

THE PURPOSE OF JESUS COMING

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Reading: 1 Timothy 1

Psalter 64:1-3

Psalter 435: 9

Psalter 390: 1-3

Psalter 123: 2-3

Psalter 53: 1-5

Children, young people, and older ones. Today I have a question for each one of you. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ come to this world? And how does this relate to you and to me? I am sure we are all familiar with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and the surrounding history. We have all heard the story many times in our life. But, is it only an historical event for you, or is it more? What does it mean personally for you that Jesus Christ came into the world?

The fact that Jesus Christ came into the world is indisputable. Many religions agree that Jesus Christ came into the world. We know who Jesus Christ is from the Word of God, from many historical facts, and from various Old Testament prophecies. We know who Jesus Christ is. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the prophet like Moses, and the priest after the order of Melchisedec, the root and branch of Jesse. He is called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Everlasting Father. His name is also Emmanuel, God with us. We know who Jesus Christ is. Do you know *who* He is? We know where Jesus Christ was born. Children, young people, where was He born? I'm sure you could all raise your hands and tell me He was born in Bethlehem. Yes, He was born in the city of David. We know when Jesus was born, approximately. We know that He was born when Caesar Augustus was ruler over the world, and we read in the Bible that He was born in the fullness of time. We know how Jesus Christ came into this world. How did He come into this world? Who is His mother? How was He conceived?

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. An absolute wonder. And He was born of the virgin Mary.

And so, my friends, young people and older ones, we know *who* Jesus is. We know *where* He was born. We know *when* He was born. We know *how* He came into this world. But there is another very important question. Why? *Why* did Jesus Christ come into this world? Why did Jesus leave the glory of His Father and come into this sinful world? What was the purpose of Jesus Christ coming into this world? And what does this mean to you and to me?

Today we will meditate on 1 Timothy 1 verse 15, where we read from the Word of God these words, *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”*

The theme for this morning is **THE PURPOSE OF JESUS COMING** and in this text, we have the essence of the gospel. This text answers the question WHY.

We will break the text into two part:

First, we will consider *“A faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance”*

Secondly, we will consider the rest of the verse *“the content of this faithful saying”*

So, the theme is ‘The Purpose of Jesus Coming’. A faithful saying worthy of acceptance, and then we will take a closer look at this faithful saying.

Paul begins this verse in a very interesting way. He begins by saying: *“this is a faithful saying.”* Today when we hear someone speak and they tell us something and they say, “You can trust me. I am a Christian. You can trust me.” I don’t know about you, but right away I feel alert, “Really? Why do you have to tell me that?” Paul begins this text with “this is a faithful saying.” Why? Why does Paul begin this way? Isn’t everything in the Bible trustworthy? Isn’t everything which Paul wrote in his thirteen epistles trustworthy? Why would Paul say this particularly about this verse? Is he implying that the other things which he wrote are not trustworthy? No. This is the way that Paul emphasizes the supreme importance of what he is going to say.

This is not a new way of writing or speaking. I think back to when the Lord Jesus spoke to Nicodemus. Remember, Nicodemus came to Him and John 3:3 Jesus began with similar words. He said, *“Verily, verily (Truly, truly. Amen, Amen) except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* Paul begins this

verse in this way on purpose. He wants to capture our attention. It is important. He wants us to pay attention to it when we read it, and also when we hear it. Everything that Paul wrote is without error. Not only this verse, but the whole scriptures are without error. It is inspired, as we read in 2 Timothy 3:16, "*all scripture is given by inspiration of God.*" Everything that Paul wrote was inspired by God, but this verse, and other verses rides to a higher importance. Five times in his thirteen epistles Paul uses these similar words, "*this is a faithful saying.*" 1 Timothy 1 verse 15 is one of them. Paul is writing especially, because he desires to capture your attention. He wants you and me to pay special attention this morning to what he has to tell us. Is it Paul speaking to us? No, it is the Lord. The Lord is speaking to us and He wants our attention.

But there is another reason why Paul begins, "*this is a faithful saying.*" Paul knows that when the Holy Spirit begins His work in the heart of a sinner and convicts of sin, and they see who they are, then they often have a hard time believing that Jesus Christ could ever have come into this world for them. And so he is especially speaking to those. He wants to convince those that know experientially that they are sinner. We know it with our heads. We know it. We know we are a sinner. And we know that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. But when you *become* a sinner, and you *feel* you are a sinner, then the questions come into our heart: Why did Jesus come? Did He come for me? Did He come for me, such a sinner? The Lord, through the words of Paul desires to convince guilty sinners that there is salvation through Jesus Christ. Sinners, this day the Lord is speaking to you about salvation. He addresses all sinners and affirms that salvation is possible even for the chiefest of sinners. Who are the chiefest of sinners? Often, we think of those, who for example are like the prodigal son, notorious sinners. Chiefest of sinners. But Pharisees and self-righteous ones they're chiefest of sinners also, just from a different perspective. Everything that you and I do without faith is sin. And so, the most notorious sinners, the chiefest of sinners, and the Pharisee that does everything for himself and for his own honor, all are the chief of sinners.

The key word in the beginning of this text is "faithful". "*This is a faithful saying.*" You can also translate it "trustworthy." When you write in Greek, if you want to put the emphasis on a particular word, then you would put that word at the very beginning of the sentence. So, if you were able to read this verse in the original Greek it would say, 'trustworthy is this statement.' Paul did that on purpose. He wants you to hear and to know that what he is going to say is faithful, it is reliable, it is trustworthy, it is of great importance, and none of us can afford

to not to be certain of this truth. This is an essential truth. We also need to understand that when Paul is writing this, he is not just inventing a new truth. He did not make up this statement; No, *“this is a faithful saying”*. Well, where did it come from? It comes from the statement that follows in this verse, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. This saying, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save” was something that believers at this time would say to each other when they came together. It was a short confession of their faith. It was the very centre of their hope. It was the very centre of their life. It was the centre of their joy. And so, they would say to each other, “Jesus Christ, He came into the world to save sinners.” Is that your joy? Is that your hope? Or not?

Paul continues and he says, *“worthy of all acceptance.”* Paul does not only say that we only have to partially accept a part of this saying. No, he says it is worthy of all acceptance. That all would accept it, and all would accept the complete of what he is going to say. Acceptance is to embrace a truth. Acceptance is not only a confession with your mouth, but it is also a believing in your heart. It is a complete surrender. Completely, entirely to the truth. It is an embracing with heart and with mouth. What is in the heart comes out of the mouth. We read in Romans 10:9 -10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe Him in thine heart, that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* My dear friends, you cannot be reconciled with a holy God and be wrong concerning this truth about Jesus Christ; that He came into the world to save sinners. What is this reliable and trustworthy statement that Paul is going to give that is worthy of all acceptance?

So now we will go to our second thought. First, I will give some general comments and then we will go and take it word by word.

So, some general comments. *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”* It is important to note that this statement has six Greek words. There are a few others, but there are six important Greek words and these words are the gospel of Jesus Christ, giving the reason why Jesus Christ came into the world. These words reveal unto us, why God the Father sent His Son into the world and why Jesus Christ came into the world. It is this statement that those Christians shared with each other and made into that confession which was their hope and their joy. But what is

the origin of this statement. What was the beginning? As I said, Paul didn't begin this. He didn't just write it out. He didn't invent it. And these Christians that shared this confession with one another, they also didn't invent it. Where did it come from? Did some Christian one day just write this out and then it was repeated and repeated, and it became well known? No. This statement that Paul makes, or you could say this confession of faith, is the combination of truths that Jesus Christ Himself taught. It is from the words of Jesus Christ Himself. It is a combination of at least two different verses.

First, it is from Matthew 9 :13, where we read, *"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* The Lord Jesus makes it clear that He came into the world for sinners. Sinners! He came for those who have that deadly disease; that incurable disease. Today we have incurable diseases of our physical bodies. Think of cancer. What that must be to hear the news that you have cancer. Some can be cured, many cannot. But sin! That is an incurable disease from a human standpoint. No man, no woman can cure themselves from the deadly plague of sin. The Lord Jesus makes it clear that He came for sinners in the previous verse of Matthew 9. In verse 12 we read that He said, *"they that be whole need not a physician but they that be sick."* Are you sick? Are you a sinner? Jesus Christ came into the world. Is that joy to you? Is that a hope for you? Is that sweet words for your soul this morning or not?

The second verse is from Luke 19:10, *"for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* He came for sinners and He came for those that are lost. These two verses combined, make this confession. Jesus had many names but the one He used in this text is the name that He used the most. Here the Lord used His name, 'Son of man'. It is a precious name. This name expresses His closeness to human beings. It expresses that He came in the human flesh. Jesus became one with us. He had fingers, he had toes, and he had a nose. He was human. He was a little baby in Bethlehem, in that manger. But one thing was very different. What was that? Children, young people, what was the difference, between you, me and that precious Lord Jesus Christ? He was without sin. He was pure.

And so, our text is the combination of the truths which the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught. Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:15 that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of the reason why He came into this world. He came into this world to save sinners. He came for the salvation of the lost. Maybe you are listening, and you say, "Wait a minute. I have a question.

Did He not come into the world to save the elect? Shouldn't Paul have written, 'this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the elect'?" He did come for that. But who are the elect? How does God find them? Who are they? Are they better than others? Are they different? No, they are not. They are all the same, they are all sinners. The Holy Spirit begins to work in them and convicts them that they are sinners; lost. He shows them that they are all under the wrath of God, as we read in Ephesians 2:3, "*and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*" We do not preach the gospel to the elect. We preach the gospel to sinners. I know that many of those dear children of God they cannot see themselves, or they do not know themselves as one of those most precious ones of the elect. When they hear their name, they hear the name sinner. When they hear that Jesus Christ came for sinners, it gives them joy. Is it joy for you that Jesus Christ came for sinners? Or not?

Now we will take a closer look at six of these words. What are those six words? Look in your bible with me for a moment. What are the six words in the statement of our text? Christ. Jesus. Came. Into the world. To Save. Sinners. Those are the six words in our text. Paul begins with saying Who came; Christ Jesus came into the world. The first word is "Christ". Who is Christ? The Heidelberg Catechism explains it very beautifully. Christ means Anointed. It is the Greek word for Messiah. Christ is the Anointed One. Jesus Christ, in His coming was anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfil the saving mission for which He came into the world. Christ was and is endued with power from above. He was baptized with the Holy Spirit in the river Jordan. We read in Luke 3:22, "*and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove, upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased.*" Later, after the temptation in the wilderness the Lord Jesus entered into a synagogue in Nazareth, He was given the scrolls of Isaiah, He opened them and He read Isaiah 61:1, "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty unto the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*" This is what it means that Jesus is the Christ; the Anointed, the appointed Prophet, Priest and King. Jesus came as the promised Messiah. Paul begins this statement with the name Christ. Christ Jesus was empowered to carry out His mission of salvation by the omnipotence of the Spirit of God upon His humanity. My friend, do you need a mighty Savior? A

sinner, a lost sinner, a chief of sinners needs a mighty Savior, and Christ Jesus is that mighty Savior. Often, we speak to the young people, but what about the older ones here? Maybe there is some older ones who have come to church for so many years and you feel it's so hopeless. Maybe you are 60, maybe you are 70, maybe you are 80 and you say it is so hopeless and so powerless. My heart is so hard. Is there hope for me? Yes. Because there is a mighty Savior. He is mighty. You know how mighty He is? Remember that miracle that He did when He raised Lazarus from the dead? It was an absolute impossible case. Lazarus was already dead for four days. He was starting to decay, and stink. But the Lord Jesus only had to say one word; "Lazarus" and he rose from the dead. Can the Lord say your name? He may say "live" to you, old sinner, and you will come to life. The Lord Jesus Christ is a mighty, powerful Savior.

The second word that Paul uses is "Jesus". Do you remember what this name means? Jehovah saves. It means that Jesus was God in the human flesh, and He came to save those who are in great danger of destruction. The very moment that you are born you are on that broad way, by nature, and you are going to that never-ending eternity, that place of destruction. That is you by nature, unless you have been translated from the power of destruction into the kingdom of His dear son Jesus. It is a precious name; a precious name. Matthew 1:21 *"And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."* The very reason Jesus came is in His name. Jehovah saves. He came to save and rescue those that are in great danger. In danger of eternal destruction. Do you see? Have you seen? Do you see that you are in absolute great danger? That is the problem. Many of us don't see it. We are blind. We hear about it, but we don't believe it. And that is why we can just keep on living, because when you see it, then there is a need, you need a Savior. I hope you see it. I hope your eyes are open and you see the great danger that you are living in. Christ Jesus came to save from eternal wrath; wrath. Because of our sins, there is wrath upon us. Without Jesus, without faith in Jesus Christ we are under His wrath. Without that great miracle, without faith in Jesus Christ we will forever remain under the wrath.

Now we come to our third word. The word "came". *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"*. That means that He ascended from heaven and He came to this sinful earth. How did Jesus come? He was born of the virgin Mary and He came upon

this earth. That Jesus Christ came, also means that He also already existed. He came in the flesh, but Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He was forever with His Father. He was forever His delight before him, as we read in Proverbs 8:23, *"I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."* And in Proverbs 8:30, *"and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."* The word 'came' also implies that He was sent. When you receive something it comes to you, and it means that it comes from someone else. Someone sent it to you. You received it. It came to you. Jesus Christ came. He was sent by His Father. He didn't come of His own will. No, He came because He was sent by His Father. Christmas speaks of the love of God the Father. He came, as that gift. John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."* Paul said that Jesus Christ is the unspeakable gift. Have you received the gift lately? Have you? Is it unspeakable to you, or not? Have you seen Jesus Christ by the eyes of faith? Can you confess with Paul, and say, "That unspeakable gift - it is unspeakable!"? Sometimes we may spend a lot of money on a gift. Imagine if you got a gift worth a thousand dollars? Wow! But Jesus Christ, that cost God the Father everything. He was His Own dear Son. He didn't have two, three, or four sons. He only had one dear Son and He sent Him. And Jesus came. This speaks of Christ's willingness. He came. He came willingly. He came with delight. He came with joy. It was His pleasure to do the will of His Father.

Why did Jesus Christ need to come? Why? Why did He need to live on this earth? Why? Because no sinner can save himself. No sinner can bring himself back to God. None. We left God. We rebelled against God, never to return. No one will return of their own. We have only turned our backs to God, but Jesus Christ came to seek and to save. He is doing that now also, from heaven by the work of His Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ didn't just finish all His work on earth. He said *"it is finished"* on the cross, but He still continues with His work. If His work was completed and now, He is only waiting for man to respond, waiting for sinners to be born again, waiting for them to come to Him and have faith in Him then it would be hopeless. But He is in heaven. He came, and then He went to heaven and there He still works with His word and with His Spirit. By nature, we are enemies of God and enemies of Christ. That is you and me by nature. Or has it changed? Have you become willing in the day of His power? Have you become a lost sinner and know that you need that Savior? Is it true in your life? Is there reason to give thanks, to give praise to God? Think about it, you were on the broad way, going to destruction and the Lord delivered you. He took you and He placed you on that narrow way. He gave you life. He came to do that, and He

came to give it more abundantly, that you may have joy and faith in Him. Christ had to come. He had to come to man, to seek man, to give him life, to save man. We cannot by our own works save ourselves. We cannot with our own works bring ourselves back to God. We cannot so to speak 'climb to heaven'. We cannot. We are unwilling and unable. That is you and me by nature. We cannot of our own self be reconciled unto God. It is impossible. Have you found that out? Have you found out that it is impossible to be reconciled unto God with anything that you have of yourself? I think we all know who George Whitefield is. George Whitefield was a famous evangelist in America in the 1800s. He posed a question. Listen. "Can a sinner save himself by his good works? No! It would be easier for a sinner to pull himself to heaven with a sand rope." A sand rope? You can't even make a sand rope. Impossible. Can you? Try to make a sand rope. It is impossible. Children, what can you do with a sand rope? You can't do anything. You can't even make it. Exactly. It is hopeless; it is useless. Trying to save yourself with your good works, or by the law is also useless. You can't. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. No sinner can save himself. We need a mighty Savior to save us. And Jesus Christ came from heaven, He came all the way to the earth. He did not only come halfway, so that the sinner must come the other half to meet Him in the middle. He did His part and sinners must do their part. No! Then you and I would still be lost. There would be no hope. That is not the precious Gospel. No, Jesus Christ came all the way to this world. He came to save sinners. This is the precious Gospel, that Jesus Christ CAME into the world. Yes, into the world to save sinners.

Let us sing now from Psalter 123 v 2-3

What were the six words? Christ. Jesus. Came. And now the word "world". Jesus came from heaven to the world. He didn't go to another planet. No, He came specifically to the world; to a place of sin, sorrow, and misery. He came to this place, which was not a pleasant place at all. Think of all the sin that was before His eyes. Think of what He saw and what He experienced. But He came. He came to the world. He came to mankind which were lost and condemned to eternal wrath. He came to enemies. He came to those who would reject Him and would crucify Him. Think for a moment. Would you go to a place where you will be surrounded with evil every moment? Would you go to a place where you would suffer continually? Would you go to a place where at any moment you could be killed? But He came. He knew all that before He came and yet He came

to the world. Think for a moment. Or maybe I should say, let us *try* to think for a moment of what this was like for Jesus Christ. Think of what He was with His Father in heaven; holiness, glory, and purity. He left the glory of His Father and the presence of the angels and He came to this earth which was filled with sin and iniquity. What an incomparable comparison from being with His Father and the angels, to dwell among enemies, sinners and evil spirits; Satan. Satan was on this earth at this time working mightily against the gospel. From a place filled with awe and glory to a place of sin. What love! What a wonder! What a wonder that He came willingly to this earth. Why? Why did Jesus do this?

Why did God the Father send Him to the earth? The answer is in the next words of this statement of our text. Jesus Christ came into the world to ‘*save*’ sinners. He came to save. The word ‘*save*’ means ‘to deliver, to rescue from danger, from a perilous situation’. I think of a fireman entering a burning house. He knows that there is a little child in the house. He enters with the oxygen. It is dangerous as the roof may cave in, and he may be engulfed in the flames, but he enters as he needs to take that child out. But what an incomparable comparison that Jesus Christ came to this earth to save sinners, who are under the wrath of God, who at any moment could die and be eternally lost. To be able to save means that you need to be mightier than what the situation is. They don’t send children as fire fighters into a house. No! Because they don’t have the strength. They send strong men into that fire, because that strong man has the power to rescue. Jesus Christ, He has all power. He came to this world to save sinners. He has unspeakable power. He came to save. But what did He come to save from? Did He come to save from money problems? Did He come to save from physical problems? Did Jesus Christ come to save from loneliness? Did He come to save from family problems? Did He come to save people from all their difficulties? Did He come to give people prosperity? Did He come, so that by faith, you can be rich and have a wonderful life? Did He come for that? Did He come to give a better life on this earth? NO! Those are not the primary reasons why Jesus Christ came into this world. He came to save. He came to save sinners from the wrath of God.

Romans 1:18 tells us “*for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*” Many do not believe in the wrath of God. They say God is love. They are correct, God is love! But I have a question. Why does God have wrath? Why? Perhaps you have had people challenge you in

this way: "God is love, God is mercy, there is no wrath, there is no hell, that is not a God of love." But then ask them, why is there wrath? Why? Do you know why there is wrath? Do you know why God has wrath? That is because God infinitely loves Himself. God infinitely loves Himself and those sinners that sin against Him stir up His wrath because it is against His Majesty, and therefore there is wrath. They deserve eternal punishment. It is because of God's love that there is wrath. God loves Himself so infinitely that He cannot just pass over sin. He cannot just simply forgive sins. He cannot. He is God. But God sent His own dear Son into the world to save from this wrath, from the eternal wrath. Dear congregation, my dear friends, you need to be saved from wrath. You need to be saved by the One who can save you from this wrath. And Who is that?

Who is that? Children, do you know? Young people? There is only One. That is God Himself. That is Jesus Christ Who is one hundred percent God and Who is one hundred percent man. God and man. That perfect, precious, mighty, and glorious Savior. He came into the world to save sinners from the wrath. God sending His Son is the proof of His mercy, of His long suffering and of His mercy. That is God. God has wrath, but God is love and God is mercy. God is all His attributes. We read in Micah 7:18, *"Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy."* He sent His Son, which is a proof of His mercy.

The sixth word in our text is *"sinners"*. For who did Jesus Christ come into this world? We read, *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* Now think for a moment. What if we were to change that word? What if I were to change that word to "good people"? What if I changed that word and said: "those that can keep the law"? Many would go home SO discouraged. It would be so hopeless. But what a precious word "He came to save sinners." Are you a sinner? You say, "yes." I ask you again, are you a sinner before God? He did not come for good people. He did not come for good little children. He did not come for well-behaved teenagers. He did not come for good adults. He did not come for good old people. He came for sinners. He came for those that have broken the law. He came for those that broke all the commandments, for those who have kept none of them. He came for sinners. He came to save bad people; bad Canadians, bad Americans, bad Bolivians. He came to save sinners.

A few weeks ago, we had a gathering at the church in Tereiaha, and this one young lady, Heslla, who works in an orphanage, asked if she could bring three

children with her. I said, "Please do come." They wanted to see the church, so I showed the. There was one little girl, I believe she was about eight years old, and we were in the place where we have church worship services, and I explained to her simply what we do in that place. I told her that there are two words. Two important things. That we are sinners and that there is a Savior for sinners. And I asked her, "are you a sinner?" You know what she said? She said, "Mesalmenos". This means, "So, so." I smiled and I said, "No Jasmine, you *are* a sinner, but I can tell you about a Savior who came for sinners." Are you a sinner? Are you just 'so, so'? Are you not 'so bad'? Not so bad as others? Or are you a sinner? That is key. You know when the gospel of Jesus becomes precious? When you become a sinner; when you have nothing, when you are lost. Then it becomes such good news; then it becomes music to your ears. My friends, the gospel is not for good people. The gospel is for lost; the gospel is for the corrupt; the gospel is for unworthy, polluted sinners.

How? How can Jesus Christ save sinners? Or we could say, what did He need to do to save sinners? There are two things: He needed to keep the law perfectly and He needed to pay. Did He keep the law perfectly? He lived thirty-three years on this earth and He never had one single sin. Can you live even thirty-three seconds without sin? If we really know what sin is, then no, we cannot. We sin in so many ways. Jesus Christ came under the law to save those who have broken the law. Are there law breakers here tonight? Jesus Christ came to save those who have broken the law, but He also came to make payment. Can you make payment? Are you still trying to make payment? I hope you become broke. I hope you become absolutely broke, because then I know that when you hear that Jesus Christ came to save ungodly ones, lost ones, you will begin to listen. Then that becomes precious. Jesus came, voluntarily and He made that payment. Where? He made that payment on the cross; on the cross. He gave His blood. He gave everything. Therefore, this is the gospel today, the gospel for sinners.

Paul ends this verse with saying, "*of whom I am chief.*" Paul was not comparing himself with other sinners. Often, we do that, right? We look on our pew and around us at church, or we know someone else in our town, or someone from where we work and we say, "You know, I am a little bit better." We don't say this out loud because we know that is wrong, but we think it. Paul wasn't looking at anyone else. You know what he was looking at? He was looking at the holiness of God. He saw himself in the mirror of the law, and there he saw himself as the chief of sinners. Do you want to learn that you also are the chief of sinners?

Think of who you are and think of the holiness of God. Look into the mirror of the law.

It is interesting, in 1 Corinthians 15:9 Paul wrote, *"I am the least of the apostles."*, and then about six years later he wrote Ephesians 3:8, and he said, *"I am the least of the saints."*, then later, exactly when I do not know, he wrote 1 Timothy 1:15, *"I am the chief of sinners."* Paul did not become a little better, a little better, and a little better. No, he became worse and worse and worse. And how is it with you? Are you becoming a little better, or are you becoming worse and worse? There are sins everywhere, that you can't do anything good. Paul said, *"I am the chief of sinners."* Chief. Is this your confession also? Is that you? Yes, you? Are you the chief of sinners? Do you recognize that you don't just do a few things wrong, but that you sin against God? When the Holy Spirit teaches, and our sin increases, and we become a greater sinner; a greater sinner! Paul knew that, but this also went together with the other part. Paul also had that joy in his heart that he believed that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He went down and Christ became more and more precious.

Do you have hope in your soul for yourself? Or not? Do you struggle with the fact that you are such a sinner! How? How could it ever be for me? For me? How? Listen again what Paul says. *"That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."* What Paul is saying is: if it is possible for me, it is possible for all of you. And that is what I say now to you too congregation, if it is possible for me, it is possible for all of you, because of God's grace. Listen carefully to what Spurgeon said; God brought the elephant into the ark. You see that door? You see that big animal? He brought the elephant into the ark, and He also brought the tiny little ant. He brought them both in. The door is big and wide. The little ones, but also the chiefest of sinners are saved by God's grace. If God can save the chief of sinners, He can save all sinners; all sinners. The new life of grace begins with learning that I am a sinner and that Jesus Christ is a Savior for sinners. Those are two words, and I hope that you have learned them. I also hope that you learn it again, and again, and again. I am a sinner, I am the chief of sinners, but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

That is my prayer for each one of you, that you learn, by God's grace, through the Holy Spirit, that your name is "Sinner". But I also pray that you will learn that other name; the name of Jesus Christ, Who came for sinners.

Amen.