

# *Transformed!*

## How God Renews the Lives of His People

# *Special Edition*

## *One Man's Story*

### A Note from Pastor Keith...

"The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

Galatians 1:22b

For weeks now the Apostle Paul has been teaching us and challenging us toward a transformed life. Paul knows what he's talking about! It would be hard to find anyone whose life was more radically altered by the presence and power of Christ. Today we will step aside from Paul's teaching to consider his life—both before and after.

## Paul Before...

### He makes his first appearance at the stoning of Stephen:

<sup>57</sup>At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup>dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. [*Paul went by both names.*]

Acts 7:57-58 (all references are NIV)

### He led a campaign of persecution against the early Christians:

<sup>1</sup>Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:1-2

## Paul After...

### Instead of persecuting Christians, Paul became chief spokesman:

<sup>19b</sup>Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup>At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup>All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" <sup>22</sup>Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 9:19b-22

## *What happened?* Paul met Jesus.

<sup>3</sup>As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup>"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup>"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." <sup>7</sup>The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup>Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.

Acts 9:3-8

## *Get Personal!*

Paul—or "Saul" as he was known among his Jewish brethren— was a passionate man. But his passion was misdirected. How about you? Based on your actions, on the evidence of your life, what are you *truly passionate* about?

Jesus said, "what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?" (Mt. 16:26 NLT) What does this teach us about misdirected passion?

If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, how has that decision redirected your purpose and passions?

# The Result: *A Transformed Life*

## 1. Paul's New Faith

<sup>3</sup>For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that **he was raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup>After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup>and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

## 2. Paul's New Passion

<sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

<sup>20</sup>I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:20-21

# *How about you?*

## 1. You can be saved through faith in Christ.

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

<sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

## 2. ...and experience a transformed life!

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2

## *Get Personal!*

The Bible tells us that we're all sinners (Rom. 3:23), and that the penalty for sin is death (Rom. 6:23). What are you depending on to solve that problem? If you stood before God and He asked you, "Why should I let you into heaven?" what would you say to Him?

Based on what the Bible says, what is God asking you to do?

The Bible says that God is asking us to trust Christ—His death and resurrection—as God's complete solution to the problem of sin. Have you done that?

If you have trusted Christ, great! What are you doing to pursue His purposes and His priorities?