

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Identified by Grace

Speaker:

Steve Heitland

Date:

October 8, 2023

Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:1-7

Theme: Stand fast in your gracious identity in Christ.

Introduction: We become like what we worship (Ps 115:8). If we worship idols, we will become more and more like them. But when we worship the true God, we become more and more like him. Paul's final letter came from a man whose life has been shaped by a lifetime of faithful service to God. And in it, we learn how our lives should be shaped by Christ and what that will produce in us.

Here are 3 implications of Christian identity in Paul's opening charge:

1. Greeted with grace (1-2)

Paul shows how his life had been marked by God's grace. He had become an apostle by God's grace, turning his previous identity upside down. Timothy, too, had received God's grace. He was Paul's "beloved child," and Paul prayed that he would receive grace, mercy, and peace from God.

2. Grounded in grace (3-5)

After highlight God's grace in their lives, Paul responds with gratitude. He notes especially how he and Timothy both had benefitted from faithful ancestors who worshipped the true God.

We, too, need to recognize how God's grace has been at work in our lives so that we have an appropriate gratitude for his great kindness toward us.

3. Growing by grace (6-7)

Paul closes his letter opening by charging Timothy: "For this reason, fan into flame the gift of God . . ." He was reminding Timothy of the breadth of God's grace in his life, and charging him to stoke the coals of his love for and knowledge of God so that he can fulfill his responsibilities well and with faith. The gift Timothy received was not specified; but it does demonstrate the general truth that the Lord empowers us for every responsibility he gives us. As we look to him and rely on him, we will grow and those we lead and care for will benefit. Paul closes with a contrast: God has not given us a spirit of fear. Instead, he has given us a spirit of power and love and self-control. His power makes us alive and overcomes sin, his love transforms us and sanctifies our works, and his self-control safeguards our spirituality and makes it true and effective.

Questions:

1. How has the Lord been gracious to you?
2. How grateful are you? How would you like to grow in gratitude?
3. How do you need to fan into flame God's grace for your responsible roles?