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FROM SAUL TO PAUL BY GRACE

A STUDY OF TIMOTHY
NUMBER 9
I TIMOTHY 1:11-13

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I Timothy 1:11-13 "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

"According to the gospel from the glory of The God..." This is as far as we studied last time.

God's Objective

It may seem strange to you, but always remember that it is God's objective to bless you in the Devil's world. God can bless you when you get to heaven, but also remember, he can bless you while you are still here in the Devil's world. However, God has chosen to bless you in the way that will glorify God. So, we have the word makarios. This is the whole purpose for moving toward maturity here in this life. So, thus far, we have "According to the gospel from the glory of The God, the source of blessing." Now, if we refuse to accept the blessing, then the only other alternative left for God is to discipline us. Since we are a part of the angelic conflict and since the church age is the intensification of the angelic conflict, then we can be sure that life is going to be an intense battle and we cannot expect to live as we ought without the power of doctrine guiding us in all our decisions. The alternative to blessing is discipline. So, the issue is this: do you ride or get crushed? The plan of God is like a bulldozer; you can ride it and do constructive work with it, or you can be beneath it and get crushed by it. No matter which happens if you are a believer, you are in the plan of God for blessing or for discipline. All believers will spend eternity in a perfect heaven, but all will not have the same rewards in heaven. Some will have the Crown of Life and some will have the Crown of Righteousness. But if the believer refuses to be blessed by doctrine, then he will be cursed with discipline.

God's Trust of Paul

We next have "Which was committed to my trust." This relative pronoun hos refers back to the gospel. Then, we have the aorist, passive, indicative of pisteuo and we usually translate pisteuo as "Believe" but in the passive voice, it means to be entrusted with something. From the moment of his conversion on the Damascus Road until the moment he died, Paul was entrusted with doctrine which he was commissioned to give to the world.

The Only Way To Get Doctrine

The believer does not get doctrine directly from God. God has entrusted the spiritual gift of dispensing doctrine to pastor/teachers, and in this way, the believer learns doctrine. God entrusted Paul with doctrine, and he gave it out to the world. It is the same old principle. You have to abide by the plan of God, and it is the plan of God for doctrine to be given by the pastor/teacher. God has designed human authority and through this human authority, doctrine

flows. This passive voice shows us that Paul received the action of pisteuo, and it means, he was entrusted with doctrine. The doctrine in context here is just a small part of the whole body of doctrine, and here it is called "The gospel." But the gospel is where we all have to start, and then we can go on to other doctrine. This passive voice shows us that doctrine given to Paul was a trust. The same is true today with the pastor/teacher. Doctrine in the Scripture is a trust to him, and he must give it out to the people. So, this entire verse says: "According to the gospel according to the glory from The God, source of blessing, with which I have been entrusted."

Verse 12 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." We now have a new subject in this new paragraph. The new subject is "The purpose of grace" and this will be developed in verses 12-17. In verse 12, Paul will use himself as the classic illustration of grace. We will see in this paragraph that Paul was the greatest sinner that ever lived but by the grace of God, he became the greatest communicator of doctrine that ever lived. In the greek, the word arrangement is quite different from our translation. The sentence begins with charin echo and it should be translated "I keep having grace." If anyone ever needed grace, Paul did; and the glorious thing is that Paul never ran out of God's great supply of grace, and neither will you. God's grace is inexhaustible. This is called a present tense of duration and it means that the flow of grace began in the past and will continue on forever. So, it means "I keep on having and holding grace." There never will be a time when grace will let you go. Paul discovered this and we discover this. Grace may bless you or grace may discipline you, but grace will never let you go. Grace is always your best friend.

The Basis For All This Grace

This phrase says "I keep on having and holding grace toward Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ is the object of all grace. Next, we have the aorist, active, participle of endunamoo and it should be translated "who keeps on pouring power into me" rather than "who hath enabled me." From the time you are saved until you reach heaven, there will never be a time when he stops extending grace to you. So, the proper word order here is this: "I keep on having and holding grace from the one who keeps on pouring power into me, even Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Power Of Doctrine

The power Christ was pouring into Paul was the power of doctrine. The two most important factors is the written word which is doctrine and the living word which is Christ Jesus. The pastor must be occupied with the Living Word, which is Christ, if he ever expects to give out effectively The Written Word which is doctrine. The same is true with the congregation. They must be occupied with Christ if they ever expect to take in the written word. No pastor/teacher can study the written word as he ought, unless he is occupied with the living word which is Christ. Occupation with the living word and the written word flow along together, and when both occur, then maturity is the result.

God's Requirement

We now discover that God requires faithfulness if we are ever to learn doctrine. This word hoti translated "because" points to this idea. Faithfulness toward doctrine starts with the pastor/teacher and flows to the congregation. Once the pastor is occupied with Christ and moves on to be occupied with the written word, then he is in position to dispense doctrine to others. So, this statement says in essence, "Because faithfulness is necessary if you ever expect to grow up." We next have the aorist, active, indicative of hegeomai and it means to think, to guide, to consider all the facts, to be an expert. So, we translate this "Because he had considered me." God is an expert and he looked down on all human history and saw Saul of Tarsus as the worst man that ever lived, and God picked him out and said, "I'm going to show the human race once and for all what grace can do. I'm going to take the worst creature that ever lived and I'm going to make him into the greatest grace man that ever lived and the greatest dispenser of doctrine. "This is exactly what God did. You see the only real greatness is the greatness of grace. All other greatness is pale beside this grace. It is sad to see a great athlete begin to fade, or a great actress begin to fade, but when you are a grace person, you never fade.

A Beautiful Moment With God

This aorist tense lets us see one of God's most beautiful moments. This aorist tense points to a moment in eternity past when God looked all the way down into time and saw this man Saul of Tarsus and at that moment picked him out to be his great grace man. So, Paul says "He has considered me." Paul uses the word ego and this is not pride. Paul knew what he had been and he knew what he had become and he knew that it was a grace work all the way. So, the use of ego here is not arrogance or pride. Paul was a pure grace product and he knew it and today the whole world knows it. Next, we have the word, the accusative singular adjective pistos and it means faithful, dependable, trustworthy. So, it says "He had considered me to be faithful, dependable, trustworthy."

Paul's Trademark

This faithfulness was the trademark of Paul and it was non-meritorious. This doesn't say anything about his talent, his ability, or his I.Q., only his faithfulness. The things that impress the human race do not impress God. God is not impressed with your talent, your ability. He is impressed with your faithfulness, which is non-meritorious. So, Paul says, "He had considered me dependable." This refers to the fact that God looked down through the years and saw how Paul would respond to doctrine and he knew that doctrine would be Paul's very life. Paul became more committed to doctrine than any man that ever lived. God saw that dedication and he gave Paul this accolade and evaluation. When God saw the faithfulness toward doctrine that Paul demonstrated, God evaluated Paul at the top of the doctrine class.

God Made Paul What He Was

We next have the aorist, middle, participle of tithemi and it means "to establish." When we get to the next chapter, we will meet tithemi again but there it will be active voice and it will mean

"to appoint." The establishing of the Apostle Paul as the Number One Doctrine Man on earth was the work of God. Paul still occupies this place as the greatest believer and the greatest doctrine man in human history. So, this says, "Having established me with reference to the ministry." It is eis plus diakonia and it means "with reference to the ministry." So this great verse says, "I keep on having and holding grace, to the one having poured power into me, even Christ Jesus our Lord; because he considered me faithful, having established me with reference to the ministry."

Some Principles That Arise Here

1. This verse is not referring to the bestowal of the gift of apostleship. Paul received this gift at the point of his salvation. It is referring to something that happened to him after salvation. It refers to the establishment of his ministry as a doctrine teacher. His ministry was established on the basis of doctrinal truth in his soul.
2. We must learn to distinguish between the appointment to the ministry and the establishment in the ministry. All pastor/teachers receive their appointment to the ministry at the point of salvation. This is one of the 36 things God does for us at salvation. He gives a spiritual gift which is bestowed on us by the Holy Spirit. This is the communication gift. This is the appointment. But the establishment in the ministry comes with spiritual growth, preparation, faithfulness in the study of the Word. The same thing is true of all believers. The believer gets his spiritual gift at the point of salvation, but the establishment comes when he takes in doctrine and moves past the maturity barrier and moves into super grace or ultra super grace.
3. The appointment occurs at the point of salvation and is the sovereign decision of the Holy Spirit. This is how Paul was provided the gift of apostleship. The eleven apostles to Israel moved over into the church age and became the eleven apostles to the church. Then they tried to elect someone to take the place of Judas and they chose the wrong man because the Lord had already picked Paul to be that twelfth apostle.
4. The establishment in the ministry comes through the consistent intake of doctrine over a period of time.
5. The inculcation of doctrine through the grace provision of God not only results in super grace and ultra super grace but establishes the ministry.
6. Note that for all believers, this principle is the same. Doctrine in the soul must precede service for the Lord. So many go off half-cocked, all service and no doctrine. Service, to be effective, must spring out of doctrine. It is so easy to have all blow and no show.
7. Doctrine in the soul is the basis for service and doctrine in the soul establishes the ministry. The ministry is established not by personality, not by a program, not by cleverness, not by anything other than doctrine in the soul.

Verse 13 "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." In this verse, we have the power of grace. They trans-

late this "Who was before a blasphemer." This word proteros plus the present, active, participle of eimi and the word blasphemos should be translated "Though I was formerly blasphemous." Paul at one time was God's greatest critic. Now you just don't criticize perfection. God is perfect and his plan is perfect and it is not subject to criticism. But Paul walked right out on thin ice and had the audacity to criticize and blaspheme God.

Next, it says "persecutor" from the word dioktes and it means a vigorous persecutor of the church. The next word is hubristes and it means arrogant. Put together, it says, "Though I was formerly blasphemous, and a persecutor and a violent, arrogant man."

We read of this arrogance and blasphemy in three passages:

Acts 22:3-4 "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."

Acts 26:9-11 "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them."

Galatians 1:13-14 "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

This gives us enough for us to know that he was the super critic of God and the church.

The Change In Paul

Now we come to the contrast, and it begins with the word alla meaning "but." This sets up the contrast between the unsaved state of "Saul of Tarsus" and the saved "Paul The Apostle." Next, we have the aorist, passive, indicative of eleeo meaning "to receive mercy" but a better translation is "But I have been graced out." Next, is hoti meaning "because" then the aorist, active, indicative of poieo meaning "to do" plus the present, active, participle of agnoeo so we translate this "Because since being ignorant I acted in unbelief." Unbelief is not only the condition of being unsaved but being totally ignorant of God and God's plan and God's doctrine.

So, the entire verse says "Though I was formerly blasphemous (a critic of God) and a persecutor and a violent arrogant person, nevertheless, I have been graced out, because since being ignorant, I acted in unbelief."

Summary

1. The transformation of Saul of Tarsus into the Apostle Paul was one of the greatest demonstrations of the power of God's grace in human history. This was a change wrought by doctrine.

2. God's grace took the worst sinner and the most evil man in history and transformed him into the greatest grace man in history.
3. Only grace could take such a person and not only save him but mould him into greatness.
4. Saul of Tarsus not only took the road to Damascus, but it turned into the road of saving grace, living grace, super grace, ultra super grace, dying grace, and surpassing grace.
5. His purpose in taking the Road to Damascus was to continue his ministry of arrogance and persecution against God and Christians everywhere.
6. But the grace of God changed all that. Grace found Saul at his lowest and raised him as Paul at his highest.
7. Therefore, Paul is the historical demonstration of the power of God's grace.