**HOPE has a SEASON**

Message #3: “GHOSTS”

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Pastor Phil Whetstone

**Paul Had to Confront Some Very REAL GHOSTS**

#1. GHOSTS OF A CHRISTLESS PAST. (vs. 13-14)

*“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man…”*

A. Haunting FAILURES-

*Acts 7:59-8:1 “While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep. 8:1 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.”*

B. Haunting REGRETS-

*Phil. 3:4-7 “If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ…”*

C. Haunting HURTS-

*2 Tim. 4:9-11, 14 “Do your best to come to me quickly, 10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry… Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 15 You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.”*

#2. GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. (vs. 15)

*“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom* ***I am*** *the worst.”*

*Matt. 12:35-37 “A good person produces good deeds and words season after season. An evil person is a blight on the orchard. 36 Let me tell you something: Every one of these careless words is going to come back to haunt you. There will be a time of reckoning. Words are powerful; take them seriously. “JESUS - Message*

#3. GHOSTS OF AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

*Acts 20:22-24 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.”*

*Phil. 1:21-23 “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!”*

*2 Tim. 4:18 “The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

***PAULS GHOSTBUSTERS***

***#1. GLANCE BACK* BUT *FOCUS FORWARD.*** (vs. 13, 15)

*“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy…Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy…”*

*“PAUL NEVER DENIED HIS PAST OR JUSTIFIED HIS PAST, HE JUST REFUSED TO LIVE IN THE PAST!” Pastor Phil*

*“In order to properly deal with my past; I must come to grips with my past, I must acknowledge my past, I must take responsibility for my past, I must ask forgiveness for my past, I must give forgiveness from my past, and I must surrender my past. BUT the one thing* ***I dare not do*** *with my past is deny it.” Pastor Phil Whetstone*

***#2.* CELEBRATE GOD’S *GRACE IN YOUR LIFE.*** (vs. 12-16)

*“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that He considered me faithful, appointing me to His service… I was shown mercy… 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus… I was shown mercy…”*

***#3.* LIVE FOR A *PURPOSE BIGGER* THAN YOURSELF*.*** (vs. 16-17)

*“But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

“Answer me this…are the things you have shown me a shadow of the things that will

be or are they a shadow of the things that may be only?”

“Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends…I accept that, but if those courses be departed from, the ends must change…tell me that is so by what you show me.”

“‘Spirit’ he cried, tight clutching at it’s robe, ‘hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?’”

 Scrooge to the Spirit of Christmas’ Yet to Come

**CHRISTMAS Came So That It Wouldn’t Be Too Late…**

#1. To restore your walk with Him.

*Romans 5:6-8 “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

#2. To renew your commitment to others.

*Romans 14:9-10 “For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother?”*

 *Luke 18:27 “Jesus replied, ‘What is impossible with men is possible with God.’"*

#3. To rework your epitaph. (1 Peter 3:18)

*“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit…”*