

THE APOSTLE PAUL

INTRODUCTION • Pastor Craig Smith • June 14, 2020

The life of Paul...

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. (Acts 21:39)

...a trained _____ with an elite background – “...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; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” (Phil. 3:5-6)

Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers... (Acts 22:3b)

...a violent _____ and _____ of the church – “I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.” (Acts 22:4-5)

...a radical example of the _____ power of Jesus – “They had only heard the report: ‘The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.’ And they praised God because of me.” (Gal. 1:23-24)

☪ **The darker my _____, the brighter God’s _____** – “Christ Jesus came into this 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 unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life.” (1 Tim. 1:15b-16)

...a gifted _____ and courageous _____ – “I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again...Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.” (2 Cor. 11:23b, 28)

...a mighty champion of the unconditional _____ of Christ – “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:38-39)

Paul gladly surrendered anything to gain the one thing that meant everything...

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. (Phil. 3:7-8a)

THE APOSTLE PAUL

INTRODUCTION • Pastor Craig Smith • June 14, 2020

The life of Paul...

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. (Acts 21:39)

...a trained Pharisee with an elite background – “...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; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” (Phil. 3:5-6)

Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers... (Acts 22:3b)

...a violent murderer and persecutor of the church – “I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.” (Acts 22:4-5)

...a radical example of the transformational power of Jesus – “They had only heard the report: ‘The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.’ And they praised God because of me.” (Gal. 1:23-24)

☞ **The darker my past, the brighter God’s mercy** – “Christ Jesus came into this 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 unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life.” (1 Tim. 1:15b-16)

...a gifted leader and courageous missionary – “I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again... Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.” (2 Cor. 11:23b, 28)

...a mighty champion of the unconditional love of Christ – “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:38-39)

Paul gladly surrendered anything to gain the one thing that meant everything...

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. (Phil. 3:7-8a)