

That's a. a strong verb and means enablement provided by God. Being aorist, it looks back to the call of Paul in Acts 9:22. It was then that God gave inward strength for his stand for Christ. From that inward vigor, there was an ample supply of:-

- a. Grace. This is really the basic provision which God gave Paul. It is the grace of our Lord, hence divine. Here is a moral support which is sourced in the Godhead. Perhaps the best way to express its meaning in this context is to use the word "strength". The strength of the Lord was just infused into Paul. How exciting that is. The kind of supply is advanced by the word "exceeding abundant." This expression comes from a verb only used by Paul here in the NT. God's grace "abounded exceedingly" to Paul.
- b. Faith. From the grace of God came forth the blessed thought of "faith." This is something inward. Grace generated a real sense of dependence upon God. This is just the opposite of how he acted prior to his conversion (cf. v. 13). Now he is filled with faith. Really, no one could carry on the ministry without this!
- c. Love. Another accompaniment of faith rising from grace is love. This stands in contrast with the "injurious person" of his unconverted days. Paul's whole enablement for his employment was saturated with the divine compulsion of love. He had a new motivation born in his heart by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5). All of these items are "in Christ Jesus" for they are not available in the true sense outside of HIM!

Conclusion It is good to find a preacher who is genuinely grateful to God. Certainly there is much in the service of our Lord for which to praise HIM. Let every preacher take a clue from Paul and so as he did. Indeed, let all who name His Name say thanks! Amen.

BOOK OF FIRST TIMOTHY

"The Thankful Preacher"

1 Timothy 1:12-14

Introduction

1. Those who are genuine servants of God are ever thankful for the privilege which God has bestowed upon them to be His vessels for ministry.

2. To be involved in the Lord's work is a good service indeed (1 Tim. 3:1). Would to God more young men would desire this privilege of activity for God.

3. In speaking of the Gospel, Paul could not restrain himself from telling Timothy how grateful he was for the Lord's hand upon his own life. God saved him. Equipped him. Placed him in the ministry. What a holy privilege he had! As you read his testimony, you become keenly aware of the fact that here is a man soundly grateful. For what does he give thanks? Here are some of the items on his list:-

1. ENFRANCHISEMENT v. 13.

The idea here is that Paul is eternally grateful for God's working in his life to emancipate him from his sins. Forgiveness is His and this is such great glory and blessing to his soul. He expresses this in the verb "I obtained mercy." The verb is in the passive form, hence it denotes that Paul was the recipient of something from the Lord. How wonderful! Two thoughts are contained in this verb: a) Pardon. Paul was now exempt from punishment. That is a fantastic truth! b) Opportunity. Paul was provided with the infinite privilege to serve Him Whom he had injured. Oh, to grace how great a debtor I'm constrained to be! May the Lord ever revive in our hearts the thrill of His mercy upon us! But Paul specifies the direction of God's mercy:-

a. From ignorant unbelief.

Paul is not here begging sympathy; He is stating a fact. Ignorance spawns unbelief! They work to-

gether. His estate was "in unbelief." It is a positive act, but it is also the position in which he found himself acting! There may be a subtle echo of the Cross (cf. John 15:21; 16:3; Acts 3:17; 13:27; 1 Cor. 2:8).

b. From terrible misconduct.

Paul is ashamed of his past, but he is ready to admit his dastardly deeds. So he lists some of the more prominent ones. Here they are in an ordered situation:

- 1) Toward God. "blasphemer." To do this means to treat God insolently. There is no more fearful sin than this. It was punishable with stoning in the OT (Lev. 24:16). It is no less a sin today. Paul committed it, but God had mercy upon him!
- 2) Toward people. "persecutor." This was particularly true of Paul's action against the people of God. This brings into a strong relief the mercy of God (cf. Acts 9:5; 22:7; 26:14).
- 3) Toward self. "injurious." Paul's own soul became seared. He not only persecuted people and blasphemed God, but he apparently delighted in doing this! The sins of Romans 1 are bad, but their fearful force is heightened by Romans 1:32, so the idea here.

All of these matters related to Paul's former times. The idea seems to be that "although Paul was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an injurious person, yet God had mercy upon him! How thrilling and how marvelous!

2. EMPLOYMENT v. 12.

As Paul had obtained mercy and confessed the same, here Paul announces that he is thankful to Christ Jesus our Lord. What a word to come from redeemed Jewish lips! The Messiah (Christ) the Saviour (Jesus),

and the Sovereign (Lord). The use of "our" links Timothy's salvation with his own. Hallelujah! For what did Paul speak particularly in this matter of employment? Mark these thoughts:-

a. His recognition.

Here is divine forethought and foresight. God saw in Paul faithfulness and considered him as such. The verb used is the common one often found in the NT for "believe, consider, think." Thus, here is a divine estimation of Paul—faithful! In this context, and in most, the meaning of "faithful" is "trustworthy" (cf. 1 Cor. 4:2). This is really the only kind of people God can use (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2).

b. His consideration.

As a trustworthy man, God laid hold of Paul and "placed" him in the ministry. The atmosphere of the verb here is one of divine appointment. One had better know he has this before he engages in any sort of service for God. Paul knew the pierced hands had touched his life.

It is interesting to note that God placed Paul in the "ministry," which is something of an activity and not a privilege per se. Let no one think that being a servant of God now gives him the privilege to carry around a status. He is called to work! He is charged with a labor for God. The Greek term used here is the one from which the noun "deacon" is derived. The application to brethren in that office is patent. What a holy employment, The type of ministry is outlined in Eph. 4:11ff.

3. ENABLEMENT vv. 12, 14.

It has often been noted and with absolute Biblical truth that God's appointments will never lack God's enablements. So it was with Paul. He shows how God fitted him for the call extended to him. Think on these matters as they rise from the verb "enabled."