
LOOK WHO'S COMING TO CHURCH

1 Timothy 1:12-17

What's the big deal about *grace*?

1 Timothy 1:12-17

1. YOU HAVE TO RECEIVE IT:

- ▶ Real grace frees us from our guilt and shame.

1 Timothy 1:12-13, 1 John 1:9, Romans 8:1-2, Ephesians 1:7

- ▶ It is not about who we are or what we did, but what we want to become.

1 Timothy 1:13-16, Acts 2:21, 2 Peter 3:9, Luke 19:10, Matthew 11:28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Paul's past: Acts 8:3, 9:1-2, 26:9-11, 1 Corinthians 15:9, Galatians 1:13-14, Philippians 3:6

2. YOU HAVE TO LIVE IT:

- ▶ That means I am no longer in charge.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Romans 14:8, Galatians 2:20

- ▶ That means loving those Jesus loved.

John 15:12, Mark 2:15-17, Matthew 21:31, 1 John 4:7-8 & 19-21

- ▶ That means faithfulness precedes usefulness.

1 Timothy 1:12, John 14:23, John 15:10, 1 Samuel 15:22-23

- ▶ That means living a life of thankfulness and worship.

1 Timothy 1:17, Colossians 3:15-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Food for Thought

For the week of July 16, 2006

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. We saw this weekend that God still used the Apostle Paul despite his colorful past. God has a long history of using less than perfect instruments (crooked sticks as Larry likes to call them) for His purposes. In each of the following passages identify what or who God used to accomplish His purpose.

Numbers 22:22-35

But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. [23] When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road.

[24] Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. [25] When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again.

[26] Then the angel of the Lord moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. [27] When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. [28] Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

[29] Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

[30] The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?"

"No," he said.

[31] Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

[32] The angel of the Lord asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. [33] The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her."

[34] Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back."

[35] The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. [NIV]

Joshua 2:1-22 *(read Matthew 1:5 for the rest of the story)*

Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

[2] The king of Jericho was told, "Look! Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." [3] So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

[4] But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. [5] At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." [6] (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) [7] So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

[8] Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof [9] and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. [10] We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. [11] When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. [12] Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign

[13] that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death."

[14] "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land."

[15] So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. [16] Now she had said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

[17] The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us [18] unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. [19] If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. [20] But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

[21] "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

[22] When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. [NIV]

Joshua 6:22-25

Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." [23] So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

[24] Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord's house. [25] But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho--and she lives among the Israelites to this day. [NIV]

Matthew 1:5

Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse, [NIV]

John 4:4-17

Now he had to go through Samaria. [5] So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. [6] Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

[7] When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" [8] (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

[9] The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

[10] Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

[11] "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? [12] Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

[13] Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, [14] but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

[15] The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

[16] He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

[17] "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. [NIV]

John 4:28

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, [NIV]

John 4:39-41

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." [40] So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.

[41] And because of his words many more became believers. [NIV]

Based on these stories, what kind of people can you expect to not only meet at church but see involved in serving?

What encouragement do these stories give you regarding God's willingness to use you?

2. Paul was not only well aware of his own past but also the past of the various people in the churches he planted. Read the passages below and describe the kinds of people who were in these churches.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders [10] nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. [11] And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. [NIV]

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. [27] But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. [28] He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, [29] so that no one may boast before him. [30] It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. [31] Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." [NIV]

Ephesians 2:1-8

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, [2] in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. [3] All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. [4] But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, [5] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. [6] And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, [7] in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. [8] For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- [NIV]

Titus 3:3-7

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. [4] But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, [5] he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, [6] whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. [NIV]

List the things God did for these people despite their tainted past.

As a follower of Jesus, God has done the same things for you as He did for those believers. Which of those things are most meaningful to you? How can what God did for you motivate you to serve Him?

3. Chris mentioned that if you don't feel like praising God, then you've either forgotten who He is and what He's done for you or where you've come from. Take some time to praise Him for who He is, what He's done for you, and His desire to use you to serve others.