



REFLECTIONS

January 17, 2021

**All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself
through Christ and gave us the ministry of
reconciliation...**

2 Corinthians 5:18

Ministers of Reconciliation

Paul, or Saul of Tarsus as he was first known, has been referenced in many of these *Reflections*. As a dedicated and highly educated Pharisee, he first purposed his life to protect and defend God's law as his teachers had taught. His purpose may have been well intended, but his actions often maligned it instead. *Love your neighbor as yourself* is central both to the Law of Moses and Jesus' teachings; but Saul's actions exemplified neither.

His horrific attacks on a movement of Jesus' followers called the Way built a terrorist's reputation. The reputation preceded his travels wherever he went, and repudiated Jesus' command to *love your enemies*.

One can speculate why Jesus chose to encounter Paul on the Damascus road. Jesus may have been attracted to Paul's competitive nature as suggested by his references to the importance of training and perseverance to athletic performance. Or maybe Paul's persuasive writing and speech made him a prime candidate for the job Jesus had in mind for him. Or Jesus may have wanted you and me to see how God uses sinners to server his purposes. But whatever the reason for Jesus' choice, Paul had a reputation to address before he could effectively do the job.

Words may be inspirational, and wisdom may turn heads, but no matter their allure, wisdom and words fall unheeded unless the speaker is also known to live them. So, Paul's reputation needed repair.

God uses wilderness experiences to produce a state of brokenness. Brokenness is the condition when one is unable to help themselves *and* is willing admit it. Examples include Joseph's years of separation from his family to develop his leadership skills; Daniel's months in captivity to formulate his prophecies; and John the Baptist and Apostle Paul had years in the wilderness to prepare their messages. But at least as important, to prepare to live them out.

God reconciled all of these to himself through Christ and gave them roles in the ministry of reconciliation.

Now today, doesn't it seem like a good time for Jesus to place such a call to you and me?

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org



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