

What Did Jesus Come To Do?

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Date: 02 March 2025

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. So if you have your Bibles open again at 1 Timothy chapter 1, we'll be focusing on verses 12 to 17. Last night we looked at this passage and we asked the question, who did Jesus come for?

Who did Jesus come for? And we looked at Paul essentially giving a snapshot of his life story. We've seen in verse 13, he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent opponent of the church, but he received mercy. He received mercy and came to Jesus, not all cleaned up, not as righteous, but as a sinner. And then what about after he came to Jesus? Was his life just perfection after that?

Was he just the unmovable, unshakable hero that we think of him as? Well, verse 15, 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. So Paul doesn't say, well, I was the foremost sinner, and then I came to Jesus and boof, just like that. Everything was perfect. Everything was just as it should be. Paul counts himself as the chief of sinners. But what then? Verse 16, but I received mercy for this reason, that in me as the foremost Jesus Christ might display as perfect patience. So on the basis of that, the answer to the question, who did Jesus come for? Jesus came for sinners. He didn't come for Paul when Paul was at his best. No, he saved Paul at his worst.

And of course, Paul came to faith, and of course there was change in his life. However, he still recognized that his sin, far from being an issue of his past, was very much still a present reality in his life. So Jesus came to the world for sinners. But what did he come to do? This is our focus of our sermon this morning. What did Jesus come to do? Verse 15, he came into the world to save sinners, to save sinners. So we're going to see that Jesus came to grant us mercy. We're going to see that Jesus came to pour out his grace upon us and to save us from our sins. So first of all, Jesus came to grant us mercy. And we see twice in our text in verse 13 and again in verse 16, the words, but I received mercy.

But I received mercy. Though he was a sinner, he received mercy. Though even now presently, he identifies himself as a sinner, he receives mercy from the Lord Jesus Christ. So how might we define mercy? Well, mercy is a sparing someone from the judgment that is deserved. Mercy is not giving someone the severity that they deserve. As it relates to us and to the Apostle Paul, before we came to know Jesus, Paul writes elsewhere in Ephesians 2, we were by very nature children of wrath. We were due to be under God's rightful punishment for our sins. And that is fair and that is justice. Yet the wonder of the gospel is that those who trust in his son, he extends mercy. He does not treat us as our sins deserve.

[3 : 4 6] We see that in Psalm 103. We sing, he does not punish our misdeeds or give our sins their just reward. And then they're so important. But I received mercy twice. The but is so important. The but is vital.

Without it, without God intervening, the Apostle Paul is still in his sins. Without Jesus intervening, you and I are still in his sins. You and I are still in our sins and without hope and without God.

When you consider Paul's life against the backdrop of Almighty God who is infinite in perfection, in goodness, in beauty, in justice, in truth. What business do people like you and me have been welcomed into relationship with God off the back of that? Called one of his own.

Well, the reality is, as we see it, well, no business at all. Our sins, we reason, ought to evoke God's wrath, God's judgment, his anger. Yet the reality, as God sees it, is that in Christ, we have every business being called one of his own. Because Jesus has done everything to welcome us in.

Not because of our own goodness. Not because of our own merit. Not because we measure up to a certain standard whereby we think, then God will finally accept me. No. All because of his heart of mercy diversity towards you and towards me. Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1 to 3 paints a picture and it's not a very positive picture. That before Jesus is intervening in our life, we were, Paul says, dead in sins. It's like being spiritually switched off to God where you're just not really that interested. We would rather do and pursue anything other than him. We were separated from God heading to a lost eternity, but that has contrasted sharply with another but in Ephesians 2 verse 4, but God being rich in mercy with the love with which he loved us made us alive together with

[6 : 11] Christ, but God being rich in mercy. God is not described anywhere else in the Bible as being rich in anything. He's not rich in love even. He's not rich in justice. He's not rich in righteousness.

He is rich in mercy, rich in mercy. God isn't stingy in showing mercy. He's not hesitant. He's not backwards about going forward with mercy. He's not even simply showing mercy alone as if mercy is just something he dishes out on occasion. No, he is rich in mercy. He is rich in mercy.

And I wonder if you've ever been in the situation where you've been around to someone's house, maybe you know, who's like very wealthy and the experience is kind of overwhelming. It's kind of awe-inspiring as you see the nice car and the drive, the nice house. It's all kitted out with great furniture, the fashion sense, all the rest. It's kind of awe-inspiring. God being rich in mercy surely produces the same thing after wave after wave of his mercy hits you even in your sin.

He has an infinite supply of mercy which he is ready and willing and delighted to give to us, to extend to us, not as a one-off gesture, but as a continual stream of his goodness towards us in Jesus Christ.

His mercy is generous and bountiful. He has an open hand with it towards you today. Why? Because he's rich in mercy. He has mercy to give to you if you call upon him today and it will flow and flow to you generously because he is rich in mercy. That means that when you come to him, what can you expect to receive?

[8 : 17] A scowl? A finger wag? A lecture? A tap-tap? And that a roll of the eyes? No. Expect mercy.

When you come in repentance and faith, expect mercy because our God is a merciful God who delights to show mercy to those who come to him because he is rich in mercy. It informs how he responds to us when we come to him in repentance and faith. Why can you have such confidence he's going to be merciful to you?

Well, first of all, because that's in his nature. But second of all, how he's acted in the past towards you. When you came to him for the first time, whenever that was, he didn't need to do that.

He didn't need to show mercy to you, but he delighted to show mercy to you. And that's been the same time and time again. If he wasn't willing to show mercy in the long term, which was required, why would he bother showing it in the first place?

Friends, he has got a heart of mercy towards you as you come to him in repentance and faith, even though you may have sins that you're fighting against, that you're struggling with, that you are all too painfully aware of.

[9 : 42] He has a heart of mercy for you. You may be feeling far from him. You might have even wandered away from him for a time, turning up to church, but the rest of your life, you've not really been spending that much time recently with him or considering much about him.

But if you come back to him today, you know you'll receive mercy because he is rich in mercy and abounding in steadfast love for all who seek him, all who receive his mercy.

The second thing we see is that Jesus came to pour out his grace upon us. So if mercy is God not giving us what we deserve, grace is giving us abundantly more than we deserve or earn.

Verse 13, Though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, an insolent opponent, but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

God doesn't stop at mercy as if simply sparing us from judgment. He goes even further. He goes even further and through faith in Christ, grants us the righteousness of Jesus with which to stand before him, with which to be accepted in his sight.

[11 : 12] It was kindness after kindness to us. And it was kindness after kindness not when things were going well, not when we reached a certain point of godliness or of repentance or of faithfulness.

Actually, God's kindness came to us at a point of even our ungodliness, our impenitence, our faithlessness. Romans 5, 8, God shows his love for us in this.

Whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That you might be here today and separated from Christ, not putting your trust in him. You might say his enemy.

But whilst we were yet his enemies, whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us that we might know him through faith. In the gospel, God's righteousness is revealed not through the law, not through keeping a list of rules, but by faith.

And now you look at that statement, if you've been in church for any length of time, it probably just rushes off you like water off a duck's back. You kind of just don't think much about it. But it's absolutely crazy that God would be so kind to us and so good to us that we who find ourselves oftentimes at the wrong end of his law, that we might be considered righteous in his sight through faith in Jesus, through trusting in his son.

[12 : 43] You see it in Isaiah 53 with the suffering servant who is bruised for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. He stood in our place.

The late Professor Donald MacLeod said this, it was the servant who was despised and rejected and subjected to suffering, but it is we who are healed. It is we who are justified.

We who sins are carried away and we who get to enjoy shalom, peace with God. Now, how does that land if you are the Apostle Paul, pre-conversion, one who is proud of his own religious attainments?

It's going to sound ridiculous. That actually the very one he's persecuting is the very one he needs to run towards in faith to receive that righteousness.

No, he's persecuting Christians and thinking he's doing God's work, imprisoning them, beating them, oversaw their killings. Stephen, in Acts chapter 7, we turn over to chapter 8 verse 1 of Acts and Saul approved of his killing.

[13 : 56] But yet on the road to Damascus, something incredible happened. God's grace overflowed to Paul with the faith and love that are in Jesus as Jesus appeared to him.

Not only did Jesus not strike him down at that moment, but he granted him forgiveness, new life, righteousness. And I could go on.

Jesus did that to his enemy, to his chief persecutor. In a word, grace. grace. Far more than Paul deserved.

And Paul will write in Ephesians chapter 1 that in Christ we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. It's so bountiful.

It's so plenteous. It's so generous. It's just overflowing that we have everything we need for life and godliness. We have everything we need to live as followers of Jesus.

[14 : 57] God has given us everything, including his very self, in filling us with the Holy Spirit that we might love Jesus, that we might live for Jesus, that we might honor him and praise him as we ought.

No, God doesn't stop at mercy, simply sparing us from the wrath we deserve. No, God is kind to us far beyond our deserving.

And he's kind again and again and again. John in his prologue will write grace upon grace, grace in place of grace already given.

And that is his heart towards us and how we need that. Thirdly and finally, Jesus came to save us from our sins.

In our passage today, verse 15, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost.

[16 : 04] Paul is a foremost sinner, but Jesus is the foremost savior. where Paul considers himself the chief of sinners.

Jesus abounds in grace towards him. Friends, as we look at the apostle Paul and we look at his life and we look at what he was, we look at, by God's grace, what he became, but even in that, still his shortcomings and failings, we see the mercy of God on full display in bright flashing lights for all to see.

We see his grace overflowing again and again. So as you come to the table today, that is what you're receiving.

That is what I'm receiving. That's what we're all receiving for all who are partaking is the grace of our Lord overflowing towards you in kindness.

It is mercy afresh. Through faith in Jesus, God who is rich in mercy is lavishly pouring his grace out upon you again and again and again.

[17 : 25] Now again, if you're hesitant to come to Jesus because you don't think you have sufficient faith, sufficient repentance, you haven't sufficiently gotten rid of sin in your life in order to first come to Jesus, I want to bring before you the grace of our Lord which overflowed to Saul of Tarsus.

If God's grace is sufficient for a blasphemer, for a persecutor, God's grace is surely sufficient for you today. You may very well have sin in your life that you're painfully aware of that things bars you from coming to Jesus.

You may very well see how you fall short in many ways but friends, that's what makes grace, grace. It's undeserved. There's no amount of sin you could do away with.

There's no amount of behavioral modification that you could try and implement to earn God's kindness. It's entirely a gift. So, again, if you haven't yet, put your faith in Jesus, find in Him your Savior, your Lord, your King, and your friend and you will be met with grace, grace upon grace.

grace upon grace. And if you have believed, as you come to the table today, you receive God's lavish mercy that you will not face the severity that you deserve.

[18 : 55] You will find grace that in Christ you have everything you need for life and godliness, rich in mercy and abounding in steadfast love. The good news for you today is that as you come to the table, whether for the first time or the hundredth time, you are met with mercy.

God remains rich in mercy and His heart of mercy reaches out to you today. Jesus was condemned. Jesus became guilty. Jesus, the innocent, became guilty so that we, the guilty, could be declared innocent in His sight.

As you come to the table today through faith in Jesus, you come not in your own strength or might or power or goodness. You come clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

You come welcomed by your heavenly Father on account of Christ. What grace for us today, friends. You might only see your sins as you come to the table, but in Christ, God doesn't.

God sees the perfection of Jesus and God wants you to come to receive His mercy afresh. You might find yourself despondent because there's a pattern of sin that has been there for too long and it's not budging.

[20 : 27] And you think, where is this all going? How can I still be a Christian if this is still such an issue for me? You might find yourself dismayed that after 30 years as a Christian or 40 years as a Christian, you still have so long to go in your path of becoming more like Jesus. You might be discouraged by what is often your knee-jerk reaction to things. You might be prone to flare up in anger about things. You might be prone to gossip, prone to pride, prone to lust.

And it's so hard because these things just seem to come so naturally to you. And you don't want that to be the case. You want to honor Christ. You want to live for Him. Friends, do you know what meets you today as you come in repentance and faith?

Mercy. Mercy meets you as you come to the table today. A crucified Savior who has borne every sin of yours so that you can go free.

Free from punishment. Free from guilt. Free from shame. And innocent in His sight. And this means that for all here today who are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, you do not need to twist God's arm in order for Him to be merciful to you.

[21 : 46] You don't need to nag Him in order to be gracious to you. You don't need to reach a certain standard of goodness before God considers you suitable for Him to show His mercy towards you.

No, God is not stingy. God is not backwards about it. God is lavish and generous because He has a heart of mercy for you. with God's mercy as the inexhaustible provision from heaven and His mercy is most clearly seen in the Lord's table, isn't it?

As we see the bread, as we see the wine, we see the body and the blood of Jesus broken, poured out for us. That we were spared God's wrath.

that the punishment was placed upon Him so that we could go free. In the Lord's Supper, as you hold the bread, as you hold the cup, you are touching mercy.

As you taste the bread, as you taste the wine, you are tasting mercy. As you come to the table, you are receiving mercy afresh.

[22 : 56] Jesus Christ broken for you. So as we come to the table, what does it mean for you as you come today? Psalm 103, verse 12, as far as east is from the west, so far as He removed our transgressions from us, they're gone.

They're out of sight. They're no longer seen. So God doesn't see your sins anymore. But does He remember? You've maybe been in an argument and you've said it or someone said to you, you always do that.

It's like that time that you did this. God's never going to do that with your sin. God's not going to bring up your past mess in order to condemn you and to shame you. Jeremiah 31, in verse 34, I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin.

No more. No more. They're gone. Jesus paid for every one of your sins so that you can come and receive mercy. And this means two things for two different people.

For the religious, for those who are followers of Jesus, that'll be most of us. That we, again, as we said last night, we don't come with a shred of pride at all. We're not here because of us.

[24 : 13] We're here because of the mercy in Him. We come in the strength of the Savior with humility and gladness. Means for the anxious. You perhaps wrestle with a sense of unworthiness that you couldn't possibly come to the Lord's table today.

We have been looking at the life of a blasphemer and a persecutor who God showed mercy to when he trusted in Jesus, when he followed Him.

Jesus didn't get in part of the way and then Paul had to make the rest of the way up. No, Jesus made the way entirely for Paul to come and Jesus has made the way entirely for you to come.

God's grace overflowed for him and through faith in Jesus, God's grace overflows to you too. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

What good news we have. Let's come in prayer. Amen.