

JANUARY 7

## *An Enduring Mercy*

*1 Timothy 1:12-14*

**E**VEN TOWARD the end of his life, the apostle Paul had not gotten over the great mercy he had received from Christ:

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him, even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus.

I TIMOTHY 1:12-14

The longer Paul served Christ, the more generous and gracious he became. He never recovered from the mercy he had been shown by the Lord. In fact, it transformed him from a rigid, rule-demanding Pharisee into a humble and gracious servant of the Savior.

How often I hear from older believers something like this: "That's just who I am. It's how I was raised. I'm too old to change now."

How sad. That was not Paul's experience. The mercy and kindness shown to him by the Lord at his conversion made him a different person. And the older he got, the more tender mercies mellowed his life and generosity marked his ministry.

When he picked up his stylus to pen a note to young Timothy, his beloved disciple who would one day succeed him in ministry, his message in his sixties remained just as compelling as it was decades earlier: *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work.*

I love that. No mention of retirement or the prospect of spending his remaining years chilling at a Sinai desert resort. Not Paul. He never recovered from the mercy he received from Christ.

The question is, "Have *you*?"