

1 Timothy 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Analysis

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Paul explains why God showed mercy to such a wicked sinner: to demonstrate Christ's perfect patience (makrothymia, μακροθυμία)—literally "long-suffering" or slow anger. The word combines makros (long) and thymos (passion, anger)—Christ's patience endures provocation without retaliation, providing sinners time to repent.

The phrase "shew forth all longsuffering" uses *endeixētai* (ἐνδείξεται), meaning to display publicly or demonstrate fully. Paul's conversion served as a public exhibition of Christ's complete patience. The qualifier "all" (*pasan*, πᾶσαν) indicates the full extent—Christ showed maximum patience with maximum sin. If Christ patiently saved the church's chief persecutor, His patience is sufficient for any sinner.

Paul identifies himself as "a pattern" (*hypotyōsin*, ὑποτύπωσις)—an example, model, or sketch serving as template for future copies. His salvation wasn't unique but paradigmatic—"to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (*tois mellousinsisteuein ep' autō eis zōēn aiōnion*, τοῖς μέλλουσιν πιστεύειν ἐπ' αὐτῷ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον). Everyone who believes subsequently follows

the pattern established in Paul: undeserving sinners receiving mercy through faith in Christ, resulting in eternal life.

Historical Context

Paul frequently used his conversion as evangelistic illustration (Acts 22:1-21; 26:1-23; Galatians 1:11-24). His dramatic transformation from persecutor to proclaimer served as powerful evidence that the gospel truly transforms lives and that no sinner is beyond redemption. This testimony was particularly effective with those who knew his former reputation or who felt their own sins disqualified them from divine mercy.

The concept of "pattern" or "type" had deep roots in biblical interpretation. Old Testament persons, events, and institutions often foreshadowed greater New Testament realities (Adam as type of Christ, Romans 5:14; wilderness manna as type of Christ as true bread, John 6:31-35). Paul extends this typological thinking to his own experience—his salvation patterns all subsequent conversions in demonstrating grace's power.

"Life everlasting" (zōē aiōnios, ζωὴ αἰώνιος) represents not merely endless duration but a qualitatively different existence—the life of the age to come, participation in God's own eternal life. This life begins at conversion (John 5:24) but reaches consummation at Christ's return (1 John 3:2). Faith in Christ grants immediate, present possession of eternal life, not merely future hope.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How has your experience of God's patience in your own conversion become an encouragement to others?
2. In what ways do you demonstrate similar longsuffering toward those who seem resistant to the gospel?
3. How clearly do you understand and communicate that eternal life comes exclusively through faith in Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ	διὰ	τοῦτο	ἡλεήθην	ἵνα	ἐν	ἐμοὶ	πρώτῳ
Howbeit	cause	for this	I obtained mercy	that	in	me	first
G235	G1223	G5124	G1653	G2443	G1722	G1698	G4413
ἐνδείξεται	Ἰησοῦς	Χριστὸς	τὴν	πᾶσαν	μακροθυμίαν		
might shew forth	Jesus	Christ	G3588	all	longsuffering		
G1731	G2424	G5547		G3956	G3115		
πρὸς	ὑποτύπωσιν	τῶν	μελλόντων	πιστεύειν	ἐπ'		
for	a pattern	G3588	to them which should hereafter	believe	on		
G4314	G5296		G3195	G4100	G1909		
αὐτῷ	εἰς	ζωὴν	αἰώνιον				
him	to	life	everlasting				
G846	G1519	G2222	G166				

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 1:13 (Grace): Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Luke 7:47 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

2 Peter 3:15 (Parallel theme): And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

2 Peter 3:9 (Parallel theme): The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Ephesians 2:7 (Grace): That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 43:25 (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

John 20:31 (Faith): But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John 6:40 (Faith): And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Isaiah 1:18 (Parallel theme): Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Isaiah 55:7 (Grace): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.