

FROM ENEMY TO FRIEND

Int.

1. Aim: To show some lessons we can learn from the conversion of Saul.
2. **Acts 9 - Acts 22:1-16** tells the story of the conversion of Saul.
3. Story of the great change
 - a. Ancestry - Jew - spoke Hebrew
 - b. Education - Gamaliel
 - c. Religion - Pharisee of the Jews
 - d. Reaction to church - Persecuted
 - e. Conversion - Christian
 - f. Life - Dedication
4. Nothing new or startling in these facts
5. From these facts we can learn many lessons

Discussion

I. ANCESTRY MEANS NOTHING IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS

- A. Acts 22:3,4 "I am verily a man [which am] a Jew, born in Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, [and] taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."
- B. I am a Jew
 1. In order to refute their charge that he taught against Moses, he calls attention to his Jewish birth,
 2. He was a descendant of Abraham

C. God does not view us according to our pedigree or our nationality

1. God is not a face looker - He is a heart looker
2. Acts 10:34,35 "Then Peter opened [his] mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
3. "Shows no partiality" - NKJV
4. Gal. 3:28

II. HAVING A GREAT TEACHER WILL NOT NECESSARILY SAVE US

A. Saul was taught by Gamaliel one of the greatest teachers of his day - but he was still a lost man - Acts 22:3

B. Having a great preacher or teacher will not save us

1. Many feel that knowing a great preacher or teacher will save them.
2. It makes no difference how great they were or how well we knew them
3. We must obey God our self
4. We will be judged individually - 2 Cor 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad."

C. Saul was not saved merely because he had a great teacher

1. 1 Cor. 3:6-7 "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."
2. Those who plant and water are important - but it is God who saves us.

III. BEING RELIGIOUS, SINCERE AND ZEALOUS IS NOT ENOUGH TO SAVE US

A. Scriptures

1. Acts 22:3,4 "I am verily a man [which am] a Jew, born in Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, [and] taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was **zealous toward God**, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."
2. Gal. 1:13-14 "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."
3. Matt. 7:21-23
4. Acts 26:5 "Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

B. Paul was zealous - busy persecuting the Christians - but he was lost

1. We can be religious and be very busy
2. That alone is not enough, we must do the will of God

C. Could Paul's sincerity turn error into truth? No ! Neither can it do that today .

IV. IT IS POSSIBLE TO PERSECUTE CHRIST WHILE BEING SINCERE

A. Paul was:

1. "And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." Acts 22:4
2. Sincere - believed he was right
3. Zealous - filled with eagerness and enthusiasm
4. Conscientious - obeyed conscience always - Acts 23:1 "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men [and] brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
5. Active - always working

B. Yet

1. Christ was not on the earth, but Saul was persecuting Christ
2. Acts 9:4 "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"
3. He was persecuting Christ ! How?
4. To persecute Christ is to persecute the Church
5. Not by tearing down a church building
6. But by persecuting the members of the church - Gal. 5:15 - "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

C. We can be sincere and persecute Christ

1. Paul was mistaken
2. What he thought was right and good was bad and evil
3. We persecute Christ by persecuting Christians !

V. WHEN WE LEARN WE ARE WRONG WE SHOULD ADMIT IT

- A. Paul realized he had been wrong
 - 1. He asked. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6
 - 2. He did not ignore his sins
 - 3. He didn't try to make excuses -

- B. We must admit our faults and sins
 - 1. It's easy to tell others this
 - 2. But it's hard for us to do it
 - 3. We must have humility so we will admit our sins
 - 4. Let us be like wet clay not like hard concrete

- C. Paul was ready to change when he saw he was wrong

- D. We must also be ready to change if we see we are wrong

VI. A LOST MAN IS NOT SAVED BY FAITH ONLY

- A. Paul was not saved by faith only
 - 1. Jesus told Saul what to do - Acts 9:4-6
 - 2. He believed immediately when Jesus told him what to do
 - 3. Was he saved?
 - a. If so Saul didn't know it - he asked what to do
 - b. If so Christ didn't know it - He told him to go and it shall be told the
 - 4. He had to Obey

B. Walls of Jericho fell by faith - Heb. 11:30

1. They did not fall when they believed
2. They fell after all the acts of obedience were completed

C. James 2:20-26

1. We are not saved by dead faith
2. Body + spirit = live body
3. Body - spirit = dead body
4. Faith + works = live faith
5. Faith - works = dead faith

D. A believer is not saved out of Christ

1. What act of obedience puts one into Christ?
2. Baptism - Gal. 3:26-27

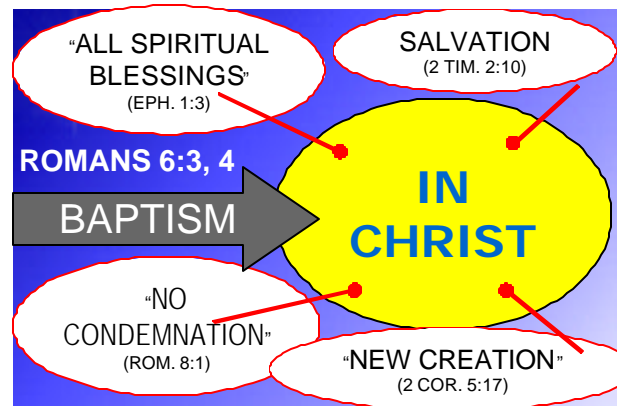
E. Paul was not saved on the road to Damascus

1. Told to go into Damascus- Acts 22:10 "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do."
2. He could not have been saved if he still had sins

VII. IMMERSION BRINGS ONE INTO THE CHURCH

- A. Saul was baptized to wash away his sins
1. Acts 22:16
 2. One cannot be in the church until his sins are gone
 3. Baptism is where we have our sins washed away
 - a. Acts 22:16 - 1 Pet. 3:21 - Acts 2:38
 - b. Mark 16:16 - Rom. 6:3 - Gal. 3:27

- B. We must be in Christ to have
1. All Spiritual Blessings - Eph. 1:3
 2. Salvation - 2 Tim. 2:10
 3. No Condemnation - Rom. 8:1
 4. New Creation - 2 Cor. 5:17



- C. The way into Christ is through Baptism - Rom. 6:3-4 "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

VIII. AFTER BECOMING A CHRISTIANS WE MUST DEVOTE OUR LIFE TO CHRIST

- A.** Notice what Paul did

1. Phil. 1:21 "For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain."
2. Rom. 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service."

3. 2 Tim. 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith:"

- a. Fought the good fight
- b. Finished my course
- c. Kept the faith

B. We, like Paul, must be dedicated

Conclusion

1. From Enemy to Friend
 - a. You may be sincere but sincerely wrong, like Paul
 - b. Admit your mistakes and obey God's will
 - c. Be dedicated and you will also have a crown of life awaiting you when you have finished your course
2. Are you:
 - a. Fighting the good fight
 - b. Finishing the course
 - c. Keeping the faith
3. Paul changed from an enemy of the church to a friend of the church
4. Paul the persecutor became Paul the preacher.
5. He was an enemy of the church but became a friend of the church.
6. If you are outside of Christ - living in sin - you are an enemy of Christ
7. To be a friend of Christ you must be obedient