

Everyday FAITH Family Page

New Testament 5

Law/Gospel

Because I am a sinner, I fail to stand up for Christ in the world, and I fear persecution. **As a member of Christ's Body, the Church, I receive God's love and forgiveness in Christ and am strengthened in faith through His Word and Sacraments to live as His child, reflecting His love to the world.**

Bible Words

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
2 Corinthians 5:17

Fun Facts

- Saul was a Pharisee, a student of respected teacher and Pharisee Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
- The Bible records other accounts of Saul's conversion in Acts 21:37–22:21; Acts 26; and Galatians 1:11–24.
- It seems that Saul did not marry (1 Corinthians 9:5, see context), but he called Timothy his child in the Lord (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; 1 Corinthians 4:17).
- We have thirteen letters Paul wrote to the churches in the New Testament.
- Already in Peter's second letter, written about AD 68, he referred to Paul's writing as Scripture (2 Peter 3:14–16).

The Conversion of Paul

Acts 9:1–31

The life of a Pharisee named Saul fills two-thirds of the Book of Acts. Saul first appeared as an approving observer at the killing of Stephen. Soon after, he fervently opposed, arrested, and imprisoned believers in Christ. With letters from the high priest to the Damascus synagogues, Saul set off to arrest Christians there.

The Lord had other ideas. On the Damascus Road, Jesus appeared to His persecutor. Blinded, Saul was led to Damascus by his fellow travelers. After Saul fasted and prayed for three days, God sent His disciple Ananias to restore Saul's sight and baptize him. The Lord told Ananias that Saul was "a chosen instrument of Mine to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of My name" (vv. 15–16).

After his conversion, Saul immediately taught that Jesus is the Son of God in the Damascus synagogues. Offended Jews plotted to kill him, but he escaped in a basket lowered through an opening in the city wall.

In Jerusalem, Saul tried to join Jesus' disciples, but they feared him because of his adversarial reputation. Barnabas bravely brought Saul to the apostles and informed them about his conversion and preaching in Jesus' name. The apostles accepted Saul, and when the Jews tried to kill him once again, they helped him escape to his hometown of Tarsus.

Later, Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch in Syria to teach the faith. At the Holy Spirit's command, Saul and Barnabas became missionaries in Asia Minor, telling Jews and Gentiles about Jesus and establishing Christian churches. Two other journeys with several other companions followed.

Saul became known as Paul, the Greek version of his Hebrew name. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Paul witnessed to Jews, Gentiles, and kings, and suffered for Jesus' name, as Christ prophesied. Paul was scourged five times with thirty-nine blows, beaten thrice with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, and endured many other hardships. Yet he remained faithful to Jesus, forever changed by the love and sacrifice of his Savior.

Prayer

Lord God, show us Jesus and His work for us so that we may believe and follow faithfully. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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