

Victory Through Surrender

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The Apostle Paul's conversion is a testimony to the lifechanging power of Jesus Christ for the one who surrenders their all to God.

In the book of Acts, Luke gives us three separate accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts 9, 22, and 26). Paul's testimony begins with a man on a mission.

Paul's Purpose for His Life

- Breathing out threatening's (*An all-out war had been waged against the followers of Christ*)

Acts 9:1–2 (NASB95) ¹Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ²and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Saul (Paul) was sincere in his spirit. He was confident in his conviction. He was on a mission for God, or so he thought. It would seem that Saul shared in the condemnation of his fellow pharisees or religious leaders.

**Is it possible to be sincere and to be wrong?
Yes! It is very probable when you are not listening to the Lord.**

Paul would later write to Timothy out of his personal Experience.

2 Timothy 2:24–26 (NASB)

²⁴The Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Paul would later share that his actions were in ignorance of the truth. He would refer to himself as the chief of all sinners, and that his salvation was a testimony to the power and the grace of God!

Paul's Plans Were Interrupted

- With the light and the voice of the Lord

Acts 9:3–5 (NASB95) ³As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; ⁴and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."

The Lord had to put Paul down before He could raise him up!

"Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him
⁴and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying..."

God could have struck him dead as some of the Christians might would have prayed, but God had a purpose and a plan for Paul's life.

Jesus Condemns the Religious Leaders

John 8:40 (NASB95)

⁴⁰... "You are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God..."

John 8:42–44 (NASB95)

⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God. ⁴³Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth."

The Lord had already been working subtly.

Acts 26:14 (NASB95) “It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

(a Greek idiom used when one was thought to be resisting the gods or resisting their destiny)

Now, at this moment, the Lord spoke emphatically. Paul became afflicted. His affliction served as a divine appointed time to seek and wait upon the Lord’s directive for his life.

Acts 9:8–9 (NASB95)

⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

This was a time of listening for the Lord and seeking God in prayer. The Lord would send one to minister to Paul, Ananias, who was told “You will find him praying.” (Acts 9:11)

Someone once said, “Don’t waste your pain.” In other words, life’s interruptions may be by divine appointment. Seek the Lord. What does God want to say to us? What is God desiring to work in us, and are we in the way?

Paul’s Life was Changed

Paul came to the place of complete surrender of his spirit and will to the will of God in his life.

Acts 9:17–19 (NASB95)

¹⁷Ananias... after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized.

Paul would later write to the Galatian churches –

Galatians 2:20 (NASB95)

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Paul’s many great victories were won by his surrendering to Christ. Arguably, no other apostle or person in church history accomplished more for Jesus Christ and the church than Paul.

How can one go from being the church’s worst enemy to being one of its greatest heroes? The answer lies in surrendering. Are we kicking against the goads, or have we fully surrendered to Christ?