

## 1 Timothy 1

- The Apostle Paul (Saul in Hebrew) was the foremost evangelist of the early church and probably in all church history
  - He was appointed by Christ to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, which was no small task
    - A Jewish Messiah held little attraction for a pagan, Greek society
    - And even Paul's own fellow apostles were opposed to the idea at least at first
  - Nevertheless, Paul preached the Good News faithfully, and his ministry bore extraordinary fruit by the grace of Christ
    - Paul founded or grew major churches in numerous Gentile cities across the Roman empire, including Antioch, Troas, Berea, Philippi, Corinth, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Colossi and others
    - Paul made a total of 4 journeys including his final trip to Rome
    - And one of Paul's most loyal companions was a young convert named Timothy
  - Paul often worked alone, but not because he was a loner
    - In fact, Paul commonly sought other men to accompany him on his long journeys
    - Men like Luke, Barnabas, Mark and others worked with Paul, giving him support and encouragement in the face of many trials
    - Some of these men worked with Paul for a time but later departed from Paul
    - A few even turned against Paul and caused him much grief
- But only one of them has books of scripture named after him: Timothy
  - Paul met Timothy while on his second missionary journey as he ministered in Lystra
    - We read about that moment in Acts 16

[Acts 16:1](#) Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, [Acts 16:2](#) and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. [Acts 16:3](#) Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

- Lystra was located about 100 miles north of the Mediterranean Sea in modern-day Turkey
- When Paul arrived, the church was already present and growing
- And one of the up and coming converts was a young Timothy
- Timothy's background was of a mixed heritage
  - He had a Greek father but a Jewish mother
  - Mixed marriages were more common outside Judea
  - Nevertheless, Timothy's mother and grandmother were devoted Jews who raised Timothy in the faith
  - Notably however, Timothy was not circumcised as a child
- This issue became a concern for Paul, who wanted Timothy to join him on his missionary journeys
  - Paul desired a companion who could move freely between Jewish and Gentile worlds acting as an ambassador for Christ
    - Timothy was an ideal candidate, since he was the son of a Greek father and was raised in Greek society
    - Yet Timothy was also raised with Jewish traditions and could operate within Jewish culture effortlessly
  - But Timothy's lack of circumcision rendered him unapproachable among the Jews
    - So for that reason, Paul asked that if Timothy were to accompany Paul, he must be circumcised
    - Timothy consented, which was no small thing in a time without anesthesia
    - That was an early indication that Timothy was a special man

- Timothy proved himself to Paul over the course of several years
  - Timothy eventually assisted Paul on several journeys and in many places
    - Timothy was with Paul in Troas, Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth
    - He also accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey as well, where he ministered with Paul in Ephesus
    - While on that journey, Paul dispatched Timothy alone to Macedonia, where he proved himself an effective evangelist
  - Paul eventually joined Timothy in Macedonia before the two then traveled together to Corinth and eventually back to Ephesus and Troas
    - Elsewhere in Paul's letters we also hear of Timothy with Paul in Rome and Philippi
    - After his first imprisonment, Paul left Timothy in Ephesus permanently to lead the church
    - Paul did this likely knowing that his own ministry was coming to an end
- This letter along with Paul's second letter to Timothy and his letter to another church leader, Titus, have collectively been titled the Pastoral Epistles
  - But that term is misleading and even unhelpful
    - Paul's occasion for righting these letters was less about training up pastors and more about the Church's need for discipline and self-sacrifice
    - First and foremost, Paul is speaking to Timothy, who seemed uncomfortable and even unhappy in his role as pastor
    - Paul asks Timothy to make personal sacrifices in service to Christ
    - To forgo the life of a traveling evangelist that Timothy obviously sought after, so he could set an example of persistence, diligence and perseverance
  - Secondly, Paul looks past the leader and speaks to the congregation as a whole about subjecting personal needs for the needs of the body

- Paul address leaders, husbands, wives and children demanding godliness, submission to authority, and respect for others
- In all these things Paul appeals to the church on the basis of Christ's example, so that we not think ourselves better than we ought
- Nevertheless, the three letters of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus are very similar in theme
  - 1Timothy covers the demands of life in the body of Christ and the requirements for church leadership
  - Titus focuses only on the requirements for leadership
  - While 2Timothy focuses only on the life of the body
  - In that sense, 1Timothy is the most general of the three letters
- Most importantly, they all focus on something Paul calls the "mystery of godliness"
  - The term refers to the means of godliness, Christ, taught and lived out
  - Church leaders must teach the truth of Christ, defend the truth of Christ and model it in their lives
  - While the church body must receive the truth of godliness in Christ, obeying that truth and witness to it
- Moving to the letter itself, Paul begins his letter by establishing his prophetic authority as he usually did in his letters

**1Tim. 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,

**1Tim. 1:2** To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Paul's opening is familiar one to Bible students
  - Paul names himself and declares his title as an apostle of the Lord
    - An apostle is a special office limited to a handful of men who lived in the first century

- Apostles were commissioned by a personal appearing of Jesus Christ, either before or after His death and resurrection
- Obviously, Paul was commissioned after Jesus was resurrected when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus
- We see the uniqueness of the apostolic office reflected in Paul's salutation when he declares he is an apostle by the commandment of God
  - God our Savior commanded that Paul be an apostle
  - Paul goes further to name Christ Jesus separately
  - So God the Father chose Paul as an apostle and God the Son appeared to reveal the news to Paul
- But the word "commandment" is particularly interesting
  - It reminds us of Jesus' words in Acts when Paul was blinded

[Acts 9:15](#) But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

[Acts 9:16](#) for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

- Paul didn't apply to become an apostle
- Nor did Jesus send Paul an invitation
- It was a command of God that Paul serve and suffer in this way
- Paul addressed his letter to Timothy, who Paul calls his true child in the faith
  - In the early church, it was commonly to refer to someone being a "child in the faith" to another believer
    - To be a child in faith or a father in faith simply referred to someone we brought to faith or who brought us to faith
    - So in this case, Paul is saying that he led Timothy to faith, and therefore Timothy was his child in the faith
  - Paul extends his customary greeting of grace and peace to Timothy
    - But Paul adds mercy to his greeting in this letter and his second letter to Timothy

- The traditional Jewish greeting was mercy and peace, so Paul includes the extra word for his Jewish friend
- Then Paul moves quickly to his first major point of the letter

[1Tim. 1:3](#) As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,

[1Tim. 1:4](#) nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

[1Tim. 1:5](#) But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

[1Tim. 1:6](#) For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,

[1Tim. 1:7](#) wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

- After Paul left Timothy in Ephesus and continued his journey to Macedonia, it seems Timothy became anxious to return to the road with Paul
  - Paul had urged Timothy to stay behind, which may indicate Timothy was reluctant to assume a local pastoral role
    - Maybe Timothy didn't feel cut out for pastoral work
    - Maybe he just enjoyed Paul's company or liked itinerant ministry
    - Perhaps it was a bit of everything, but whatever the reason Paul had to convince Timothy to stay
  - Since then Timothy has written back to Paul it seems asking if he can leave his post to rejoin Paul in Macedonia
    - This is Paul's response to Timothy
    - Paul refused Timothy's request
    - Then he gives Timothy encouragement and advice to stay the course in his new pastoral role in Ephesus
- Paul says he left Timothy behind because Paul knew bad men were coming to Ephesus
  - And these bad men (certain men) were going to teach strange doctrines
    - A single Greek word is translated "teach strange doctrines"

- It means to advocate a different truth
- Anything that departs from what is prescribed by the Spirit is strange or different than the truth
- In Timothy's day the church in Ephesus was probably little more than an association of house churches meeting under humble circumstances
  - These churches were supervised by elders, older men who had some experience in the faith and the character to lead others
  - Timothy was not an elder; he seems to have been a pastor serving in one or more of these house churches
  - The role of pastor was not a position of leadership so much as one of service to the body in shepherding
- Nevertheless, Paul clearly had high expectations for Timothy
  - Paul expected Timothy to defend the flock despite his youth and inexperience
  - Much like a young David was expected to defend the flock from wolves
- Here we find one of the major themes of this letter: guarding against false doctrine
  - Any teaching that departs from the true doctrines of the faith as revealed in scripture is false and should not be heard
    - Notice Paul asks Timothy to instruct those who are spreading false teaching to cease doing so
    - Paul doesn't tell Timothy to debate them nor to counsel them
    - The first order of business was to silence the false teaching
  - This is a very politically incorrect tactic today, since we try to avoid confrontation under any circumstances
    - Frankly, it's amazing how much contradictory teaching takes place in the church
    - Churches often tolerate teaching on multiple, contradictory perspectives within the body on major doctrines of the faith

- It's not uncommon to find various Bible studies taking place simultaneously in the same building teaching opposite views of eschatology, gifts of the Spirit, marriage, church leadership, etc.
  - This tolerance is usually explained either as an effort to "educate" the body on the spectrum of interpretive views in the church
  - Or especially in the case of prophecy, opposing views to share the pulpit because we assume that certainty is unattainable
- Paul doesn't seem to share these concerns, because his first concern was the silence strange doctrine in the church
  - And of course we apply this approach in every other academic pursuit
    - What would a history department chair say to a professor who taught his students that the Holocaust never happened because he preferred that viewpoint?
    - Or what would a science department chair say to a teacher who taught that the earth was flat because many people still held this view?
    - Would the department chairs set up a debate between the two positions in the spirit of fairness?
    - Would the chair agree that the truth can't be known with certainty?
    - Would the department tolerate the alternative perspectives just to avoid division?
  - Yet in the church, we often respond to false or strange teaching in these ways but Paul says we shouldn't
    - The sources for false teaching should be silenced by the church leadership
    - Of course, if the people teaching are teachable, then we should also educate them from scripture on the correct interpretations
    - But under no circumstances should we permit the body to be confused by contradictory teaching we know to be false
- In the case of Ephesus, the strange teaching was a common culprit in the early church



- In v.4 Paul describes the false teaching as involving myths and endless genealogies
  - Myths could refer to almost anything, of course
  - But Paul also mentions endless genealogies
  - And in v.7 he mentioned the men teaching strange doctrines were men who wanted to be teachers of the Law
- Putting all these together, a picture comes into focus
  - Certain men, probably leaders and possibly elders in the church, were introducing Jewish heresy into their teaching
  - The myths may have been Jewish myth surrounding the Messiah or other prophecies
  - And genealogies were probably popular Jewish mythologies invented about obscure biblical characters
  - These were the ear-tickling teachings of Paul's day, and they had gained an audience in Ephesus through the influence of these men
- These men and their teaching were not furthering the administration of God which is by faith
  - The word administration in v.4 could also be translated plan
  - Paul's referring to the plan of salvation, which is by faith alone
  - But men in the church were teaching in a way that didn't further this plan in the minds of the church
  - At best this teaching was a distraction from understanding the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ
  - And at worst these teachers were misrepresenting salvation, substituting a works salvation or salvation through Jewish roots
- Instead, Paul wants Timothy to ensure the church received better teaching met three tests Paul gives in v.5
  - First, the teaching should come from a pure heart
    - A pure heart refers to our intentions toward our students

- A pure heart is one that genuinely desires to share the truth for the benefit of the student
- The teacher isn't attempting to manipulate his audience or hurt an opponent
- A pure heart has the best interests of the students in mind
- Secondly, the teaching comes from a good conscience
  - A good conscience refers to teacher's motives for teaching
  - A good conscience doesn't teach seeking fame and fortune
  - A good conscience seeks to serve God, to share knowledge and to further the kingdom
- Finally, teaching must be accompanied by a sincere faith
  - Sincere faith refers to a genuine born-again relationship with Christ by His Spirit
  - It also refers to operating by faith in seeking to know scripture by the counsel of the Holy Spirit
  - Teachers that lack sincerity of faith are either unbelievers
  - Or they are believers working in their flesh absent God-given insight
- We can safely assume these qualities were lacking in the certain men Paul mentions
  - They were teaching with false motives, corrupt conscience and absent sincere faith
    - At best they were misguided, carnal Christians with egos inflated by positions of authority in the church
    - Or at worst they were unbelieving wolves in sheep's clothing deceiving the flock
    - Either way, they needed to be silenced
  - And we need to apply these same three tests against our teachers
    - If a teacher offers intriguing biblical insight but stirs up division and controversy, walk away

- If a teacher is diligent and scholarly but ambitious for attention and wealth, steer clear
- And if a teacher's life lacks sincerity of faith, beware
- When these things are lacking, it's like a boat has lost its anchor in a storm as Paul says in vs.6-7
  - Paul says when men stray from these things, they turn aside
  - The Greek term for "turn aside" literally means to put something out of joint
  - Imagine a long distance runner whose hip suddenly pops out of joint
  - The runner couldn't move properly much less continue the course
  - They must turn aside, leave the path
- This is a serious moment in a spiritual life
  - Turning aside is much more than simply becoming confused or distracted
    - The idea in the New Testament always implies a wandering away from walking with the Lord
    - Not losing salvation, for that is not possible
    - But still a serious impediment to obtaining a good testimony as we'll see shortly
  - These men turned aside to fruitless discussion
    - We could also translate that phrase as empty talk
    - It's a complete waste of time, and if there is one thing Christians can't afford to waste, it's time
    - Our time is precious, since it's the most powerful resource we have to honor and serve the Lord
    - As Paul says in Romans 12

**Rom. 12:1** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

- In v.7 we see where they went wrong...they didn't possess pure hearts or good consciences
  - They wanted to be teachers of the Law
  - A teacher of the Law is a term describing a position of authority and power
  - Among Jews, the term would be Rabbi
  - Today, we might say professor, except in that day the term was one of significant authority
- These men were motivated in their teaching by prestige and authority, which meant they didn't possess a pure heart or pure conscience
  - Their hearts were not directed at the good of their students
  - And their conscience was polluted by selfish desires
- Perhaps most importantly, they lacked sincere faith concerning the things they taught, as we see at the end of v.7
  - Paul says they didn't even understand the things they taught through they made confident assertions
    - A person working in sincerity of faith will be bound by the Spirit in his teaching
    - Sincere faith doesn't assure us perfect understanding of scripture
    - But it does guard us against making confident assertions about things we know we don't understand yet
  - But when your motives are corrupted and your conscience is compromised, you don't worry about such things
    - Which reminds us that sincerity is never a substitute for insight
    - Confidence and sincerity doesn't equal accuracy, and many false teachers are confident and sincere...sincerely wrong
    - Ironically, many good teachers take caution with their conclusions, not wishing to be arrogant or over confident in their interpretations

- So if we judge teachers on sincerity or confidence, we're likely to follow the wrong person at times
- Always inspect a teacher's motive, conscience and faith
- Having exposed the false motives of these men, Paul can't resist also taking a swipe at their teaching

[1Tim. 1:8](#) But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,  
[1Tim. 1:9](#) realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers  
[1Tim. 1:10](#) and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,  
[1Tim. 1:11](#) according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

- These teachers were teaching on the Law given to Israel, and Paul makes clear his problem with their teaching is not with the Law itself
  - The Law is good, meaning study of it is profitable, provided it is used lawfully, that is in the way God intended
    - The Law served a certain purpose for Israel as part of their Old Covenant
    - And it serves a different yet complimentary purpose for those in the New Covenant
    - For Israel, it defined and secured the nation as God intended
    - And for the NT believer, it explains the mission of our Messiah
  - But when we cross those purposes, we depart from a lawful use of the Law
    - Specifically, we err if we teach NT believers they must live as if they were under the Old Covenant instead
    - Requiring believers to observe the Law is using the Law unlawfully
  - To prove his point, Paul explains that the key function of the Law both for Israel and for the believer today was to expose sin
    - In v.9 Paul says the law was not made for the righteous person

- He's referring to the essential quality of any Law
- Laws exist to define and expose unrighteousness
- There is no need for Law among the righteous, since they do nothing wrong
- Righteousness and unrighteousness are not terms that describe behavior so much as nature
  - Righteousness is the absence of sin while unrighteousness is the absence of perfection
    - We are unrighteous by nature, and this remains true whether we are currently engaged in any sin at the moment
    - Even at rest, we are unrighteous
    - When we sin, we are acting out of our unrighteous nature
  - Those who are unrighteousness benefit from living under Law, because by that Law we come to see how we live in unrighteous ways
    - We note that our behavior departs from the Law
    - And that departure is a measuring stick of our unrighteousness
    - Our unrighteousness was always there, but the Law helped us quantify it in a sense
  - So Paul takes this truth and turns it back upon the very men who desired to be teachers of the Law
    - Paul says the Law is meant for those who practice lawlessness
    - The Law acts as constraint on their evil
    - And Paul lists a number of particularly serious sins as example
    - But clearly, Paul chose the harshest examples to make an association with these men
- In effect, Paul was saying that if these men wanted to be associated with the Law, let that association be in the way God intended
  - Specifically, let the Law reveal the truth about these men's hearts
    - They are lawless and rebellious men

- Though they desired to show themselves as better than others by their supposed expertise in the Law and their piety in keeping it...
- Let the the Law show they are no better than other ungodly sinners
- They are like the unholy and profane, the sexually immoral, the dishonest and violent
  - Ironically, Paul throws these teachers in with the worst of the law breakers
  - They used the Law to make themselves superior which was never the purpose of the Law
  - The chief purpose of the Law was to convict sin where it existed, and these men should have felt conviction, not pride, in what they taught
- Notice how Paul ends his rogues gallery with anything contrary to sound teaching
  - With that statement, Paul equates the work of these teachers with the other terrible sins
    - Do we need any further proof of how Paul viewed false teaching in the church?
    - And this perspective is not Paul's alone
  - Peter, Jude and Jesus Himself also criticized false teachers in equally harsh terms
    - While we've generally softened our criticism of teaching contrary to scripture, but scripture itself roundly condemns it
    - Anything teaching of salvation that is contrary to the truth is an expression of unrighteousness equal to the other sins on that list
  - In v.11 Paul says what's at risk is the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ that he preached
    - The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only truth, the only message in the universe that carried the power to bring eternal life
    - So how dangerous is that thing that would undermine the message?

- And so Paul has positioned himself on opposite sides from these men
- In summary, Paul is commanding that teachers of scripture must endeavor to teach the word as God revealed it
  - It must be taught from a motive of love and a sincere desire to communicate what God intended
  - This is especially true when presenting portions of scripture by itself, including larger portions like the Law
  - Every verse, passage, chapter and book of scripture must be taught in light of the overall message of scripture
  - To do otherwise is to misuse scripture, misrepresent the truth and possibly join that rogue's gallery
- Now Paul had his own history of contrary teaching and behavior
  - Paul knew that history could be used against him by these false teachers in defending themselves from his charges
    - So Paul preempts those accusations in vs.12-17

**[1Tim. 1:12](#)** I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,

**[1Tim. 1:13](#)** even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;

**[1Tim. 1:14](#)** and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

**[1Tim. 1:15](#)** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

**[1Tim. 1:16](#)** Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

**[1Tim. 1:17](#)** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

- Paul acknowledges he too once taught wrongly against the very Gospel he now cherishes
  - He was formerly a blasphemer, speaking against Jesus
  - And he was a persecutor and violent aggressor



- We remember in Acts 8 that Saul was an instigator of Stephen's death and probably many more
- Paul had to deal with this inconvenient truth his while ministry, and yet it was also his most powerful defense
  - Paul's history validated the earnestness of his confession
  - Paul gave up everything he valued to join the side he once persecuted
  - There was no earthly explanation for Paul's about-face except that the message of the Gospel was true
- At the same time, Paul's past was a frequently tool of his critics to discredit him
  - How could they church trust the teaching of a murderer, they would ask?
  - Therefore, Paul was forced time and again to explain how the Lord could use one such as himself
- As as we see in this passage, Paul was also honest and humble about his past
  - He admitted his crimes, for how could he deny them?
    - Nevertheless, the Lord forgave Paul and showed him mercy
    - Obviously, Paul was shown mercy on the same basis as all believers: by his faith in Christ
    - At the end of v.13 and into v.14, Paul states clearly that he was rescued by grace though he was a great sinner
  - So on the question of Paul's guilt, he acknowledges his past, but then so must his critics acknowledge that Paul has been made righteous by faith
    - Paul was saved like all people
    - Paul was a sinner needing God's grace,
    - He's simply like the rest of us
  - But Paul's is moving toward a larger question
    - Why did the Lord select someone who persecuted the church to receive such a position of honor in the church?

- Paul's answer is he acted in ignorance
- Paul is not suggesting his sins were forgiven because he was ignorant
- He's saying his opportunity to assume high office was not jeopardized by his crimes, because those crimes were committed prior to faith
- Paul's role as persecutor and blasphemer predated his knowledge of God in faith, and therefore he couldn't have been expected to be any different
  - Paul blasphemed against Christ and he persecuted the Church out of unbelief, therefore, those past actions didn't disqualify him from serving God
    - How could anyone serve God if our resistance to God prior to faith were grounds for disqualification?
    - Our qualification for service to God is measured by who we are and what we do following faith
  - Paul is inferring something about the men he opposes in Ephesus
    - The false teachers can't rest on the same excuse for their false teaching
    - They understand the Gospel, and therefore they are not ignorant
    - Yet they continue to teach error
    - So ironically Paul's critics accuse him of having disqualified himself by what he did prior to faith even as they disqualify themselves after faith
- Finally, Paul explains why the Lord chose someone like him to serve the Church
  - Paul says so that God could use him as an example to other believers
    - Breaking it down, Paul says "in me as the foremost"
    - He's referring back to his earlier comment about being the foremost sinner
    - The word foremost doesn't mean the greatest, for who can call themselves the greatest sinner?

- In a way, calling yourself the greatest sinner would be a sin in itself, since it would be a boastful statement
- The word in Greek means more prominent, as in the person standing first in line so that you can't see who is behind that person
  - Paul was the most prominent sinner in the church
  - Imagine if Hitler had become Christian during WWII or if Stalin or some other famous evil person had converted to the faith?
  - That person's crimes would probably hang over their head in the minds of the Church for sometime
  - They would be the most prominent sinner in the church, as Paul was in his day
- So Paul says he was shown mercy as the foremost sinner so that he could serve as Christ's billboard
  - Forever more, Paul gave witness to how patient and forgiving the Lord is willing to be for those who believe in Him
    - If anyone thought themselves too evil, too far from God to receive forgiveness, Paul stood as God's counterargument
    - No one is out of reach
    - No sin is unforgivable in Christ Jesus
  - So though Paul's critics pointed to Paul's past as evidence he couldn't trusted, since he had too much baggage
    - Paul says his past is merely evidence of the depths of God's mercy in Christ
    - And so Paul ends in a minor doxology, born out of personal gratitude
    - To the eternal, immortal invisible God belong all the honor, glory and praise forever and ever
    - Amen