

**I. Introduction: Paul's story is our story. 1 Tim. 1:15-17**

**II. The gospel I preached was not derived from men, but it was revealed by God. v. 11-12**

- A. The gospel I proclaim did not originate from man. v. 11-12a
  - 1. The false teachers accused Paul of preaching a counterfeit man-made gospel.
  - 2. People today still claim that the Christian message is man-made.
- B. My gospel was received directly as a revelation from the Lord. v. 12b Acts 9:4 Eph. 3:3 Mt. 16:17 Mt. 16:17
- C. How do we receive the gospel? Rom. 10:17 Js. 1:18 Eph. 2:17

**III. What I did – Before my conversion I opposed the gospel. v. 13-14**

- A. I was a very devout Jew. v. 13-14 Phil. 3:4-6
  - 1. I was a rising young Pharisee who was zealous for our ancestral traditions. v. 14 Mt. 15:3ff Acts 22
  - 2. Because I recognized that the Christian gospel was a threat to Judaism, I actively sought to destroy the church. v. 13 Acts 7:58-8:3 9:4,21 22:4 1 Co. 15:9 1 Ti. 1:13
  - 3. Only a miraculous revelation from God could turn Paul from Judaism.
  - 4. Paul's single-minded zeal was redirected for good when he was converted.
- B. There are many religious people who are as lost as Paul was before he met Christ.
  - 1. Judaism and Christianity are still incompatible. 3:7,28-29 6:15
  - 2. Sincerity and zeal will not save you if your passion is misplaced. Rom. 10:2-4 1 Ki. 18:26-29
  - 3. Human traditions still keep many people from Christ.
  - 4. Nor will mere biblical knowledge bring spiritual life and deliverance. 2 Co. 3:15
  - 5. Enemies of the gospel in our day are just as zealous as Paul had been.
- C. We once were devoted to our lost way of life.
  - 1. Some of us were slaves to particular sins. Rom. 6:16-20 John 8:34
  - 2. Some, like Paul, were slaves to self-righteousness. Rom. 10:1-3 Phil. 3:3-6
  - 3. We were all spiritually dead, blind, hostile and hopeless. Eph. 2:1-3 Rom. 8:6-8 1 Co. 1:18 2:14
  - 4. Like Paul, we would have never chosen to seek Christ on our own. John 6:44
  - 5. As in the case of Paul, God may use our character traits which had previously been used for evil for His glory.

**IV. What God did – He sovereignly called me. v. 15-16a “But God” Eph. 2:4**

- A. There is a clear progression to Paul's transformation. v. 15-16a Rom. 8:29-30
  - 1. God had set apart Paul from before his birth – divine election. v. 15a Jer. 1:5 Isa. 49:1-6 Ro. 1:1 9:10-13 Luke 1:15
  - 2. God, by His sovereign grace, effectually called Paul when Christ was revealed to him on the Damascus road. v. 15b Rom. 8:30 9:11 2 Tim 1:9 1 Pet. 5:10 2:9
    - a. The Holy Spirit gave him a new birth – life and sight. Eph. 2:4-5 Acts 9:18
    - b. Paul repented, recognizing that what he had regarded as his greatest spiritual asset was actually his greatest spiritual liability. 2:16a Phil. 3:8

- c. Paul believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ and was declared righteous before God because of Christ's perfect work. 2:16b 3:6-9 Phil. 3:9 Eph. 2:8-9
- d. Paul was baptized as an expression of his union with Christ. Acts 9:19 22:16
- 3. God called Paul for a purpose -- that he might preach the gospel to the Gentiles. v. 16a 2:2,7-9 Acts 9:15 22:21 Jer. 1:5 Gen. 22:18 Is. 2:2-3 Psalm 2
- 4. Why did God choose Paul?
- 5. Was it necessary for Paul to act in faithful obedience to God's call? Acts 26:19

- B. What happened to Paul happens to every person God saves. Eph. 2:4-10 Ro. 8:29-30
  - 1. God knew and chose us for Himself before we were born. Eph. 1:3-5
  - 2. God effectually called us to Christ by His sovereign grace. Jo. 6:44,37 Acts 16:14
  - 3. As a result of God's call we repent (turn) from our sin and believe on Christ.
  - 4. God called us for a purpose – that we might serve Him. Eph. 2:10 1 Pet. 4:10-11
  - 5. Not only your salvation, but everything good is from God. Js. 1:17 1 Co. 4:7

C. The glory in salvation belongs to God alone. v. 24 Eph. 1:6 Rom. 3:27 1 Co. 1:30-31

## V. After God called me, I didn't need approval or instruction from anyone else. v. 16b-24

- A. Paul asserts his apostolic independence. v. 16b-21
  - 1. Because Paul had received his commission from Christ he did not need any one's blessing, not even the existing apostles. v. 16b-19
  - 2. Instead of going straight to Jerusalem he spent time in Arabia and Damascus. v. 17b 2 Co. 11:32-33 Acts 9:19-25
  - 3. Three years later (34 AD ?) he visited Jerusalem and spent a short time with Peter and James. v. 18-19 2:11-13 Acts 9:26-30 12:17 15:13 1 Co. 15:5-7
  - 4. Then he went to Syria and Cilicia from which he was later summoned by Barnabas (42 AD?). v. 21 Acts 9:30 11:25-26 22:17-21
  - 5. Paul calls God as witness to his truthfulness. v. 20 Col. 3:9 1 Tim. 2:7
- B. Paul's relationship to the churches in Judea. v. 22-24
  - 1. Because he spent so little time there, they didn't know his face. v. 22
  - 2. The people of Judea did know Paul by reputation – that the former persecutor is now faithfully preaching the gospel. v. 23
  - 3. They glorified God because of Paul. v. 24 Mt. 9:8
  - 4. The point is that Paul's message did not come from Judea, but his message and ministry are approved of by the churches in Judea.

C. The gospel still transforms people to the glory of God.

## VI. Concluding applications.

### Discussion questions

1. Why does Paul describe his call to the Galatians?
2. Why was Paul a very unlikely candidate to become a Christian evangelist?
3. Is it enough to be sincere and passionate about your religious beliefs?
4. How were we once like Paul was before his conversion?
5. How does Paul's description of his conversion follow Romans 8:29-30?
6. How is your conversion like that of Paul?
7. How is your call to faith in Christ related to your call to serve Him?
8. What version of the gospel gives glory to God alone for our salvation?
9. Why didn't Paul need approval by or instruction from the apostles in Jerusalem?
10. What would you say to someone who claims that Paul corrupted the teaching of Jesus?