

The Conversion of Saul

by James A. Stewart

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a powerful example of how God can transform a person's life and bring them from being a bitter enemy to a devoted follower.

Duration: 42:40

Scripture: Acts 7:55, Acts 9:5

Topics: "Conversion Of Saul"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, also known as the Apostle Paul. He emphasizes the excitement and joy of witnessing someone's transformation from death to life through faith in Jesus Christ. The preacher highlights the moment when the light of the gospel shines into Saul's darkened soul, revealing Jesus to him. He also mentions the emotions experienced by a newborn believer, such as trembling under conviction of sin and astonishment at God's love. The preacher concludes by expressing concern about the confusion surrounding the gospel message in today's world and the need to continually emphasize the fundamental truths of salvation.

Transcript

Now, this morning, I want to speak to you on the conversion of solid passes. Now, I hope I don't get too excited. I'm sorry Mrs. Stewart is not with me because she's over at Willow Park this morning speaking because when I get excited, I go back into my Scottish dialect and I have to be interpreted, and Mrs. Stewart is a good interpreter.

Still, when I'm dictating to her, many times she puts down the wrong words and the wrong sentences, and I have to do it all over myself. I've been living with her for over 30 years, but when I get excited, I get a little bit Scottish, but since I came into Tennessee, the people, when I ask a question, they say, say that again please, say that again please. So, you'll excuse me if I get a little bit excited this morning because how could I not get excited when I'm talking about the conversion of solid passes? You have to, you have to get excited.

The most exciting thing on earth is to see a soul pass from death unto life. This sign of glory, that's the most exciting thing, to see a man or woman saved, but especially such a character and personality as solid passes. So, I'm reading the case of his conversion as explained to us in the 9th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 9. Now, we see, of course, that the Holy Ghost is working a wonderful process of conviction of sin in the life of solid passes. And the background of his conversion is the martyrdom of Stephen, you see. He's participating in the martyrdom of Stephen.

And that is the background of the conversion of solid passes. And you remember how Stephen prayed, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And if you read in verse, chapter 7, verse 58, and they cast him out of the city and stoned him, and the witnesses laid down their clothes at the young man's feet whose name was Saul.

That's chapter 7, verse 58. And so the background of his conversion is the death and martyrdom of Stephen. And so, verse 9, he's angry, he's boiling mad, as you see in America.

And Saul yet, he's still yet unsay, still yet persisting on his broad way to hell. And Saul yet, breathing out threatenings and slaughter. And now, if we don't get excited about souls being saved, the devil gets excited about souls being damned.

If we don't get excited in the Lord's work, the devil's bunch, they get excited in the Lord's work. And here is Saul, he's ardent, he's enthusiastic, and his desire is to exterminate the name of Jesus. And so we read, and Saul yet, yet still under conviction of sin, in spite of everything, he's breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, and he goes unto the high priest.

And it is out of him, let this to Damascus, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus. And suddenly, there shined round about him a light from heaven.

And he fell to the earth, and he heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the praise. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man. But they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

And it was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. And to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias.

And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. I am ready, Lord, for any message. He saluted and said, Lord, I am ready now.

What do you want me to do? And he said, Lord, behold, I am here. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarsus. For behold, he is there, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I think you have made a huge mistake, a great mistake. Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priest to bind all that call on thy name.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and putting his hand on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received me, he was strengthened. Then was Saul sent in days of the disciples which were in Damascus, and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God.

But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them, which called on this name in Jerusalem? And came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ. And then just one more verse, verse 26. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

Now you can still see that wall where Paul was let down in the basket, and as you know, Damascus is the oldest city in the world today. Now I want to speak to you, as I said, on the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Well you notice first of all, in my introduction, that the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is the most devastating conversion in the New Testament.

The most devastating conversion in the New Testament. You know, they pressed the panic button in the camp of the enemy. And somebody said, who pressed the alarm? And there was a cry, did you not hear? Did you not hear the news? Saul of Tarsus is saved.

Saul of Tarsus is preaching the gospel that he once destroyed. And they said, another impossibility. And they were all flung into confusion.

And then there was consternation among the army of the Lord's people. The news spread. Did you hear the news? Saul of Tarsus is converted.

He's our brother in Christ. And they said, nonsense. Tell us some other story we might believe.

It's another impossibility. No, no, no. You can't get us to believe that nonsense.

Go and tell some other story. And the Holy Ghost had to get Barnabas to introduce him into the fellowship of the saints to say, yes, it is absolutely true. That's no longer Saul of Tarsus.

This is Paul. He's a new creation in Christ Jesus. And yet they had been praying and praying.

No doubt, oh God, save this man. Save this man. So, to my mind, this is the most devastating conversion we have related for us in the New Testament.

But you'll notice also that it is the most dramatic case of conversion related and recorded in the New Testament. You say, but Brother Stuart, what about the Philippian jailer? Oh, I like him. He's a good friend of mine.

I've been living with him for years. And I've been in prison often with him and out of prison with him. And he is a glorious example of a dynamic, dramatic case of conversion.

But don't forget, he was an insignificant man. He was just a jailer of a prison in a city of Philippi. That's all.

But you see, Saul of Tarsus was the bitterest enemy of the Lord Jesus. He was the leader, the arch enemy of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. And he was gloriously saved on this highway to Damascus.

And so, that is why I say that his is the most dramatic case of conversion in the Old Testament. It was so revolutionary. So, he says in Romans 1 16, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God, the dynamic of God, the dynamite of God, unto salvation to everyone that believe it.

So, his was the most dramatic case of conversion. As you read this story, it just grips your attention from start to finish. But you will notice also that it was the most detailed conversion in the New Testament.

No conversion story is given in such minute detail. And no conversion story is told so often as the story of Saul's conversion in the New Testament. And hence, I believe that it was meant by the Spirit of God that we should use Saul's conversion as a pattering case of conversion.

We could say his was a prototype case of conversion. For example, Paul himself says to young Timothy in 1 Timothy 1 15 16, This is a faithful saying, unworthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. And then he goes on to say, how be it for this cause I obtain mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus, or Jesus Christ rather, might show forth all unsuffering for a pattern, P-A-T-T-E-R-N, for a pattern, till them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

And so, I would say that here we have a pattering case of New Testament Christianity. Now, do you not think that there are some basic truths brought out in the story of Saul's conversion in Acts 19? What does it mean to be saved? And what will happen to me when I am saved? Or what actually takes place before the new birth, and at the moment of the new birth, and after the new birth? And may I say, that after almost 46 years in the service of the Lord, I have never been living in a day of such gospel confusion, even among believers. And the asserting basic fundamental truths of the gospel, of the new birth experience that we must emphasize over, and over, and over again.

And so here, in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, we have a pattering case of conversion, and we can examine it together this morning, and we will see what happens before, and during, and after salvation. Now, will you notice first of all, the first words to a guilty sinner. The first words to a guilty sinner.

Saul, Saul, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the priest. Saul, Saul, why do you keep on resisting my love? Saul, Saul, why do you keep on fighting me? Why do you keep on, when you, why do you keep on persecuting me? Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Do you not know that when you persecute these believers, you are persecuting me? When you touch them, you touch me. I am the head, and these are all members of my body.

Why do you continue in your breakneck speed to hell? Oh, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Saul, do you not know, have you not discovered, it is hard for thee to kick against the priest? Saul, you are just a stubborn old ox. But the more you fight and struggle, the goads will go deeper and deeper and more fiercely into your flesh. Saul of Tarsus, have you not yet discovered that the way of the transgressor is hard? Oh Saul of Tarsus, why do you persecute me? It is hard for thee to kick against the priest.

Now that is the first words to a guilty sinner. Now, I wonder if you are like that this morning. You have been hearing the gospel over and over and over again.

Some loved one praying for you. You have been in this church, and you have been under conviction of sin. And here the Lord is saying to you in a very, very definite way this morning.

He will call you by your first name as He called me by my first name. He called me by my name, James James. When I was playing soccer football before, maybe 50,000 people.

He did not call John John. No, He said James James. I heard His voice.

It was my name. And I knew He was speaking to me. And He will say to you, your name Mary Mary or John John.

Why do you persecute me? Do you not know that the way of the transgressor is hard? Do you not know it is a very difficult thing to go to hell? Because I am going to put blockade after blockade. I am going to do all I can to put hindrances in your way to keep you from hell. Now these are the first words to a guilty sinner.

But will you notice the first question of awakened soul. Who art thou Lord? O Lord, whoever you are, please reveal Thyself to me. Now you see, Saul is so intent and so restless in the service of the devil that he cannot rest like the other travelers.

But he presses on to the highway to Damascus going up and up and up to the city. Under the burning heat of the noon day sun. And his eyes are scanning the horizon to see if he can see the environs of the city.

When suddenly a supernatural light dazzles his eyes and he becomes blind. And suddenly a supernatural hand flings him from his horse. And prostrate in the dust, he knows no mortal hand laid him low there.

And in his confusion and conviction he cries out, O, O who art thou Lord? Whoever you are, please reveal Thyself to me. Now friend, I want to say this. That we have next the first revelation to awakened soul.

The first revelation to awakened soul. I am Jesus. I am Jesus.

I am the same Jesus, the Son of God that you are persecuting. The same person that Stephen saw standing up welcoming him to receiving up to glory as you were stoning him to death. I am Jesus whom your nation crucified in the Roman Judas.

I am Jesus whom you are crucifying afresh, Saul of Tarsus. I am Jesus. I am Jesus.

Now Paul tells his story of his conversion in one verse. Of course he does say in Galatians 1, It pleased the Lord to reveal His Son in me and send me to preach the gospel to the heathen. But I think the real glorious case of conversion is in 2 Corinthians 4, 6 when he says, For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And here at this one exact moment, like the twinkling of an eyelid, like the flash of lightning, the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ shone into Saul's darkened soul. And here was the first revelation to awakened soul. I am Jesus.

Oh friend, oh dear sinner friend this morning, I pray that you, that the glorious light of the gospel will go into your darkened soul. As the Savior says, I am Jesus whom thou persecuted. Paul was startled and startled more.

And then I want you to notice this friend. The first emotions of a new born soul. The first emotions of a new born soul.

And he trembling and astonished saying. He trembling and astonished saying. Now the trembling speaks of conviction of sin.

And the astonishment is the wonder of the grace of God in saving me a poor wretched sinner. Now the trembling and the astonishment always go together. Now I don't care if you are the most unemotional person on earth.

You will show some emotion when you get saved. Now I suppose the most unemotional people I know are Norwegians. But maybe the most unemotional are my folks up in the highlands of Scotland.

I mean I was trying to cultivate the friendship of a man for years. And one day I cultivated his friendship. I said to him this morning passing by.

Good morning sir. And he says. Tis.

T-I-S. So I got that word after 25 years. Tis.

And up in the highlands what we call the Hebrides. I mean what an American preacher could say in 10 minutes. A Scottish preacher takes maybe an hour in 10 minutes.

He is so slow. And there is no emotion. You can't tell by their faces.

Nothing is expressed in their face. Whether they are happy or sad. It is unemotional.

And you may have inherited your traits. Your emotional traits from your father and your grandfather. Your grandmother or mother.

Whoever it is. But I want to tell you friend that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are all together different.

But I don't care who you are. If you get saved you will tremble and you will be astonished. You see the Philippian jailer.

He came in trembling. And he fell down to the apostle's feet. And he cried out.

Sirs. Oh. What must I do to be saved? One of the sweetest gospel hymns along this line is written by another Scotsman.

A friend of Horatio Boner. Murray McChain. I won't repeat it to you because I love poetry.

And it goes into 25 verses. But one of the hymns says. One of the verses of the hymn says this.

I once was a stranger. A good old Presbyterian hymn. I once was a stranger to grace and to God.

I knew not my danger. I felt not my Lord. When friends spoke of rapture of Christ on the tree.

Jehovah saten you. Or Jehovah my righteousness. Was nothing to me.

And then it goes on to say that. When free grace awoke me with light from on high. And legal fear shook me.

I trembled to die. And then he said. Then I got a sight.

Of Christ dying for me. On the cross of Calvary. And I both trembled.

And I was filled with wonder. Oh dear unseen friend. These are the first emotions of a new born soul.

Now I always said. The first emotions of a convicted sinner. Or a guilty sinner.

But I put down. The first emotions of a new born soul. You see it's hard to see.

Where it begins. You see why brother Stuart. Oh you see I said already.

You're passed from death into life. Like the flash of lightning. Like the twinkle of an eye.

One second you're on the way to hell. The next second you're on the way to heaven. One second.

You're a child of the devil. Next second. You're a child of God.

One second. Like John Bunyan. You have the whole burden of sin on your back.

And the next second. Glory be to God. The burden of sin rolls away.

It's so instantaneously. You know. It doesn't take five minutes for God to save you.

It doesn't even take a minute. It can be done in a second. And so here are the first emotions of a new born soul.

Now you tremble under conviction of sin. You tremble before a holy God. And then.

You're astonished. Trembling astonished. You're astonished.

You say. Oh no God. You couldn't love me.

You know. So I had. In Scotland I had most all the gospel preaching on hell fire.

The damnation of the lost. But that didn't move me. But oh friend when the Holy Ghost gave me a sight of my Savior dying for me in the cross of Calvary.

That moved me. Now some people are moved by fear. Noah.

He was moved by fear to build the ark. We're told in Hebrews 11. But I was moved by love.

In that soccer football stadium. I couldn't believe it. I got a sight of Christ dying for me.

And I said oh it's my sins. And I trembled. But then I became astonished.

And I haven't got over the astonishment yet. I haven't got over astonishment yet. Spurgeon wrote a beautiful hymn.

I looked to Jesus in my sins. My woe and want confessing. I turned to him and looked at him.

I sought and found a blessing. There's on telling describing Christ dying for him. But my favorite children's chorus we used to sing in the Sunday school in Scotland is this.

Wounded for my transgressions. Slowly the words I read. Swiftly the tears will gather.

Truly the heart shall bleed. Wonderful condescension. Matchless infinite grace.

Jesus sinless holy. Taking the sinner's place. Oh friend filled with trembling.

My whole body trembled and shook when I was under conviction of sin. I've seen that over and over again. And then I was amazed in holy wonder.

Oh God how could you love a poor miserable sinner like me. Oh Jesus why could you die for me such a wretch like me. Now these are the first emotions of a new born soul.

Now as I said they both go together. The trembling and astonishment go together. In some cases of conversion there's more trembling than astonishment.

In other cases there's more astonishment than trembling. I think you'll all agree those who have been saved. I think if I said to Pastor Thompson this morning.

Mr. Thompson did you repent more before your conversion or repent more after your conversion? I think he would say right away. I think James I repented more after my conversion. Now why would that be? Because we have a greater sight of the holiness of God.

And we have being born again. Now we have a greater appreciation of the death and the atoning value of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder friend have you trembled under conviction of sin.

I wonder if you stood amazed at the love of God and Calvary. I must hurry. Then you have what I would call the first words of a new born soul.

Lord, Lord, Lord. Now you know before you can be saved dear friend. You must receive Christ as your Lord.

You see the gospel is not believe in Jesus and thou shalt be saved. Oh you say that today. I thought it was.

No, no, no you've been misinformed. The gospel is not believe in Jesus and thou shalt be saved. The gospel is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

You see the light, the text that the Holy Ghost used to illuminate my darkness was Romans 10 and 9. Romans 10 and 9 is a favorite verse of mine. Confessing Christ as Lord and saved by grace divine. For there the promised words in golden letters shine.

Romans 10 and 9. And in one of our European Bibles it's translated this way. That if thou shalt confess at thy mouth that Jesus is Lord. And shalt believe in thine heart.

That God hath raised him up from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. Now the reason why we have so many shallow converts.

What I call psychological converts. Is because they have received Christ as Savior and not Lord. Now it is another impossibility for you not to receive Christ as Lord.

As well as Savior. If you won't receive him as a far escape from hell. I say that reverently you're not saved.

Because the gospel is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. You see in the Acts of the Apostles the word Savior is only mentioned twice. But the word Lord is mentioned 117 times.

What did they preach to the Apostles? They preached the Lordship of Christ. Now don't misunderstand me. I know that the young convert.

Whether he's Indian or Russian or American or Scot. He does not at the fullest moment understand the full implications of the Lordship of Christ. You understand he doesn't.

It's not possible because he's still in his sins. He's not a born again believer yet. But he must in some way throw down the arms of rebellion.

You know I could have been deceived into hell. By some good well meaning Evandus in Britain. If I didn't know my Bible better.

And if I didn't have my mother and father watching over me. Because I sat through revival gospel campaign after gospel campaign. I heard them all.

And our campaigns went on for 7 weeks every night. So you can know that was awful for a boy. And I had to sit in the front seat.

And every time the Evandus would preach. They all got me saved every night. But I said I'm not saved.

They said Jimmy do you believe in John 3.16. I said yes sir. And I said I believe in Matthew 11.28, Isaiah 53 and 6. And I could quote them all for him. And he said you're saved.

I said no sir I'm not saved. I'm still going to hell. Then another man would come up and say Jimmy would you pray.

And I said yes sir. I'll pray. I pray every day.

Mother makes me anyhow. And so he would say say this prayer after me. And I would say this prayer after me.

And then he would say we've got another contact. I said nonsense I'm not saved. I know in my heart I'm still going to hell.

No change in me. You know why? They didn't tell me I had to fling down my arms a rebellion. You see I had to throw down my arms a rebellion.

And you know what was keeping me back from Christ? My soccer football. I knew it. Every time I was under conviction of sin and wanted to be saved.

That soccer football was right there in front of me. That was my stumbling block. Because I loved that soccer football more than I loved Christ.

I didn't want to throw down my arms a rebellion. I didn't want to receive Christ as my life. I said he would make a mess of my life.

I said to my mother and father. He'll upset my life. I don't want him Lord of my life.

Oh no. I don't mind going to heaven as long as I don't need to love the Lord going to heaven. But you see friends salvation is not just from the penalty of sin.

Salvation is from the pleasure of sin. Salvation is from the pleasure of sin. And so the first word of a new born soul is Lord.

Lord. Oh I love that. Isn't that wonderful? He was a heathen, a pagan.

Oh yes and yet he says Lord. You're my Lord. Lord you have conquered.

I'm just a poor miserable sinner saved by grace. Lord I'm thy vassal. Lord I'm thy slave.

Lord. And then will you notice also. You see.

The first request of an awakened soul. Lord. The first request of a you could call it of course a new born soul.

Lord what will you have me to do? Oh he's gushing all over. I don't like gushing people. But I like if you have something to gush about I don't mind.

But if Paul had something to gush about. Saul of Tarsus had something to gush about. Lord.

And he was no gusher type I can tell you. He was a hard hard steely stony man. And he was on the highway to Damascus to kill the Lord's people.

And he gushes and he says. Oh Lord. What will you have me to do? Now that's extraordinary when you think of it.

You see. He knew what he was going to do. Just a second before he knew what he was going to do.

When he was riding that high horse. He knew what he was going to do. If you would have said to him.

Stopped him and pulled the reins of his horse and said. Saul. Where are you going? Damascus.

And what are you going to do when you get there? Me? And he waves his letter of authority. I'm going to exterminate the Nazarenes. I'm going to put them in prison.

Bring them back to Jerusalem and scourge them. Of course he knew what he was going to do. But no friend.

You see he has his commission in his pocket. In his tunic. But he takes it and he tears it up.

Because these letters friend of authority. Are only worthless pieces of paper now. Why? Because he is under a new master you see.

He is under a new master. And so his whole life is completely revolutionized. And so he said.

No Lord. You are my master. You are my Lord.

No Lord. What do you want me to do? You see before he was planning out his own life. Before he was letting the devil run his life.

And now he says. Lord I am at thy feet. I am thy slave.

Lord what wilt thou have me to do? I wonder if you this morning. Are you willing to bow at the feet of the Redeemer? And I wonder. Are you willing to say.

Love so amazing. So divine. Shall have my life.

My life. My all. Lord.

What will you have me to do? And then. I must hurry. You notice the first assignment.

Of a new born soul. And we read that in the 15th and 16th verses. Ananias had to tell him.

Now you are a chosen vessel. The Lord said you are a chosen vessel. To bear my name before the kings.

And you must suffer much for me. Now that is the first assignment of a new born soul. Now friend.

It is wonderful to know according to Ephesians 2.10. That the moment you receive Christ as your Lord and Savior. The moment you pass from death unto life. Not only are you a new creation in Christ Jesus.

But God has a master plan for your life. God has a master plan for your life. I believe for example.

As I tell young people all over the world. God has a master plan. He has got a plan for your life.

Whether you should marry or not marry. He has got a master plan for your husband. He has got a master plan for your wife.

Oh yes. God has a master plan for your job. Paul says for we are his workmanship.

Ephesians 2.10 or his poem or his handiwork. For we are his handiwork. For we are his workmanship.

Created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Which God before ordained that they should walk in them. Now the moment you receive Christ as your Lord and Savior.

That moment God has a master plan for your life. Now if you are not saved. You are still in the broad door to hell.

God has no plan for your life at all. The devil has a plan for your life. But God has no plan.

But the moment you get saved. What a comfort. What an inspiration it is to know.

That God has a master plan for your life. Right here in Memphis. From the day of your salvation to the day of your translation.

And this is the first assignment of a new born soul. And God. The Lord says to him now Paul.

You are a chosen vessel. I am going to use you. You are going to carry out my plans and my purposes.

For the salvation of a lost and dying world. And you are going to suffer much for my namesake. And then.

You have. May I say. The first requirement of a new born soul.

And that is. You are my soul of Tarsus. Now the Apostle Paul.

You must be filled with the Holy Ghost. Now isn't that. Isn't that amazing.

If anybody was qualified to be a real evangelist. And a real pastor. And a real missionary of the cross of Christ.

Surely it was Saul of Tarsus. You know because. If he had been saved in Memphis.

We would get him rigged up right away. We would put placards all over the city. Saul of Tarsus.

The man. The greatest. The greatest sinner.

And the greatest prosecutor of the church. Is now the greatest champion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we are saying he is in.

He is in boys. He is in. He has got everything.

He doesn't go to Bible school. He doesn't even need to go to seminary. He is in.

What a dramatic story of conversion. But no. You see he had all the native ability.

He was a trained lawyer. I think I have been everywhere Paul has been except Tarsus. And now up in Mount Ararat.

You know but. He was trained native ability at everything. And yet he had one qualification lacking.

And that was he had to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Now I am so glad in Acts 9.17. Saul or Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost. At the very threshold of his new life in Christ Jesus.

I said he is a pattern case of conversion. Dear brother and sister. It is the will of God that every believer should be filled with the Holy Ghost at conversion.

Now many are. I know many. Many are filled with the Holy Ghost at conversion.

But the vast majority of believers are not filled with the Holy Ghost at conversion. And it is the second experience. They are indwelt by the Holy Ghost.

Because you couldn't be saved if you weren't indwelt by the Holy Ghost. It is because you are indwelt by the Holy Ghost that you know you are a child of God. That you know you are passed from death unto life.

But it is one thing to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. It is another thing to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. And this is the supreme requirement of every believer in their witness.

Now Paul had an assignment. He was a chosen vessel. God had his plans and purposes with that one young man.

But before he could carry out these plans and purposes. God's assignment for his life. He had to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

And may I say very reverently here this morning. Yet very earnestly. Oh I say before all the holy angels in heaven.

And before the Savior himself. What a revolution would take place in Memphis. If every believer here was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Not just filled for a day. Not just filled for a week. But continually present tense filled with the Holy Ghost.

I must hurry because there are many firsts here. You know many firsts in this experience. I must finish.

The last could be the first action of a new born soul. The first action of a new born soul. He went straight way into the synagogues.

And preached Christ as the Son of God. Isn't that wonderful? He didn't procrastinate. He didn't say well you know.

I am all muddled and confused in my religious thinking. Because you know. I thought Jesus Christ was just a mere man.

And he was a Jewish religious imposter. But now he is the Son of God. I will have to go to Bible school before I start witnessing.

Or some theological seminary. Someone will have to teach me. But glory be to God.

There was no procrastination. He went straight way and began to preach Christ in the synagogues. And that would cost him a lot solitarily.

Now the first instinct to the new born soul. Is to tell somebody else. About the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now friends this is a test. As I say I don't care how backward you are. I don't care how diffident you are.

And how shy you are. If you are born again. If you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

One of the first evidences that will be straight way. You go and try to tell somebody else about the Lord. Andrew was nobody.

Maybe timid and shy. But when he found Christ he had to tell Peter about it. The woman of Samaria.

She left her water pot behind her. Why? Because she wanted to run. Faster and faster to her village.

To say come see a man. Which has told me all things whatsoever I did. Is not this the Christ? And one lone woman brought about a revival.

Because she had a gushing heart. She was just so happy to be saved. Now she said I must tell everybody about my Lord.

Now a Bible school is helpful. A theological course is helpful. But that is not necessary for you to witness.

Are you witnessing? Are you a soul winner? Are you witnessing here? Day by day. Week by week. Here in Memphis, Tennessee.

That is the first action of a new born soul. Now if you have no desire to tell others about the Lord Jesus. Let me say this Mark.

You are not saved. Oh no you are not saved. It is an utter impossibility for you to have the loving Lord Jesus living in your heart.

And you not want to tell somebody about him. It is an utter impossibility. Now we have all degrees of enthusiasm for soul winning for Christ.

Of course. But if you knew him. I don't care you could be baptized into 20 Baptist churches in the city of Memphis.

You could be a Sunday school teacher. Sing in the choir. But if you don't spontaneously want to tell somebody about the Lord Jesus Christ.

I put a question mark over your compassion. Because this is the first action of a new born soul. Straight way.

You are going to tell somebody. Oh I am saved. Do you know what happened to me? I was born again.

In the central Baptist church. Oh do you know what happened to me? The Lord washed away my sins. Do you know what happened to me? I am a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Could I tell you about my Savior? Now you may go with fear and trembling. I began with fear and trembling. Oh yes.

I began with fear and trembling. But my heart was in it. I knelt and prayed and I was burdened to tell people.

But I began with fear and trembling. To witness. And the Holy Ghost gave me power to witness.

And you may go shyly and backward. You may even try 6 or 7 times and go back out of the office. But the 7th time you will go in.

Why? Why because the Lord Jesus is there. And He is so precious. So wonderful.

You say, you are so wonderful. You don't need to whip and scourge a young man to talk about Mary and his gene. No, no, no, no.

If he loves his Mary or gene, spontaneously he is going to talk to everybody about her. And it is love. And Paul says in Galatians 2.20 The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

And that is a wonder. And you spontaneously tell people about the Redeemer. Have you this evidence you are born again? You are a new creation in Christ Jesus? You see, if you say you go to heaven and don't want to bring other people with you.

Then there is no evidence you are going to heaven yourself. May I close with this story? We only have one son. And our son Jimmy for the past six years or so has been evangelizing among the dole pad dicks in

Great Britain.

He is also in the factories all through Great Britain. And among the railway men in the railway yards. And many times he will be called at 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the morning to a railway crash.

60 miles down the highway. And then identify the dead bodies and try to bring the dead bodies out. And then notify the dear ones whose people had been killed in the railway accident.

And it is a terrible thing to be there in these railway accidents. There are quite a number in Great Britain. And you see them more often because they are so compact.

Not the size of our great continent. And there was a terrible railway accident. And there were hundreds groaning and crying out.

All covered over with the steel and the coaches. And the dying and people crying dying, dying. Doctor, doctor, doctor.

And you know in the coach in a miraculous way there was one of the leading surgeons of Great Britain. But alas you see, although he had escaped with his life and was only bruised in the last coach. He did not have his instruments with him.

And he rushed up and down the dying like a mad man crying out. Oh, oh, if only I had my instruments. Oh, if I only had my instruments.

And he was tearing his hearing crying out. And he almost went crazy seeing these people dying. But he kept on crying.

Oh, if I only had my instruments. And he left the scene of the dying. Hours and hours later were these words still singing under his breath.

And coming home to his wife and children. Oh, if I only had my instruments. And for the next few weeks that's all the physicians.

And his friends could hear him say. Oh, if I only had my instruments. Now friend, there's the lost and dying all around the boroughs in Memphis.

And the 40 mission fields of the air. And I can hear the Saviour say. Oh, if I only had my instruments.

The Lord Jesus has a heart of compassion for the lost and dying. And he's saying this morning. Oh, if I only had my instruments.

Are you willing to be one of his instruments? God can't touch the world through you. God can't touch that unsaved person apart from you. He can't touch the world apart from you.

He needs the human vessel. He needs the human instrument. Will you say this morning.

Oh God, I know you can't touch my next door neighbour. Except through me. Lord, I know you can't touch these unsaved friends of mine.

Here in Memphis without me. Lord, I know you cannot touch the heathen without me. Lord, what will thou have me to do? Oh God, I want to be thy instrument of blessing.

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