

Personal Study

Week of July 28

This summer we have been in a series called, ‘THE ONE’ – if I had but one message to share, what would it be? If I had but one person to follow, who would it be? For the apostle Paul, it was Jesus. Here is Saul (later Paul), born in Cilicia of Tarsus, a star student of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, zealous guardian of the Law – who one day unexpectedly encounters the Risen Christ on his way to persecute Christians. Paul’s one message forever changed.

1. Recall a time when you encountered something so unexpected, that your life drastically pivoted. Take a few moments to reflect on that experience and fill in the blanks below.

When I was _____ I experienced _____, and from that point forward, and I never looked back. Today, I thank God for _____.

Paul wrote *Romans* to Christians in Rome around 57 A.D. perhaps toward the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:2-3). For some time, Paul had wanted to share the Gospel message in Rome and so begins his letter: “This letter is from Paul a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach His Good News” (Romans 1:1).

Paul felt God specially chose him to preach to Gentiles. He explains to the non-Jewish world how God *is God* of both Old and New Testaments, how Jesus Christ came to fulfill God’s promise, not only to the nation of Israel, but to all people everywhere: “And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ. I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be His own holy people” (Romans 1:6-7). Paul, a Jew himself, loves the Jewish people and explains how God is still in control of beloved Israel.

Read Romans 11:11-36

2. Paul writes: “...God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles” (v13). Paul understood his marching orders. To whom are you ‘appointed’? How is the overarching focus of your life in line with your assignment from the Lord? Think about practical ways you can better align your life with your assignment. For instance, where will you spend your time, energy, and resources this week? How is Christ first in your appointment book today?

Paul refers to Deuteronomy 32:21 when he explains how God wants His people to become jealous and accept salvation for themselves. He later writes that God’s heart is for all men “to be saved and to understand the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). Even though ‘jealousy’ is not a quality we strive for, God is jealous for us. The Lord knows how much we need Him.

3. God loves you so much He sent Jesus to cover your sin. Sometimes it is not until we catch a glimpse of life without someone, that we truly begin to value that someone. What would life be like without God? What would your life be like if you put God first? How can you begin to better appreciate the personal love relationship Jesus offers you?

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