

10/9/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is an advertising message we hear and see quite often. We hear it when we see the knife being twisted and pounded on, cutting through wood and tin cans, then slicing a tomato like it's not even there. We hear it when we see the vehicle going through thousands of hours of grueling tests, being driven over terrain most of us will never see and emerging without a flaw. The message can come in many different ways, but the thought is essentially the same: If our product can do this, then it can certainly handle your needs.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:12-17

The Apostle Paul had a similar message for his younger colleague, Timothy. Timothy was now on his own, leading the congregations around Ephesus while Paul, his mentor, returned to Macedonia. In the days ahead, Timothy would face some tough challenges. Perhaps Timothy was thinking: “I’m not ready for this. I can’t do it.” Perhaps he was thinking: “Maybe I could do it if Paul was still here with me, but by myself?...” Perhaps he was doing some comparing: “I could never be the kind of church worker Paul is.”

Do you ever think that way? When God puts a challenge before you, do you ever look at it as something someone else, someone with a greater faith, could handle much better or instead of you? Do you ever find yourself thinking, “I could never do what he or she does”? Are you struggling with questions of faith in your life? Are you struggling with particular sins that plague you? Do some of the things that God leads you to do seem overwhelming?

To Timothy and to you Paul says, “If God can work with me, God can work with you. In fact, I’m a perfect example of what God can do with a sinner. Take a look at what Jesus has done in my life and place your confidence in Christ.”

The grace of our Lord has also been poured out on you abundantly. Your sins are forgiven in Christ. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. Don’t let the devil convince you that you are beyond God’s help or beyond hope. Don’t let him convince you that, because of your sin, God can’t use you.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save you. You have been shown mercy. Christ Jesus has appointed you to his service. And he will give you strength.

Prayer: *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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