

“Jesus Came to Save Sinners”
(1 Timothy 1:15-16)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. If you were to ask most people today where they think they’re going when they die, they would probably say heaven.
 - a. Why?
 - (i) Because they’ve been good enough.
 - (ii) Because their good deeds will outweigh their bad.
 - (iii) Because God is fair.
 - (iv) Really, it’s because that’s what they choose to believe.
 - (v) They’re going to get there on their own.
 - (vi) They certainly don’t need Jesus and what He’s done to save sinners.
 - b. This is what most people believe.
 - (i) They can’t be bothered to pick up the Bible and read what it says.
 - (ii) If they did, they’d see that no one is acceptable to God.
 - (iii) Perhaps they would be moved enough to do something about it.
 - (iv) But because they won’t, they will perish.
2. But there are others – relatively few compared to this first group – who believe they will never be good enough.
 - a. These have a better idea of what the Lord requires before they can enter heaven.
 - b. They can see their sins more clearly, because of the work of God’s Spirit.
 - c. While so many are confident of heaven, these despair of ever seeing it no matter what they do.

B. Preview.

1. It’s this second group I would like to address this morning – you who know you’ll never be good enough.
 - a. Compared to the first group, you’re actually in a much better position.
 - b. You see your sin.
 - (i) The Lord wants you to see it; He wants to drive you out of yourself – away from your own works – that you might find salvation in the work He did through His Son.
 - (ii) You aren’t good enough, but He promises He will make you good enough, if you will just come to Him.
2. Jesus didn’t come to save the righteous – He came to save sinners.

II. Sermon.

- A. We have one great example of this in the apostle Paul.

1. What do you usually think when you think of Paul?
 - a. Perhaps that he was the greatest apostle, who almost single-handedly evangelized the whole world, who was perhaps the greatest contributor to the New Testament.
 - b. You might think the Lord saved him because of what He knew He could do through Paul – which is true in a sense: He knew what Paul was capable of with His help – especially since the Lord made him this way.
 - c. But He was also aware of how much Paul would love and serve Him once He had opened his eyes to his sin and saved him from it.

2. What did Paul do that was so bad?
 - a. Before the Lord saved him, he was doing his best to tear down the church.
 - (i) Paul was the infamous Pharisee Saul – the one who was doing his best to pass up all his peers in his zeal for what he thought was the truth.
 - (ii) He was a Christian killer – in his own words:
 - (a) “I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify” (Acts 22:4-5).
 - (b) “I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities” (26:9-11).
 - (c) Looking back, how bad did Paul consider this to be? He wrote, “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*” (v. 15).
 - (d) And yet as bad as he was, the Lord saved him; He saved him when he wasn’t even looking for salvation; He even saved him when he thought he was already good enough for God, which is the one sin that is particularly offensive to God.
 - (e) Paul was a great sinner – but that’s who Jesus came to save.
 - b. Paul wasn’t the only criminal the Lord redeemed from sin.
 - (i) He also had mercy on Peter – the one who, on the night of his betrayal and trial, denied that he even knew Jesus.
 - (ii) He had mercy on King David – who committed adultery with his neighbor’s wife, and then who had his neighbor killed to cover his crime.
 - (iii) The Lord saved Manasseh, the wicked king of Judah who led God’s people away from Him and filled the streets of Jerusalem with innocent blood (2 Kings 21).
 - (iv) He even had mercy on Adam.
 - (a) The one who was responsible for the death of the entire human race.

- (b) The one who chose to disobey God even knowing that his decision would condemn all his children.
 - (c) The Lord had mercy even on him.
- (v) The crimes these men committed were bad, but they're much worse than you think.
- (a) They were bound by an infinitely holy God to do what's right.
 - (1) This put them under an infinite obligation to do the right thing.
 - (2) But they failed, and so are guilty of infinite guilt.
 - (b) The sins they committed were against an infinitely holy God.
 - (1) You and I might be offended by what they did, but God infinitely more.
 - (2) And so again, they are infinitely guilty.
- (vi) Are your sins any different?
- (a) No. You are under the same obligation and you have sinned against the same infinitely holy God.
 - (b) Your guilt is infinite.
- (vii) But remember, Jesus didn't come to save the righteous, but sinners.

B. But why would He do this?

1. Why would He come to show mercy to those who did such wicked things?
 - a. Why did He come for the man who denied Him?
 - b. Why did He save the king who turned so many of His own people away from Him and killed so many innocents?
 - c. Why did He choose to redeem the murderer of all mankind?
 - d. And why did He have mercy on the man who hated Him and tried to destroy His church?
2. Because the Lord wanted to show the world just how gracious and merciful He really is.
 - a. Paul writes, "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" (v. 16).
 - (i) Paul deserved to be condemned forever in hell for his sins.
 - (ii) As a Pharisee, as one of the teachers of God's people – he knew better.
 - (iii) But the Lord saved him – as He did these others – to prove that He is willing to show mercy to all who will come to Him in faith and repentance.
 - b. He's willing to show you mercy if you will come to Him.
 - (i) It's true that your sins are very serious.
 - (a) Maybe you haven't committed adultery or murder, but you have still done a great deal of evil His eyes.

- (b) How many times have you broken His commandments by doing what He forbids? Not only in the things you've done, but in your thoughts, in your words?
 - (1) Even one sin against this infinitely holy God deserves infinite punishment.
 - (2) How much punishment do you deserve?
- (c) How many times have you failed to obey Him by not doing what He commands?
 - (1) You are under an infinite obligation to love and obey Him.
 - (2) But have you even for one moment?
- (ii) And yet the Lord is willing to show you mercy, if you will turn from your sins and come to Him in faith.
 - (a) He is willing to forgive you.
 - (b) He is willing to give you the perfect obedience of His Son to make you righteous.
 - (c) He is willing to free you from hell and give you heaven.
 - (d) This is why He sent His Son Jesus into the world.
 - (1) Jesus obeyed the Law for those who would believe in Him.
 - (2) He died on the cross so He could grant a full and complete pardon to those who would trust Him.
- (iii) You don't measure up – you will never measure up.
 - (a) If you see that this morning, you've already moved a step in the right direction.
 - (b) Jesus didn't come to save those who didn't need His help, but those who do – those who are sinners.
 - (c) If you see your need this morning, Jesus offers Himself to you as a Savior. He offers you His mercy.
 - (d) All you need to do is come to Him in faith and receive it. He says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).
 - (e) Come to Jesus and rest in Him. Amen.