

Theme: As Paul learned on the road to Damascus, we thrive not through our own righteousness, but because we have a vital unity with Christ and His Church.

I. Intro - A Road to Damascus Experience

- A. The conversion of Paul is an amazing story
- B. In the story we just read, everything changed for Paul
- C. This has become a catchphrase for dramatic changes
- D. What happened on the road?
- E. Why did it have such an effect on Paul?
- F. What does it mean for us?

II. Paul (Saul) - His Life Before Christ

- A. Luke does not tell us much about Saul/Paul
 - 1. Saul was also known as Paul (Acts 13:9)
 - 2. Paul is Roman form of Jewish name Saul
 - 3. Breathing murderous threats against church (vv1-2)
 - 4. Zealous to persecute the church everywhere!
- B. Why Paul hated the church
 - 1. His brief autobiography (Philippians 3:4-6)
 - 2. He is confident of his own righteousness
 - 3. He is a religious zealot - persecuted others
 - 4. He thought Jesus was a fraud
 - 5. He thought he was alive to God!

- 6. He thought Jesus was cursed! (Deut 21:22-23)
- 7. Note that Paul quotes this in Galatians 3:13
- 8. They needed to rid the land of this curse!

III. Blinded by the Light - Paul Meets Jesus

- A. Arrested by God - Paul stopped by a blinding light
 - 1. God stops Paul with a blinding light (v3)
 - 2. "Saul, Saul" - usually important message from God
 - a. Abraham, Abraham [Gen 22:11-12] - spare Isaac
 - b. Moses, Moses [Exodus 3:4-5] - burning bush
 - c. Samuel, Samuel [1 Samuel 3:10] - prophets call
 - 3. Shocking question - "Why do you persecute me?" (v4)
 - 4. Paul's question - "Who are you **Lord**?" (v5)
 - a. Lord - Knows this one has authority
 - b. Must be a heavenly messenger - but who?
- B. Paul encounters the Risen Christ (v5)
 - 1. The shocking answer - I am Jesus!
 - 2. Jesus is Risen - He is not dead like Paul thought!
- C. Paul's world is shattered
 - 1. All his thoughts about Jesus were wrong
 - a. Jesus is not dead - but alive!
 - b. Jesus is not cursed - but blessed!

- c. Jesus is not a false Messiah - He is the True Messiah!
- 2. All his thoughts about himself and salvation were wrong
 - a. Remember Paul's bio in Philippians 3 - about him!
 - b. He now sees his own unrighteousness
 - c. He now sees how he has persecuted God's people
 - d. Philippians 3:7-9
 - 1. No boasting - count all as loss for Christ
 - 2. All my works are dung!
 - 3. Righteousness comes from God - not me!

IV. Jesus and the People of God

- A. Paul was persecuting Jesus?
 - 1. "Why are you persecuting me?" (v4)
 - 2. "I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting" (v5)
 - 3. How was Paul persecuting Jesus - Whom he never met?
- B. Implications - The unity of Jesus and the Church
 - 1. The Church is the Body of Christ
 - a. Ephesians 1:22-23 - Christ the Head of the Body
 - b. Col 1:18 - Christ the Head, Church the Body
 - c. Ephes. 4:14-16 - Christ the Head, Church the Body
 - d. The Church is vitally linked to Christ
 - e. He is the Vine, we the branches (John 15:5)
 - 2. The Church is unified - One Church

- a. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27 - One Body of Christ
- b. 1 Peter 2:4-5 - One Spiritual House
- c. We are joined to each other - by Jesus!

V. Applying the Word

- A. Do we see our union with Jesus?
 - 1. The Church is not built on philosophy - united with Jesus!
 - 2. Jesus is not just our teacher or example - He is our Life!
 - 3. If a Church loses its vital union with Christ - death!
 - 4. Rom. 5 - we are either united with Adam or Christ
 - 5. Do you have union with Christ?
 - 6. Have you been united with His life, death, burial, and resurrection?
 - 7. Have you thrown away your righteousness for His?
 - 8. Look to Christ for abundant life - now & eternally
- B. Do we see our union with the Church?
 - 1. Do we see that the Church is the Body of Christ?
 - 2. Do we see that the Church is a unity in Christ?
 - 3. Do we see that how we treat the Church is how we treat Jesus?
 - 4. Do we walk in unity with Christ's Church?
- C. Prayer for A Thriving Union

A Thriving Union

Acts 9:1-6
 October 23, 2011
 Prayer
 2 Corinthians 13:14

Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas Acts 13:9

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. Phil 3:4-6

If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, 23 you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because **anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse**. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. Deut 21:22-23

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 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. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. Phil 3:7-9

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:22–23

And he is the head of the body, the church... Colossians 1:18

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:14-16

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink... 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, 27

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4–5