



The God of New Beginnings

1 Timothy 1:12-20

Introduction

In verse 11 of 1 Timothy, Paul finishes his train of thought about false teachers with the phrase ‘the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which He entrusted to me’. He then takes a diversion for a moment as if to say, “Please indulge me as I explain how this gospel has changed my life!”

Paul never missed an opportunity to share his testimony – how, because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, he had been saved from sin (its control and consequences) and given a new life in Christ (abundant life here and now, and eternal life when the moment he dies). So here, Paul takes the opportunity to talk about his former way of life and lists the offences he had committed against God that should have disqualified him from service in the Kingdom. He explains how he didn’t deserve forgiveness and a place of honour in God’s Kingdom, but how Jesus poured out on him His grace and mercy. Then – as though thankfulness was welling-up inside and could be contained no longer – praise



spills forth from his lips in a triumphant declaration of God’s majesty (v17).

Paul started badly but, by God’s grace, finished his life well. He ends this section, though, with a warning about how God’s grace and mercy can be rejected and a person’s faith ‘shipwrecked’. He mentioned two people by name in the Ephesian church who apparently started well but had rejected God’s ways and finished badly.

Life Group questions...

1. In 1 Timothy 1:11 it talks about 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God'. Break down into pairs and try to write down in bullet points what you think the key points of the gospel are.
2. Look at verse 12. Paul realised that he was appointed by God and empowered by God. Is this the same for all believers?
3. In verse 13, Paul lists his past failings. All of us have made mistakes – we've sinned by doing things we shouldn't or by not doing things we should. Take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to show you anything from your past or present that is holding you back from serving God more fully (it could be sin, hurt, unforgiveness or fear). Write down a list.
4. Read verses 14-15. Paul says that 'even though' he had failed and was the 'worst of sinners', God forgave him (showed him mercy) and poured His grace out on him. God wants to forgive, heal and restore us too:

Look at your list again. Ask God for His forgiveness where you've sinned and ask Him to heal you where you've been hurt. Ask God to help you forgive those who have hurt you. Ask Him to deliver you from any life-controlling habits or addictions (you may like to pray for one another if it feels appropriate).

5. Paul stops at this point to praise God (v17) for His greatness. Why is praise so important for Christians? Share ideas of how to incorporate praise, worship and thanksgiving into our everyday lives.
6. Read verse 20. Two prominent men in the Ephesian church are mentioned. What happened to make them 'shipwreck' their faith? As a family of believers, how can we help each other to stay on track?