

“Converted & Called” (1 Tim. 1:12-20)

1. Converted by Christ (12-17)

- a. Gratefulness (12) accompanying conversion is a gratitude for God’s grace and employment in the ministry.
 - b. Graciousness (13-15)
 - i. Counterintuitive: God’s purposes and grace far exceed our comprehension. Paul was a blasphemer, persecutor and insolent (violently arrogant) man by his own testimony. If honest, we too can see the great depravity of our sin nature and its selfishness, pride, anxiousness, and overall idolatrous nature. But such grace is not counterintuitive to God – but a natural extension of His compassion for sinners.
 - ii. Conforming: Paul was zealous above all when it came to his mission before Christ, and God did not alter Paul’s disposition – but rather his objective.
 - iii. Consideration: Re: “ignorantly” reveals the foreknowledge of God e.g. Acts 3:17-19; 17:30 cf. Lu. 23:34. God did not and does not overlook sin. Ignorance due to lack of revelation or illumination - God tolerated ignorance in the past, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.
 - iv. Convicting: Salvation is a very personal experience as it occurs one person at a time; but it is also something which manifests publicly in that once one has been redeemed, she cannot keep it personal and to herself. “Oh Give thanks to the LORD for He is good, His love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy” (Ps. 107:1-2).
 - v. Chief: Paul’s former persecution of the Church (and Christ Himself, see Acts 9:4), ranked him as the preeminent sinner as he waged war on Christ. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:9-10; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 3:4-9. See also Eph. 2:8-18 re: all of us.
 - c. Grandness (16-17)
 - i. Pattern (16) Although Paul’s conversion and ministry is spectacular, it is also a pattern for us. His conversion displays the transformation, conviction, gratitude, purpose, peace, and praise each of us experience in Christ. There is grace for the worst of us when we turn to Christ in repentance.
 - ii. Praise (17) when marking his conversion, Paul breaks forth in a doxology to express the grandness – the astonishing, spectacular, magnificent, wonderful, marvelous person and nature of God. When we express such it will be seen as intolerant and exclusive because when we praise Him for who He is and what He has done, it excludes other false gods, religions, ideologies, and adherences. He is the only “King eternal, immortal, invisible” God! It is nothing less than astounding that God the Creator entered into creation and took our punishment upon Himself. If you cannot praise and serve the One who came and served us, you have not been converted! But if you have – a calling came with it. →
- ### 2. Called to Combat (18-20)
- a. Warfare (18)
 - i. Purposeful: called to engage for Gospel. Such is not an unfortunate endeavor but one which has been purposed for His Kingdom – which is for our benefit! Such warfare produces courage, conviction, fortitude, humility, honor, maturity, salvation, and glory. When I, as pastor, have to confront external or internal conflict; I do not see it as a distraction but as a duty for which I’m called to engage.

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- ii. Proactive: Paul charges Timothy to “wage” it = offensively. We engage offensively by proclaiming the Gospel with the “Sword of the Spirit.” Further study, see Eph. 6:10-20).
- iii. Philanthropic: It is a “good warfare.”
 - 1. Self (Ro. 7:14-25; 2 Cor. 10:3-6)
 - 2. Society (Gal. 6:14)
 - 3. Satan (2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Thes. 2:17-18) who also comes via false teachers of whom Paul was waging war (cf. Jn. 8:44 and start of this letter vv. 3-7).
- b. Warning (19) “shipwreck” We must stay the course via a clean “good conscience.” We must continually affirm course by the informing of our “faith” and “conscience” with the Gospel and Word. A multitude of preachers/teachers have drifted from the course and have suffered or are destined for shipwreck. Perhaps there is hope for them →
- c. Will (20)
 - i. Opportunity: Volition provides opportunity for repentance and correction: “learn” supposes teach/correction. After all, Paul was a blasphemer albeit ignorant before conversion. 1 Cor. 5:5 reveals that there are opportunities in certain situations (if not most) to repent after being ‘handed over to Satan.’
 - ii. Apostasy: The absolute necessity for church discipline is seen here. Many must be disciplined, “handed over to Satan” so as to “learn” and repent. Many (if not most) will refuse and seal their perdition. Perhaps the emphasis on ignorance may be the determinative factor i.e. teachers who get unwittingly sidetracked from the warfare by becoming peace keepers rather than peace makers (see Matt. 5:9; 10:34-38). Conversely, those who have been reminded with Scripture and their calling to courageously engage in combat yet refuse – how can they be renewed unto repentance (Heb. 6:1-8)?

PC: Peter wrote concerning the believer’s growth in the faith as indispensable to salvation, “Therefore brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election certain, for if you do these things you will never stumble” (1 Pet. 1:10). We are witnessing a massive apostasy in the Evangelical Church. It is the result of gradual laziness. We have failed to keep our minds trained, our swords sharp, and our call prioritized. Instead of studying and teaching the Word, pastors have reverted to self-affirming messages, gimmicks, sensationalism, and following the trends of culture. We were called out of the world, albeit residing as aliens in it. Therefore we must glory in the wonderful salvation of God which transforms the most wayward and then calls, equips, and sends us out to battle. Rather than affirmation, we need conviction. Rather than gimmicks, we need to trust the straight forward Word of God. Rather than sensationalism, we need to dig deep to mine the brilliant treasures in God’s Word. And rather than be influenced by culture, we must wage war on it with the salvific Gospel of Jesus Christ! Anyone who has been born again is a disciple. One who claims to be saved yet yields no fruit is an apostate.