

## The Greatest Story (Part 47):

Really Thankful For Jesus

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Memory Verses: Psalm 107:1

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

There's a difference between being kind of thankful for something and really thankful. For instance... when the mail lady drops off our mail and I'm out in the yard where she can hear me... I will yell... "thanks." I mean... its a nice way of greeting her... but let's get real... it's her job... so i'm not like really thankful... i'm just kind of thankful for her.. doing her job... getting paid... to stick her arm out her window and drop a half ounce envelope into my mailbox.

Same thing when the kids' bus driver drops them off at the house after school. The door is open... he can hear me... so I wave and say thanks. Thanks for getting paid to be safe with 30 kids in your giant metal bus. Thanks for going the speed limit and keeping your eyes on the road and stopping and looking both ways at every railroad crossing even though the lights aren't flashing and there is no train in sight... thanks for doing that.

Am I thankful? Sure I am. But sometimes i'm kind of thankful and sometimes I'm like really thankful. I'm really thankful for friends, and family. For shelter, and transportation, for having a job, food, health, livelihood. There are many things in life to be really thankful for, yet there is one that should stand above the others... Jesus.

As believers we know that we should be really thankful for Jesus... he is by the way the founder of our faith and the one by which we have salvation from sin and hell... Of course we are thankful for Him. But beyond the all too common Sunday School answers... can we accurately describe why we are thankful of Him. I'm afraid that Christians too often treat Jesus the way I treat my mail lady and my kid's school bus driver... we are kind of thankful for him... when we should be really thankful for him.

This morning we are going to look at a passage in 1 Timothy 1:12-17 which will show us why we should be really thankful and not just kind of thankful for Jesus. This morning I want us to see why Jesus is the most precious thing in the entire universe and why we should be so thankful for him that every moment of our lives are lived in a way that says... I'm really thankful for you Jesus. This morning I want us to recognize that... **When We Realize Where We've Been And What Jesus Has Done, Thankfulness Becomes More Than A Fleeting**

## Response; It Becomes A Life Defining Trait

### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

First, you see... **I'm Really Thankful For Jesus Because He Has Been Merciful To Me A Sinner (vs13, 16)**. Skip over verse 12 for the time being and look at **verse 13**. Paul is confessing that he was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent to the cause of Christ. I think we can all relate to some degree. Before Christ we were all horrible sinners. We were also blasphemers – we rejected Christ and were antagonistic towards him and the church. We were also persecutors – we actively fought against Christians and the cause of Christ. We were also opponents – we actively rebelled against the one true God. And because of this... we were also deserving of Hell. Our rejection of God and rebellion to his law condemned us to eternal destruction.

Not only this... but like Paul... we too were ignorant of the true reality of Jesus' love and salvation. Our ignorance of who Jesus really is causes our unbelief. The Bible tells us that before Christ we are all blind, lost, and unable to seek after God. There are scales over our eyes and minds and we in our ignorance reject the truth of who Jesus is.

But Jesus is patient. Look at **verse 16**. His mercy patiently waits for us. He doesn't quickly determine we are lost causes. Even in our rebellion he is patient. Even in our ignorance he is patient.

And where does his patience lead to? Mercy! We don't want Jesus and deserve hell... but in his patience he waits for us to accept him. We can't accept him of our own will because we are blind so he patiently waits until we are given sight to see him. All those who come to Christ are shown a mercy that they can not obtain on their own and this mercy is the most miraculous thing in the entire universe. We deserve death and destruction. Get it... you've earned it. We've sinned and rebelled enough to condemn ourselves. Yet Jesus patiently gives us opportunity after opportunity to repent and turn to him... it is only because of his patient mercy that you are not destroyed. You deserve Hell... and yet Jesus in his great mercy, has patiently waited for you, and in his perfect timing saved you. **A consistent reminder of the patient mercy of Jesus is all one needs to remain thankful for Jesus. When We Realize Where We've Been And What Jesus Has Done, Thankfulness Becomes More Than A Fleeting Response; It Becomes A Life Defining Trait .**

Secondly, **I'm Really Thankful For Jesus Because Of His Amazing Grace (vs14-15)**. Mercy is not getting what you do deserve... Grace is getting what you don't deserve. We deserve hell but in God's mercy he saves us from destruction. We don't deserve salvation but in God's grace he gives us eternal life through faith in Christ. Look at **verse 14**.

Jesus' grace is overflowing. It's not just a simple attaboy... or a small help when you need a big help. Rather, his grace is so great that it overflows... it is beyond our understanding. It's more grace than we could ever need. What is so great about this grace?

First, Jesus' grace gives the gift of faith. Look, we know that we cannot be saved apart from a faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. But there is one major problem as we have already discussed.... we cannot obtain this faith on our own. So what does Jesus do... he gives us the ability to believe... he gives us faith. The only way that you can believe in Jesus as your Lord is because Jesus has given you that belief through his grace.

Second, Jesus' grace gives the gift of love. We cannot know true love apart from Christ. His love is the true definition of love because he laid down his life for the world. No greater love is this than that a man would lay down his life for his friends – **John 15:13**. But Jesus takes it one step further... he didn't lay down his life for just his friends... he gave his life for me a sinner – not a friend but an enemy – there is no greater love.

These gifts of grace are unfathomable. There is no greater gift than Jesus' love poured out for us on the cross. There is no greater gift than the faith to believe in this salvation granted to us in our unbelief. So... **If the gracious gifts of Jesus' love and faith for salvation are the greatest gifts ever given... then what do you have to be more thankful for?** **When We Realize Where We've Been And What Jesus Has Done, Thankfulness Becomes More Than A Fleeting Response; It Becomes A Life Defining Trait .**

But still there is more here in this passage... look back at **verse 12**. **I'm Really Thankful For Jesus Because He Gives Me Strength (vs12)**. We all know this verse... I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength – **Phil 4:13**. First Jesus gives me salvation but then he gives me the strength, the ability to live the Christian life. I think many of us forget that the christian life is a war, a fight, a constant struggle. In order to live it we need a supernatural strength to fight within it. Jesus gives us that strength through the Holy Spirit which lives in us.

Where would you be without the Jesus given strength of the Holy Spirit living in you everyday? Defeated? Deflated? No.. we are more than conquerors through Christ. Listen to this quote by the author of the famous hymn Amazing Grace, John Newton. He says... *"Faith upholds a Christian under all trials, by assuring him that every painful dispensation is under the direction of his Lord; that chastisements are a token of His love; that the season, measure, and continuance of his sufferings, are appointed by Infinite Wisdom, and designed to work for his everlasting good; and that grace and strength shall be afforded him, according to his*

*need."* According to your daily need... Jesus is providing you with supernatural strength. Are you thankful for his strength in you? **When We Realize Where We've Been And What Jesus Has Done, Thankfulness Becomes More Than A Fleeting Response; It Becomes A Life Defining Trait**

But also in verse 12... **I'm Really Thankful For Jesus Because He Has Appointed Me To His Service (vs12)**. It just keeps going and going. Look at the progression here... Jesus shows me mercy and doesn't send me to hell, Jesus shows me grace and saves me, Jesus strengthens me through the Holy Spirit living in me, and then Jesus gives me a ministry and purpose. We aren't just thankful that we have been saved and have the strength to endure this life... we are thankful that we have a purpose, and meaning in this life that fuels us.

How awesome is this... Jesus has made you a minister. He has taken you... just like Paul... a person who was against him... who was the worst of the worst... and made you his minister. If Paul can become a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ... anyone can. And what is this ministry? Simple... to share the Gospel, to disciple believers, to serve the needy, and to bring him glory in all things. And this gives us purpose and meaning beyond anything we had in this life before Christ. **There is no greater joy in this life than to live it to the fullest in servitude to Jesus . When We Realize Where We've Been And What Jesus Has Done, Thankfulness Becomes More Than A Fleeting Response; It Becomes A Life Defining Trait**

### Application (Resolution, You)

So... it all boils down to this.... We've got a lot to be thankful for in Jesus, right? But how does that change our lives? Simple... when we see what Jesus has really done for us... which is life altering... it alters our lives. The thing is... we must not allow what Jesus has done to escape our minds. I think this is the biggest danger... that we get to comfortable with the story of Jesus that we find it hard to dwell on it. We must keep it on our minds all the time... His mercy has saved us from hell, His grace has given us salvation, His strength helps us fight the good fight, His ministry gives us purpose and meaning. When these things are on our minds... we are ever thankful. Not kind of thankful... but really thankful. And really thankful changes our lives. **Kind of thankful says... i'm glad you did that. Really thankful says... i'm going to change my life because of what you've done...**

So what changes? Two to be sure... First, Real thankfulness results in humility. If i'm really thankful for all that Jesus has done for me... and it is ever present on my mind... then i'm not puffed up by my own power... i'm

humbled knowing that I have nothing apart from Christ. My life looks humble and happy. **The most humble people are always the most thankful . When We Realize Where We've Been And What Jesus Has Done, Thankfulness Becomes More Than A Fleeting Response; It Becomes A Life Defining Trait .** Humility is a defining trait of a believer who is thankful for all that Jesus has done for them.

## Conclusion

But also... real thankfulness results in worship. Look at **Verse 17**. This whole verse is thankful adoration and praise. Look what he says... to the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever. This sounds like a worship song right?

You see... real thankfulness changes you from being someone who is merely glad that something kind has been done to you.... it makes you a new person... it makes you a humble person, and it makes you a worshipping person.

So.... when you look at yourself do you see a humble worshipper? If so then you are really thankful for Jesus. If not then you are probably kind of thankful for Jesus. **When We Realize Where We've Been And What Jesus Has Done, Thankfulness Becomes More Than A Fleeting Response; It Becomes A Life Defining Trait**