

Why He Came

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Date: 21 December 2025

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[0:00] 1 Timothy chapter 1 at verse 15. This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners sinners of whom I am foremost.

! Those who are at either the holiday club or the family service, it's nice to see some of the young ones who were there last week out here tonight as well. You may remember that this was one of the verses that we were looking at, one of the passages that we looked at during that service last week.

And it reminds us in a week when we are remembering, it's Christmas time, is remember the birth of Jesus, that our focus is to be on that, that Jesus came into the world.

That amazing wonder of Jesus coming into the world, of God sending his son. Because we are a forgetful people, one of the things that we thought about looking at this verse was how easy it is to forget.

And we're asking the young ones a question, what did you get for Christmas last year? Some could remember, some forgot. But then when you start going back further and further in the years, it's often we've forgotten what we got in these previous years because we are very forgetful people.

[1:27] And in this week we can become so distracted by these things that we forget the main purpose of what it is we are to remember. There's a well-known, very famous Christian book.

It's called The Pilgrim's Progress. Many will have heard about it. Many of you, I'm sure, have read that book. It's a book about a man called Christian.

And it's a journey he's going on. And it's full of different characters, people who have given names, and each name has meaning, and different places that the journey takes him from and leads him to along the way.

He begins his journey in a place called the City of Destruction. That's a place where he is just lost. And his journey ultimately takes him to another city, to the celestial city, which is really what we would call heaven.

And the Christian is taken there. But on the journey, he passes through many different places and meets many different people. And at one point in his journey, he comes to Forgetful Green, a place called Forgetful Green.

[2:42] But in this place, there is someone who is able to remind all who are on this journey of what is important. And the man is called Great Heart.

That's the man's name, Great Heart. And it really means this man called Great Heart. He's almost like a preacher who is there to guide people along the way.

He's got a heart for the people to guide them along the way. And when they come to Forgetful Green, Great Heart says to those on the journey that Forgetful Green is the most dangerous place in all of these parts, he says.

For if at any time the pilgrims meet with any pressure, it is when they forget what favors they have received and how unworthy they are of them.

We forget the favors that we have received, all that God has done for us. It's a dangerous thing. And how unworthy we are of them.

[3 : 41] And so it's important for us to remember what is right, what is important at this time of year. And indeed all throughout the year. Because as we approach Christmas time, we can be forgetful.

And at other times in the year, we can be so forgetful. When you think of the two really most significant dates in the Christian calendar, when the birth of Jesus Christ is remembered at Christmas, and when his death is remembered at Easter time, where our focus should be clearly on the wonder of these things, it is the two times in the year that have almost become the most materialistic.

Where it becomes all about gifts and giving, and we so easily forget about the Lord Jesus. And it's something we can all be guilty of. It's something we've maybe been guilty of in this past week, and maybe guilty of in this coming week.

We're caught up in the busyness of everything that's going on, and we forget what we should be really remembering. How significant it is that Jesus came into the world, that he was born into this world.

And how significant it is that he had a purpose in coming into this world, that he would ultimately give his life for his people. So we are a forgetful people.

[5 : 02] But when we turn to the Word of God, to the Bible, it reminds us of the real significance of all of these things. So that when we have the likes of the first chapter of John, and you start to read there, it says, The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

That Jesus came into this world, that God sent his Son into this world. Isn't it amazing to think of that? How we've forgotten the wonder of it, that Jesus came into the world.

It's not just a story for Christmas. It's not just a story for Easter time. It's not a story confined to the history books. It is the most important thing we can hear today and every day of the year.

The love of God towards us. The grace that he has shown to us in providing a Savior. Giving a Savior for all who will put their trust in him.

And here in 1 Timothy 1, verse 15, Paul is showing just how important, just how significant this was for himself.

[6 : 16] And how it is to be important for us too. Why did Jesus come into the world? Why do we remember his birth and his death, his resurrection and his ascension?

Well, Paul reminds us here in this verse, the saying is trustworthy, deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Why did he come to save sinners? To offer every one of us that hope of salvation through faith in him.

We looked at it last week, but I want to just look at it in a little bit more detail this evening, this verse. And really we're going to break it down into three bits, using the words that we find in this verse.

The first thing is that it is a trustworthy saying. And then it says it's deserving of full acceptance. So these are our first two points.

[7 : 17] A trustworthy saying. Let's think a little bit about what this means. As Paul writes here, he's writing to Timothy. And Timothy is much younger than Paul.

Paul is an older man now. He's experienced much in life. And now he's passing the gospel on to Timothy. And as he's doing so, he's not just someone who has been at a distance from life and all that it means.

All the challenges and now having faith in the Lord Jesus. It's not just something that he's heard about or just learned in a classroom or anything like that.

It's through very practical experience. His life has been full of thinking he was doing right with God only to realize he was miles away from God.

But he says to us here that something changed his life. Verse 12 to verse 17. It's almost like a small digression.

[8 : 17] A little diversion that Paul takes. And it's really reminding us and speaking about his own experience of the wonder of the grace of God. In verse 14 it says, The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

He's got this amazing testimony to give. The grace of God has overflowed to him. This grace that is in Christ Jesus.

It is what has completely transformed his life. So here is someone who knows what he's talking about. He's experienced it in such a wonderful way.

His life has been totally changed and transformed by this grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he's saying here in verse 15, This saying is trustworthy and true.

I'm sure Paul maybe at times came along to this forgetful green himself. Times when he was maybe distracted and was starting to forget things.

[9 : 29] But what you often find with Paul as he's writing is he takes frequent trips down memory lane. He always comes back to reflect on his life in a way where he doesn't forget what he was.

He realizes how far away from God he was. How bad a person he was. But then he comes to marvel at the grace of God. He's reminding us of his past, of his sins.

It says that in verse 13, He was formerly a blasphemer, persecutor, insolent opponent, but I received mercy. So he's talking about his past, but he's seeing the wonderful mercy of God.

And as he goes on speaking in this way, he's speaking about it in this grace. It is something that is trustworthy. Something that you can rely on.

Because it comes from God. Paul uses this phrase, this is a trustworthy saying, five times. As he writes to Timothy and also to Titus.

[10 : 33] And as he's writing to them, he's trying to put across a particular point saying, This is so important for you to remember. This is a trustworthy saying.

It's important for you. And he's saying this in light of others who are coming and telling lies and seeking to lead them astray. You see that in verse 3 and 4 of this chapter.

Where he's saying to Timothy, I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, Remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.

So there's all of these other things that people are teaching. And they're not trustworthy. They are lies. They are taking them away from God. But here is Paul saying, But this, this is trustworthy.

This is the very word of God. This is God speaking to us. And so it's important for us to listen. Do you believe the Bible?

[11 : 44] Do you believe everything that the Bible says? Do you see it as trustworthy? When you think of the wonder of Jesus coming into this world, when you think of the suffering of Jesus, when you think of all of the people that are mentioned throughout the Bible in the Old and the New Testament, do you believe what it says?

Do you believe that God is speaking to us? Well, it is all trustworthy. Every word that God has given is trustworthy for us.

To give you an example, there was a man called Matthew Morrie. And he was a naval officer in the 1800s.

He had been at sea for many years. But as he was getting older, he became unwell. And during his time of being unwell, he was reading the Bible.

He was a Christian man. And as he was reading the Bible, two things stood out to him. One was Psalm 8 and verse 8.

[12:50] And there it speaks about, whatsoever walketh through the paths of the sea. And this resonated with him, having been at sea, whatever walketh through the paths of the sea.

And he started repeating this phrase, the paths of the sea, the paths of the sea. And what he began to realize was that there were paths in the sea.

There were currents in the sea. And he realized this over his years at sea, that there were places where there were times when you were going against the current and it was slowing you down.

And other times you were going with the current and it was helping you go faster. So this verse began to speak to him. And another verse spoke to him as well. Ecclesiastes 1 verse 6.

The wind blows to the south and goes round to the north. Around and around goes the wind. And on its circuit, the wind returns. And again, he began to realize this.

[13:52] This is trustworthy saying. This is the truth of God. He's speaking about the paths of the sea being these currents that are in the oceans. And the wind, how the wind has a prevailing direction it comes in.

And all of these things helped him to draw charts for seafarers. And if you look at the currents, there are general currents in all the oceans of the sea that have a general direction that they go in.

You think of the North Atlantic drift, that current that comes across from America and Canada, across to our own nation. When you're in that drift, it's pulling you along. It's helping you to go fast.

If you're going against it, it's slowing you down. And there is God speaking of these things in his word. And this man realized it and made up charts that showed it to seafarers.

God's word is trustworthy. That's just something that seems a little maybe simple to us. But every word that God speaks is trustworthy. So when you think of words like in John, the word became flesh and dwelt among us, it is trustworthy.

[15:04] Christ Jesus came into this world. When you think of reading of Jesus dying on the cross, it is trustworthy. Because he died on the cross for sinners such as we are.

And so Paul is speaking from his own experience here that the gospel, the word of God, is all trustworthy. Through experience, he has realized it for himself.

Is that what you can say today? Is this word of God trustworthy to you? Because it is what speaks about our greatest need in this world, which is a savior who is Christ the Lord.

So the word of God is trustworthy. The second thing we see here is Paul says it's deserving of full acceptance. Deserving of full acceptance.

So before he actually comes to what the trustworthy saying is, he says it is worthy of full acceptance. It needs to be accepted. It needs to be believed.

[16:10] What does Paul mean here? What he's about to say? What this message is going to be? This trustworthy saying?

He's saying the hearer, the one who hears it, needs to listen and needs to respond. Needs to accept this word.

It is deserving of full acceptance. He is speaking about as one who heard the word of God. But not just heard it in the sense of he listened and did nothing to him.

But he heard it in light of what it was really saying. The warnings it was giving. We all get warnings in our lives. We see it often at this time of year.

Heavy rain warnings. Gale warnings. We hear of them and sometimes we pay attention. But other times we choose to ignore them. There are many warning signs, excuse me, that you see around us.

[17:15] One of the ones I often see and think, well, how can people not listen? It's the warning on cigarette packs. It used to be that cigarette packs didn't have any warnings.

And then it went to, it can cause you harm. But then it went to something else. It went to cigarette packs.

It now say smoking kills in big, bold writing. And yet people still choose to smoke. And you think to yourself, but why?

The warning is clear. In front of you, there's smoking kills. But so many will have that attitude, but not me. And that's the way we are with the warnings that the Word of God gives to us.

Warnings that we are sinners, that we need a Savior, that without Him we will perish. And yet so many will say, no, not me. Sin won't touch me.

[18:16] Sin won't kill me. But the reality is it doesn't matter who you are. We are all sinners. But the reality of that too is that it doesn't matter who we are, that there is a Savior on offer.

That this trustworthy saying is deserving of full acceptance. So it doesn't matter your background, it doesn't matter your nationality, your age, your education, whatever it is in life.

This is for all. This is to be accepted by all. There's no reason, no valid reason by anybody who could turn around and say, but it's not for me.

This is not speaking to me. It is speaking to every one of you, to myself as well. God is speaking, a trustworthy saying that's worthy of full acceptance.

Can you imagine a world in which these words were not given? Can you imagine a world without the Bible, the Word of God?

[19:26] Imagine you wake up one morning and there's no Bible to read. Not just that you've lost your own copy, but there's no Bible anywhere.

God has stopped speaking. What kind of world would it be? What kind of life would we live if we didn't have God speaking to us, a trustworthy saying, worthy of full acceptance, all of these warnings?

Our world would soon tumble into chaos. We don't have to think about it as what if because we see it with so many people. They want nothing to do with the Bible.

Let's get rid of it. and our world just descends into chaos. Values become meaningless. Life becomes of little importance, of little value.

So many things are meaningless, tragic, tedious. Nothing would make sense without the Word of God. We'd have no direction.

[20:35] Some would be happy enough to say that's the world we should have, but it wouldn't benefit us. And that's why this week is so important to us.

The Word of God, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. It says in other parts of Scripture that in the past God spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament, but now He has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

God is speaking and thankful He is that He has not turned His back on us, but that we have God's Word, that it is trustworthy and that it needs to be accepted.

Here, Paul is saying this is what gives life purpose. This is what gives meaning. This is what should be the foundation of everything that we look at in this world.

The Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. It's the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God.

[21 : 45] So we need this Word. I've mentioned recently the woman at the well in Samaria. There's another point in that account where Jesus meets with her and He says this to her.

Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

There is this offer of the water that springs up to eternal life. What is the response of the woman? The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.

Give me this water. And here is Paul saying, this is the water of life. This is the Word of God. This is a trustworthy saying.

It is deserving of full acceptance. Let us not ignore this Word. Let us not ignore the importance of Jesus coming into this world when all around us is the temptation to get distracted away from the real meaning of Christ coming into this world.

[22 : 58] Let us remember that Christ came into this world with a purpose. And that's the third thing that Paul tells us here.

He tells us the reason why Jesus came. It is a trustworthy saying. It is deserving of full acceptance. Now what is it?

That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am foremost. So here is the trustworthy saying.

Here is what needs to be accepted. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners for our salvation. You see the birth of Jesus it's not an excuse for a party.

His death and his resurrection is not important because it gives us an Easter holiday. it is not meant that we should give and receive presents at Christmas time.

[24 : 01] Easter time is not just about Easter eggs. Now you would say here comes the Christmas Scrooge. He's going to tell us why we should not enjoy any of these things.

But when you look back to Pilgrim's progress and think of that man Great Heart as he was warning the people on forgetful green what was his purpose. Not that their fun would be spoiled but that their joy would be complete.

And saying these things that Christmas is not just about parties or families being together that is not the reason for saying these things.

But it's to get things right. To get things in order. because you see to enjoy these things to the full what you need to see is the importance of why Jesus came.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If we acknowledge that, if we receive that, if we trust that, if we accept that, then we can enjoy all of these things in a much fuller sense.

[25 : 23] That our life may be full, that our life may be complete with Christ at the very heart. Putting him first in all of these things.

Paul's trustworthy saying is not something he made up himself. He is reiterating what Jesus taught in the Gospels in Mark chapter 2 verse 17.

Jesus told them it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have come not to call the righteous but sinners. In Luke 19 verse 10 Jesus says for the Son of Man came to seek and to save that what was lost.

So there is the purpose of Jesus coming. And so to enjoy all of these things, to enjoy the birth of Jesus, the word becoming flesh, to enjoy the fact that Christ died for our sins, to get the real blessing out of us, to have our focus right, not to forget him but to remember him in the midst of it all, to give thanks to him, to praise him who has come to save us from our sins.

And Paul here says in verse 15, that he has come to save sinners. And look at the way Paul describes himself, of whom I am the foremost, of whom I am the chief.

[26 : 54] He sees himself as the worst of sinners. We can see ourselves as the worst of sinners. You might feel like the worst of sinners here tonight. But as he's saying these things, he's reminding us this trustworthy saying, this saying that is worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners.

It rules nobody out because it's given for all. And so what is important for us to remember in this coming week and in all our days is this trustworthy saying and to accept this word of God, that he came, the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners.

That is what we need. A minister reflecting on this time of year said this, none of us want to appear ungrateful when someone has taken the trouble to buy, wrap, and deliver to us a present.

But my suspicion is that most of us have experienced that sense of disappointment or even bewilderment when opening a parcel to find that either we already have the item in question or we simply have no need for such a thing in the first place.

Isn't that true? Bewilderment on opening parcels when we either have the item or we have no need for it. How many of us just put things to one side and say, oh, that's lovely, forget all about it.

[28 : 34] But he went on to say this, yet the great leveler of the Christian gospel is that there is not one person in the history of civilization who does not need the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

The greatest gift of all is often the most neglected, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

the light has come into the world. The darkness cannot overcome it. But you decide.

Do you accept or do you reject? Do you put it away for another time? Or do you see the importance of these words?

This saying is trustworthy. It can be believed. But it is also deserving of full acceptance.

[29 : 40] To receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith is to recognize that he came into the world to save sinners.

We are all sinners. We all fall short. but Jesus came to save us from our sins. Let us remember that in this coming week.

Not just remember it, but accept it. And as you accept it, may you realize then the greater meaning of Christmas, of Easter, of life.

That Jesus came that we might have life to the full. let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, we do thank you for every gift that we have in this life.

We thank you for all the good things that we enjoy from day to day and all the many blessings that we will have in these coming days ahead. But Lord, help us not to be forgetful.

[30 : 47] Help us to remember the real purpose for which your Son came into this world, that he came, that sinners might be saved. And so we pray to know that joy of salvation, to know that delight in the word that became flesh and dwelt among us, so we might receive him with all joy and gladness and be blessed through faith in him.

So hear our prayers and go before us as we ask all in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 111, Scottish Psalter version, page 391 of the psalm books.

We'll sing from verse 6 down to the end of the psalm. Psalm 111 at verse 6, We're going to sing from verse 6 down to the end of the psalm.

The tune is forest green. It's not a tune we sing very often, but you'll recognize it as we sing it. So we stand to sing these verses to God's praise. He did the power of his works and to his people's show.

When he like he and he and he and the and his up up He sent redemption to his soul, his son of a man for the day.

[33 : 20] He did come unto his spirit, and heaven and his soul be.

With what he did in his love to give, good understanding may.

And all that is called and fulfilled, his grace endured for thee.

We'll close in prayer. Lord, we do thank you for your goodness to us. We pray your safekeeping over us in these days. We ask your blessing to continue with us as we go from here this evening.

And as we go through to the hall, Lord, we ask for your grace and your blessing in all that we do there. We thank you for the food prepared for us. May you bless it to us and watch over us in all of these things.

[34 : 27] And now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.