
Scripture Class Studies

Lesson Five

THE GLORY OF THE HAPPY GOD

We read in 1 Timothy 1:11 that Paul was entrusted with the evangel of the glory of the happy God. This was a message of salvation in grace apart from works of law (Eph.2:8,9). Paul's first letter to Timothy shows that this evangel applies to Paul himself (especially as Saul on the road to Damascus), to believers and even to all mankind.

SAUL OF TARSUS

Before he was called in grace, Paul, who was then called Saul, was a great enemy of the Lord. According to the law he should have been destroyed, but God did the very reverse and called him to Himself, entrusting him with an evangel of transcendent grace and glory. "Grateful am I to Him Who invigorates me, Christ Jesus, our Lord, for He deems me faithful, assigning me a service, I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy . . . the grace of our Lord overwhelms . . ." (1 Tim.1:12-14). God is the happy God because of His most gracious dealing with Saul.

THOSE ABOUT TO BE BELIEVING

But this grace is for others as well. We see this as the passage in 1 Timothy continues: "But therefore was I

shown mercy, that in me, the foremost [sinner], Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian" (verse 16). The pattern of mercy and grace shown to Paul is the pattern which can be seen as each of us are called into the family of faith.

Yet, as we have seen in a previous study, the message of grace also involves the word of the cross. Not only does God give us grace while we are still sinners, and this given on the basis of the cross of Christ, but also our present service is made useful, to God's glory, only by the way of humiliation and struggle. The more we appreciate God's grace the more we experience the cross.

When Paul was given transcendent revelations, and heard "ineffable declarations" he was given "a splinter in the flesh" which the Lord did not remove from him despite his prayers (2 Cor.12:1-8). The Lord's reason was "Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in infirmity is being perfected." We ought to listen to and heed Paul's response very carefully. "With the greatest relish, then, will I rather be glorying in my infirmities, that the power of Christ should be tabernacling over me. Wherefore I delight in infirmities, in outrages, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for, whenever I may be weak, then I am powerful" (2 Cor.12:9,10).

This also is the evangel of the glory of the happy God, not only that He saves us through the apparent failure and obvious shame of the cross, but that He continually saves us in service and gives us strength through infirmity and need. We are saved in grace, and this is not out of ourselves (Eph.2:8). In the same way we are His achievement in any good work we may perform (verse 10).

THE SAVIOUR OF ALL

But the evangel of the glory of the happy God has an even wider application. There was grace for Saul; there is grace for each one of us; but there is grace enough for all. Again we read in 1 Timothy that God "wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth" (2:4), and "that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers" (4:10). All mankind is in need of this grace. Therefore, we read that Christ Jesus gave Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (2:6). The good news of the happy God is that the cross was not a defeat, but rather it was such a great victory that its blessed results will eventually reach to all.

Our God is a happy God. In Ephesians 1:10,11 we learn of the secret of His will, and this accords with His *delight*. It gives Him happiness, joy and delight to purpose and bring about "an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ." Such an evangel is certainly for the laud of His glory!

CLASS PROJECTS

1. Look up the word "happy" in the *Keyword Concordance* and make an outline of its occurrences in Romans, 1 Timothy and Titus.
2. What is the relationship of the cross to our position in Christ and to our walk in the Lord?
3. List examples where God has brought victory out of apparent defeat.
4. What do we learn about God's will in 1 Timothy 2:4 and Ephesians 1:9-11?
5. List the various teachings which Paul called "faithful sayings."

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