

April 7

Scriptures: Read 1 Timothy 1

Key Verse: “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.” (1 Timothy 1:15)

Overview

Paul is quoting something he, and presumably Timothy, have both memorized — perhaps it’s part of an early Christian creed or hymn: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” This “saying”, Paul says, is “faithful and worthy of all acceptance.” You can trust it.

Let’s look at its component parts. The subject of the saying is Christ Jesus. The word “Christ” means “the anointed one”, or, in the Jewish context, “the Messiah”. To this day in Israel, Jewish believers refer to Jesus as “Yeshua ha Meshiach” — He is the One spoken of by Isaiah as “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is.9:6). The verb “came” speaks of movement, in this case “into the world”, from the eternal dimension into and onto our temporal earth (see Philippians 2:5-11). This movement is called “incarnation” — God becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14). The infinitive “to save” describes the purpose of the incarnation. Mankind was terminally diseased and unholy, without hope and eternally lost, apart from some redemptive act on God’s part. That’s why God sent His Son. The blood He shed on Calvary’s cross once and for all atoned for our sin. All we must do is confess our need and put our trust in Him.

The final words of the sentence, “of whom I am chief”, tell us that Paul is not speaking merely in theoretical terms. He recognizes his need of salvation, so much so that he sees himself as chief of sinners. There’s no rationalizing of behaviour here. Rather, there’s a strong acknowledgement that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

Prayer

Thank ‘You, Father, that we who were once afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. We come to you with grateful hearts for your mercy and great love, for even when we were dead in our transgressions, You made us alive together with Christ.