

Covenant Life

- We are meeting **today** for an in-person Prayer Meeting at 4pm in the MSM gym. If you are able, please join us to praise and worship our Lord. We are still practicing social distancing but since so many have been vaccinated, this is excellent opportunity to Gather together once again to Be the People He has called us to be and support one another on our journey to Him and the mission He has entrusted to us!
- Our next Gathering will be a special Prayer Meeting on Pentecost, Sunday May 23rd at 4pm. Please allow the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart for this special outpouring of His Spirit by participating in our **Let the Fire Fall Challenge**. Details are [here](#).
- How are you doing on this week's Challenge? Laura's email asked us to pray and then reach out to reconnect with a community member asking them how you can pray for them. It is not too late to join in...today is a perfect day to respond.
- The Holy Spirit has been speaking a powerful word to us at our last two Gatherings and our daily prayer times will be blessed by allowing the word to minister to us...the audio recordings are [here](#), the summaries are [here](#), and the transcripts are [here](#).
- Your ongoing financial support is sincerely appreciated. Please donate online [here](#) or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, Tx 75222.

Reflection - Reflecting on the readings today, I was drawn to Saul's plight. Here was a man completely changed by His encounter with our Lord. He went from one extreme to the other...from persecutor to passionate evangelist. Thinking back on my own journey I see many parallels. What impressed me about the people I met at Sunday prayer meetings was their zeal, their passion for our Lord. They were very different from those I encountered at church, at school, or work. They were on fire with love and zeal for the Lord. And their testimonies at the microphone witnessed that it was not just a 90-minute praise and worship change but their whole lives were transformed.

What was it that transformed Saul? What had transformed these radical people praising the Lord in that gym? Of course, it was a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. When we humble ourselves and let Jesus in, we

cannot help but become a new creation. Our whole world changes. We go from head knowledge to heart experience. We share our Lord's passion for telling His story. It does not matter what happens to us, we just cannot help but spread His love and joy to everyone we meet.

Barnabas saw this transformation in Saul and welcomed him into community. We do this for each other. We love, support, and care for one another as we need each other to live this new, transformed life. Why? Because living a transformed life is not easy. The Hellenists tried to kill Saul and we too face our own trials. But we have each other. Saul's community "*sent him on his way*". I had to think on that a while. I supposed that Saul was not looking to be sent away. I would think that he would have been content to stay with the other disciples in that community and continue his mission work there. But God had another plan and that is how it is with His disciples. It is not about our own good ideas, it is about surrendering to His will, being open to hear it, and then acting with full faith, trust, and confidence in our response.

Saul, transformed into Paul the Apostle, obediently left, and transformed the Church of his day. He established churches throughout gentile lands and his letters to these communities represent over half of our New Testament. Think of the lasting impact on the world of his letters and what might have been had he not accepted being sent away...

If we think back to our own personal story, we will recall our 'moment of encounter'. While maybe not as dramatic as Saul's, God reached out to each one of us and revealed Himself, His love for us, His desire for us to be His son or daughter, and His desire that we help Him spread His message to the world of our day. Maybe we were as passionate as Paul for a time. Maybe we are less so now. Maybe God is asking us to again recall our personal encounter and join Paul running the race "*to win*" (1 Cor 9:24) so on our last days we will be able to also join him in saying that we have "*competed well, finished the race, kept the faith*" (2 Tim 4:7-8).

Let us pray *"Jesus, You are the vine and I am sorry for the times I have not remained in You and have chosen to focus on my own wants and needs. Allow me to recall the transformation of our first encounter. Allow me to feel again that passion that drove me to speak of You every day to anyone and everyone I met. It is my ardent desire to run the race to You to win...to follow Paul's example of building Your kingdom despite the trials that I encounter. I will listen to You and my Community and go where You send me. I will do my part and bring as many of Your children with me to You as I can. Hear my prayer. I pledge to remain in You and accept Your promise to "ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you." I present my needs to You, surrender to You, and leave these intentions with You. Amen."*

God bless,
David