

Verses: 1Timothy 1:12-15

¹² I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 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.

In the veteran apostle Paul's letter to his spiritual son, Timothy, he makes a startling statement. As part of his mentoring process, he shares openly and honestly his own vulnerabilities. He calls himself, present tense, chief of sinners. He is clearly not advocating a life of sin, nor is he saying he is caught in a lifestyle of sin. He is however sharing our human state, our vulnerability towards sin and the old man – the old sinful nature that was crucified with Christ, buried with Him and raised into new life.

Another name for it is the flesh. And while we are still on earth, we will need to deal with it every day. Paul's statement, is not however, a hopeless one. To the contrary, he is highlighting and glorifying the power of the gospel to save us every day. In his other writings, Paul shares a lot of insights on how to live out of our new life in Christ, rather than identifying with and living in the lower life, the life of the flesh.

In Colossians 3:1-3 he says, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

In Romans 6:11 he says, "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

It starts with how we think about ourselves, followed by our actions of putting away our old lifestyle and habits. Although still vulnerable to sin, we are no longer slaves to sin, but slaves of righteousness! The choice is ours.

We who have received Christ and his gospel of grace have been gloriously saved and made righteous. May we live out of that blessed state every day, and not dip into the mud pool of the past.

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for your amazing grace, that you saved a sinner like me, and thank you for giving me your Spirit, to help me live a life that is fully pleasing to you and desiring to please you in all things. Help me forget the past and live from my new identity as your beloved child, made righteous by Jesus' blood that was shed for me. Help me to be honest about my own weakness and glory in your sustaining grace. Give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the deep and intimate knowledge of you, in Jesus' name. Amen.