

**Read: 1 Timothy 1:12-20**

## From This to That

### **1 Timothy 1:15,16**

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Have you ever seen an artist plop paint onto a canvas and after just a couple of brush strokes make the blobs of paint turn into a magnificent masterpiece? A famous artist named Bob Ross painted during breaks in his work schedule during the day. He didn't have enough time to paint slowly. He had to work fast before his break ended! In just a few minutes, he could take paint blobs and turn them into trees and mountains. Artists are professionals at turning "this" into "that" in seconds.

But God is the ultimate master of turning working blahs and blobs into something good. He turned the betrayal of Joseph by his brothers into an amazing example of deliverance and forgiveness. He used a reluctant prophet named Jonah and a big fish to convert an unbelieving city to repent and turn in faith to him. He changed the heart of a wee little man who made poor choices with the money of others into a man who gave back over and above what he owed.

In our reading today Paul says, "I am the worst of sinners." Then he thanks Christ Jesus for appointing him to be a follower and proclaimer. He says, "Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." Paul is a perfect example of how God's mercy and patience turned "this" into "that." By no way of his own could Paul, a Christian hater, turn into a Christian himself. The Holy Spirit worked in his heart and turned him into a beautiful example of faith.

He does the same thing with us. We were sinful from birth. Nothing about us was good, but by the water and Word at our baptism, he turned the bad into good and washed us clean. By his innocent suffering and death on the cross, we have something gorgeous on the canvas of our lives. We have him.

The Lord is the only one who can make beauty out of our mess. He is the perfect artist who looks at you, blemishes and all, and has turned you from blah into a masterpiece. Praise God!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Did you make a mistake today? Talk about it.
- Who always loves us and has paid the price for our mistakes?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Today's devotion told the story of someone that God changed for good. Think of one more story from the Bible where God did the same.
- If you were to paint a masterpiece, what would it look like? Describe how you are God's masterpiece.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Think of something you are currently struggling with that you want God's help to turn you away from. Time yourself for 30 seconds and list how many transformations from "this" to "that" you can think of from the Old Testament. Now time yourself for 30 seconds again and think of examples from the New Testament.
- Reread 1 Timothy 1:15,16. How do those words comfort you when you're struggling in life?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for thinking I am valuable enough to make beautiful. Thank you for erasing my sin and washing me clean of blemishes. Forgive me when I fall short and make me strong to live for you. Amen.