

I'm the Foremost Sinner

READING 1 Timothy 1

Yeshua came into the world to save sinners, of whom I'm the foremost.

In 1 Timothy 1, Paulus said that this is a good saying, “Yeshua came into the world to save sinners, of whom I'm the foremost.”

I'm sure I've said this before. Paulus is **not** saying that he is the worst sinner ever. He's saying that you are.

Well he's not really saying that either, but he is saying that we should all think this way. It's a “saying” and we should all accept it. We should have the attitude that “I am the foremost of sinners.”

For the Western mind we always want to be “in” the cool crowd. We usually prove our claim to be “in” by showing that we're not “out”. We do it by comparing ourselves to others.

To show that we're a good person we could make the claim, “I'm not as bad as Hitler”. But that doesn't prove anything.

It does seem likely that there is a line somewhere between Yeshua and Hitler. Those on the right side of the line are “in” and those on the wrong side are “out”. But even though you might not be as bad as Hitler, you still might be on the wrong side of the line.

The question we should be asking ourselves is not, “Am I as bad as Hitler?”, it's, “Am I as good as Yeshua?”

Clearly the answer is “no”. I'm out.

One of my early Bible teachers, John Woodward, taught me this. Imagine you're in a totally pitch black room, when suddenly, across the room, someone lights a small candle. Even in the light of that one candle you suddenly realise that the clothes you are wearing are filthy! So you clean them up as best you can, and feel a bit better about yourself. After some time you move a bit closer to the candle. It's light hasn't changed, but you're closer, so it's brighter for you. You realise you missed a few spots. You clean up some more. Each time you move closer you realise your clothes are **STILL** dirty. But each time you also think you got it all this time.

This is how the spirit of God reveals sin in your life. Little by little, bit by bit. Enough for you to deal with at a time. As we move closer to God we realise we still have a lot of sin issues to clean up.

When you move closer and see some previously undetected stain on your clothes - it's very easy for you to look back at the people far away and judge the filthiness of theirs. It's easy to say, “At least I'm not as bad as them”, as you point your finger back.

What you don't realise, is that it is not a candle. It is the bright shining light of Yeshua in his totally spotless, shining white garments. It looks like a candle to you because you are still so, very, very far away.

Accept the saying.

Accept that **YOU** are the foremost of sinners.

You need to look at the mess on your own shirt, and keep your eyes focused forwards in repentance, not backwards in judgment.