apostles taught in the different places where they planted churches and they would cause people to remember perhaps to chant mantras to recite things to memorize because especially if a lot of people were illiterate then this was how they were taught they were taught by rote they were taught to memorize they were taught to sort of condense down the essence of the teachings of the apostles and so to focus on the truth of those teachings and thus to be able to distinguish between the truth as it was revealed to them and any false teachings that might come in and if you look at the New Testament particularly the letters of Paul you'll see that this is a recurring theme a distinguishing between true and false teaching and as I've mentioned many times in the past we might just summarize again that true religion and the true teaching of Christ will always focus ultimately upon Christ it will always raise up Christ it will always be sent to in Christ false religion and false teaching will tend to reflect away from Christ onto something or someone else it may be the so called prophet that's bringing a new message it may be a false teacher or one who wants to create a cult following where the emphasis is as much on the leader on the teacher on the guru on the holy man as it is upon Christ it may be that the emphasis comes to be placed upon the church as an institution as opposed to upon Christ it may be all these things that are almost the truth and so near to being the truth but not quite the truth that they reflect people away like you were let's say you were being rescued from a raging torrent that was going to encamp you or from a lava stream of a volcano and a helicopter was lowering down the rope and lifting you up and you're about to grab onto the sort of spar of the helicopter and as long as you could grab on then you'd be safe and your hand just reaches up and you just swipe past it but you just miss and you fall to your death and it's no use

saying oh but I was so close I was nearly touching the spar I almost grabbed onto the helicopter shouldn't I be allowed to live on that basis that which is almost the truth is still not the truth remember of course when Agrippa says to Paul almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian and almost but lost so to be near the truth is not enough it has to be that which has been transmitted and brought down from Christ to his apostles to the church and so on and to begin with as we say they would retain this by verbal transmission recite memorize and keep the core doctrines that they would pass on this is why Paul says this is a faithful saying it's not a saying in the sense of you know red sky at night shepherds delight and red sky in the morning shepherds warning or some kind of fable or some kind of proverb that's simply a little maxim that people would chant or pronounce this is a faithful saying in the sense of that which you have received and heard orally which has been transmitted and said repeatedly in the church and in your hearing it is faithful not

only is it filled with faith in that sense but it is faithful in the sense that it may be trusted it may be relied upon this is a faithful saying it may only be oral at this stage of course now thankfully we have the

New Testament reduced to writing we can check it we can cross with and say we can see where people depart from it and sometimes of course people may say that they're still abiding by scripture but they sort of interpret it in such a way and effectively it's made to say the opposite of what it actually is saying so of course we can see nowadays thankfully where people are going astray from the scripture because we can check with the written word they didn't have that except from the Old Testament scriptures sound as they are but this is a faithful saying this is why it's a saying transmitted orderly at that time and worthy of all acceptance it deserves that everybody receives and accepts it it's not just my opinion Timothy it's not just me Paul having an idea it is a saying that is filled with faith and worthy to be believed because it is dependable it is faithful worthy of all acceptance what that

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners now you'll notice that throughout this chapter particularly the opening verses Paul makes repeated references to Jesus Christ as he often does in his letters you know the commandment of God our Savior apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ which is our hope and to Timothy my own son in the faith grace mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and so on so he is constantly referencing the Lord Jesus Christ but notice that this time around it is Christ Jesus as opposed to Jesus Christ small point small distinction all it means is that on this occasion he is placing the emphasis not simply upon the person of Jesus of Nazareth but upon his office and I used to as a boy and a youngster think Jesus Christ that was his first name and his last name his last name was Christ his first name was Jesus just like we all have a first name and a third name and so on but of course it is not that Jesus is of course the name that the angel told

Joseph that he was to be named meaning Savior Jehovah is salvation Joshua in the Hebrew Jesus in the Greek Savior but it is nevertheless his name Christ is his office it is the fact that he is the anointed one Christ in Greek Messiah in the Hebrew both mean the same thing the anointed one and it is his office the purpose that he has come to fulfill which is in this particular verse it's not that his personal identity is being negated it is just that there's a slightly different emphasis here the emphasis being turned round so that the focus is not simply upon who came to do this but rather what he came to do he came to be the anointed one the one to fulfill on behalf of the chosen the elect from mankind all that mankind could not do through sin because

[8 : 53] Adam fell because mankind in Adam is there in his posterity as some commentators have put it as surely as the branch of the tree is already there in the root so likewise all of mankind is there in Adam and as all fallen is all born and conceived in sin therefore even our best efforts would never be able to achieve the righteousness the perfection that the Lord requires if we're ever going to be in his presence but the Lord Jesus coming amongst us came without that original sin it is why he was conceived in the womb of the virgin he wasn't conceived in the normal biological way despite what some liberal thinkers would have us believe that oh it was just that Joseph and Mary conceived a child in the ordinary way he was just special he was just blessed and God anointed him with his spirit no the word of

God clearly says that the virgin Mary was precisely that it is the fulfillment of scripture that a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and because it is not of mere fallen man the original sin of Adam is not transmitted through the father's seed into the next generation because in this instance the father's seed is the holy spirit it is of God the father that spirit that seed which is planted in the womb of the virgin brings forth the one who is the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head that he bruises heel but not of the man and therefore there is no original sin transmitted in this way but this Christ Jesus has come to fulfill all that fallen humanity could not man by his very best efforts if he lived a sinless life from the moment of his birth to the moment of his death would still have the burden of original sin even if he never actually committed any sins of his own of course we all do but Jesus being born and conceived without sin also fulfilling that sinless and perfect life which Adam did not do and offering up that perfect life on behalf of all those who would trust and believe in his name means that his righteousness becomes theirs it is done in their name you see if I had a million pounds in my bank account and were to write you a check for a hundred thousand pounds you take that check to the bank you presented and once they've checked that the money's there that hundred thousand pounds becomes yours it may say on the

check that it's my account that it's me that's giving to you but the fact that it's me giving to you now it's yours it was mine now it's yours and it's yours because I've given it to you and the only reason I'm able to give it to you is because it was mine in the first place so Christ as it were writes this check for all the righteousness the perfect righteousness that we do not have what he gives to us because it is his to bestow and once he has put our name on that check and we present that check as it were at heaven's door and present it at the judgment seat as it were of the Lord in fact spiritually before that when we confess Christ as our saviour when we acknowledge him as our own personal saviour that check is written out it's already been planned it's already been intended it's written out it's given to us it becomes ours and all the credit that comes with it becomes ours and all the debt that we may have had before he takes that on board it becomes in a sense his debt of course a millionaire or a billionaire taking on a debt of you know thousands of pounds he doesn't become a debt he absorbs it he pays it he can deal with it because of the abundance that he has this is the office Christ has come to fulfil to pay the price of sin for all who trust and believe in him this is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptance that

Christ Jesus the anointed one the one his office is being emphasised here not denying his identity but it's the emphasis here it's not so much just a person as the office the anointed one Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief you see his coming amongst us think about the womb of the virgin he becomes human in that way he came for that purpose he was born in order to die and although he lived a perfect life that perfect life is not all there is we don't just say try and follow Jesus example he was good so we've got to be good he forgave so we forgive have to forgive we've got to be as much like him as possible we've got to have an imitation of Christ all of that is true yes we should it's good and it's true but that's not what it's all about ultimately we should be as much like

Jesus as possible by his spirit we hope to become as much like Jesus as possible but it's not just about here's your perfect example follow that example and do your best Christ Jesus came into the world not merely to set an example but to save sinners that becoming and being becoming human being born living a perfect life and dying upon the cross the death of our Lord is what purchases salvation for us and that is what saves sinners that is the reason he came that's what we can say colloquial times that's what the job is all about that's the job of the saviour to save sinners of whom Paul says I am chief I am the worst he says now I'm quite sure that every genuine christian will have thought that at some point of their lives maybe every day of their lives once they know christ is their saviour you know when you look around the other people in your church and think yeah okay [15:18] I can see why the Lord wrote the safe heart or whatever because you know they're good people they're nice people you know but oh if they could see it to my heart oh they never want anything to do with me they would shuddle me they would be disgusted that somebody like I could sit near them in the pew or standing up and spout my point there's such a filthy sinner inside who would believe how despicable they are and every one of us recognises themselves in this of whom I am chief each of us think surely Lord there's nobody as bad as me and sometimes that perhaps keeps us away from the Lord for a while thinking oh Lord you know we can't possibly want me you can't possibly have done enough to save me and we have to guard against the line between humility which is a good thing and bordering or blasphemy which is the other extreme because when you look with the eye of faith at our

Lord upon the cross when you think of all that he endured simply to beginning even in the physical sense I could go into the details of crucifixion and you know it would make your stomach churn but that's not what we're here about tonight it's bad enough the physical suffering the physical agony and bloodshed and pain and anguish of all those hours upon the cross is bad enough but if you think in these times that Christ endured the punishment for every soul that he saves all his elect then what is the punishment that our sins deserve it is not just death it is hell we deserve hell for all eternity we are literally hell deserving sins now if you or I were to go to hell we would be going to hell for all eternity all eternity because the sin that we have committed against God is an eternal sin because it is against an eternal being that is where we be for all eternity now eternity is infinite but God of course knows that the limits of eternity if we can say that reverently and if an eternity for one soul were to be telescoped into one year the suffering spread out of an eternity were telescoped into one year then how much more intense that would be if for example the amount of suffering or the amount of debt for example let's say you're buying a car and you're buying a car and it costs you let's just take a ballpark for you let's say 7,000 pounds you buy 7,000 pounds for a car 8, 9, 10

I don't know ok let's say 10,000 pounds for a car and you've got that 10,000 pounds and the salesman says to you ok now you pay so much every month and you pay over so many years 5, 6 years whatever so much a month and you sign off on the papers and every month so much comes out of your account so you can carry on with your ordinary budget and your ordinary family finances and so on and every month so much comes out of your account and you pay off that car and over 5, 6 years however many years it may be that car gets paid little by little by little and eventually it's all paid off but supposing right at the salesman you said no no no I want my 10,000 pounds right now you pay me now never mind 5, 6 years time never mind all these installments I want it now then you telescope the payments of all those years into one payment it's hugely expensive it's intense you really feel the hit when you're paying it all at once so if you can imagine the equivalent of an eternity for one's soul telescoped into one year how intense the suffering would be now telescope it not into one year but into one day one day because the intensity of that suffering you think like the rays of the sun coming down and then you take a magnifying glass and focus it on a piece of paper you're intensifying the rays of the sun it starts to burn up because you're magnifying intensifying and telescoping it into a much smaller piece of ground or much smaller piece of a target and then you think not one day

I read of six hours six hours Jesus hung on the cross and the intensity of the hell he suffered in place of one sinner that he is saving and he goes through that intensity in six hours for an eternity for that one soul now of course it's not just one soul it's all the elect that have ever lived or ever shall live are paid for with the incredible intensity the divine depth of intensity of wrath that Christ suffers spiritually on the cross the depth to which he must have descended my God my God why has thou forsaken me we can't even begin to enter into it that is what he's gone through and then you think okay fair enough maybe it is enough maybe he has actually paid a deep enough price for even what I've done because to then say well I don't think actually what Jesus went through is actually quite enough because I'm so bad

I'm really such a sinner that it doesn't even come yes it does Christ went through believe me pays for all the sin and every single one who will trust in his name there is enough grace there there is enough payment there for me for you for anyone who will put their faith in Christ this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners that's what he did it for that's why he came of whom I am chief and we all think that how be it for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long supping patience with me for a pattern to them which should he have to believe on him to life everlasting now what does he mean by that not in me first he doesn't mean that

[22 : 08] I'm the first one that ever believed the son of man has come to seek and save that which was lost Paul is not the first one to believe but what he means is in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long supper he's already said to saints of humanity I'm the worst I'm the worst possible person I persecuted the church I killed the saints of the Lord if anybody should be beyond the pale it should be me but he saved even me this is grace this is salvation which Paul could say is right to Timothy to say yes even me and the reason and the reason why he says me first as a pattern is that he is saying that I had to be saved and redeemed first in this way so that every single person I tell afterwards and remember from the moment of his conversion he went into the synagogue in Damascus and started expanding the scriptures and arguing from the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ the anointed one and he started arguing and proving and demonstrating look yes he can save service he can save anyone because he did me because he saved me yes even me this we might say is the benchmark it is the demonstration of the truth of the veracity of the gospel yes even me this is what Paul is saying how be it for this cause I obtain mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering the patience that he had with me for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him the life everlasting so that Paul can say with absolute integrity yes it's enough for you yes there will be grace for you if you will repent and believe yes this is for the likes of you because this is for sinners of whom I am cheated and yes even me it was enough for that threw me for a pattern to them which should be after believe look at me look how bad I am look how bad I was and this is grace sufficient for yes even me and every sinner who comes to know Christ as their saviour acknowledges yes even me it is sufficient for and he saved even me and of course often nowadays there might also be those perhaps in every age there will be those who might think okay yes I believe Christ could do that I believe he could if he wanted apply this to even me he could take his grace he could take his precious blood

I just don't know that he wants to I just don't know that he would what if I'm not of the elect what if I'm not saved this is for his people this is for yes perhaps the violence of sinners yes perhaps for good and godly saints but look at me I'm just ordinary I'm not there with the worst and the most evil but I'm certainly not up there with the saints and the godly I'm just normal I'm just ordinary I'm just me why should he take notice of the likes of me this can't really be for somebody as dead ordinary a sinner as I am yes chief of sinners perhaps but an ordinary person I'm so mundane I am so monochrome I am so uninteresting why would the lord take notice of me when Paul is able to say with authority it doesn't matter who you are you are a sinner in need of salvation and this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ

Jesus came into the world for this very purpose to save sinners of whom I am chief the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost and we are lost without him you and I are lost without him every single soul is lost without him no matter how righteous they may seem however moral and upright if they are without Christ they are lost if they are trying to fashion their lives according to the religion they do profess and it is not Christ they are lost and they are swiping for the spar of the helicopter and they don't just miss because they're not quite close enough because they're focused maybe on the church or on a holy bishop or upon a saint or upon a guru or a holy man or a prophet or a pelt leader or an individual in whom they put their trust rather than in Christ they may swipe close and still fall and still fail because not quite is not close enough we have to be secure to be safe as

Hebrews puts it chapter 7 verse 25 he is able to save and save to the uttermost them that come to him by faith for this cause Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief for this cause I obtain mercy that in me first before I tell anybody else before I tell you Timothy or anybody else about it he did me first so that I can be a pattern I can be an example so they can point the finger at me and say well he saved Paul sure he can save anybody if he can save the person keeper in the church maybe he can save me too if he can save somebody so bad maybe he can save somebody so ordinary showing forth all long suffering for a pattern of witness an example to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting they don't just need the scriptures from long ago and the lost in this day and age don't just need the bible they also need to see the living reality they need to see the reality of those whose lives have been changed of those who have been born again of those who they rubbed shoulders with they knew them growing up they worked with them or their neighbours or whatever and they've been changed they've been born again they've been saved and they can see that this has happened to somebody they know somebody just like them somebody who is a sinner just like them somebody who is a chief of sinners just like them and for this cause such patterns are set forth such examples the Lord sets forth not just the scriptures not just the spirit but the demonstration that yes this is a reality that actually happens it actually does change lives it actually does convert sinners it actually does bring people from death to life and Paul is able to say and I should know because he showed such patience and long suffering to me first a chief of sinners

[29 : 29] Paul having been born again is able to testify to the reality of the new birth and this is one reason why the Lord never leaves himself without a witness in any generation he causes them to be men and women boys and girls who will be saved who will be born again who will be raised up simply by the fact of being converted it testifies to those around them the reality of Christ's power to convert of the gospel's power to change and transform lives because this is why he came yes to give us an example to follow yes to give us good and godly teaching that we should follow it's right we should yes to become immersed in his word to know the truth is in Christ Jesus but ultimately to save sinners that which no amount of book reading can do no amount of bible knowledge can do that universities are replete with professors who know the hebrew know the greek know the scriptures know the language and the nuances of how it's all translated and they are completely devoid of grace knowledge will never save knowledge of the truth as it is revealed in the scriptures alone will never save the church will never save no cult figure or prophet or guru will ever save no preacher however inspired will ever be able to be somebody that anyone can follow that will save them only Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief says Paul of whom I am chief says I of whom I am chief no doubt says every true believer that each one saved each one converted is a pattern to them which should he have to believe on him to life everlasting generation to generation to generation all the way down you can think we can all think of those who are Christians before us

we can think of those who would be Christians before them they would have been able to and before them and before them and if we traced it back where would it go go all the way back to the reformation go all the way back to the Celtic saints who first brought the gospel to these shores it would go all the way back to the first Roman Christians who came to this land this island of Britain and all the other islands round about it would go all the way back to Palestine it would go all the way back to Christ because the reality of what he has done changed his lives and continues sinner who will put their trust in Christ because this is why he came this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance all that means you and me as well that Christ Jesus came to the world to save sinners in his power life v die who or has success While she are carrying holy