



REFLECTIONS

May 15, 2022

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Hebrews 9:14

Dismayed

Dismay echoed in his voice; disbelief in what he had become. With all the evil things Paul had done in the name of God, who wouldn't. But God let him do those terrible things! And there Paul sat, writing instructions and explanations for his trainee to follow in Paul's footsteps.

First, he urged Timothy to pray for everyone, especially those in authority, that they would all live quiet and peaceful lives in holiness, and that they would learn the truth that there is one God, and one mediator between them, Jesus Christ, who sacrificed his life that they may be saved. And then, Paul's big surprise—"I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles." (1 Timothy 2:7)

Now how did that happen!

Paul (or Saul as he was known then) set about on a career to serve God. He went to the best schools, trained under a premier teacher of the law, and he rose in the ranks of the Pharisees to become a zestful leader and a vicious enforcer of God's law.

Once, when a crowd heard Stephen accuse them of disobedience to God's law, ... *they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. ...And Saul was there, giving approval to [Stephen's] death. [After that,] Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.* (Acts 7:56-57, 8:1, 3)

Yet, Jesus wanted Paul no matter what bad things he had done. So He grabbed Paul's attention on the road to Damascus, sent him to the desert to sort things out, exposed him to Christian leaders, then to Paul's dismay, sent him on the road to become "*a herald and an apostle ... and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.*"

And we may be dismayed and disbelieving to hear that no matter what bad things we have done, Jesus wants you and me too.

He sacrificed his life *so that we may serve the living God!*

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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