

Following the Real Jesus: Into the World

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Saturday, May 8, 2021

Acts 5:41-42; 8:1,3; 9:1-2a,3-5,15-16,19-21

1 Corinthians 15:1-10; Luke 22:17-20

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Jesus passed his mission on to the church. The church is literally the gathering of Jesus' followers. It's a "going" gathering that makes new followers.

⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Acts 5:41

⁴² Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:42

The good news was just too good to keep to themselves.

¹ Saul agreed that the killing of Stephen was good. On that day the church of Jerusalem began to be persecuted, and all the believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Acts 8:1

³ Saul was also trying to destroy the church, going from house to house, dragging out men and women and putting them in jail. Acts 8:3

The church is the followers of Jesus. It's not the building. It is the message and the mission to tell the world that Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead.

¹ In Jerusalem Saul was still threatening the followers of the Lord by saying he would kill them. So he went to the high priest ^{2a} and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Acts 9:1-2a

³ So Saul headed toward Damascus. As he came near the city, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. Acts 9:3

⁴ Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

⁵ Saul said, "Who are you, Lord?" The voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Acts 9:4-5

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Acts 9:15-16

If you are a follower of Jesus, then you are a chosen instrument, too.

¹⁹ Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰ At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. Acts 9:19–20

This is what repentance looks like. Sharing your story is essential.

²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? Acts 9:21

¹ Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 1 Corinthians 15:1

“The very first function of the good news was to give people stability. In a slippery world, it kept them on their feet. In a tempting world, it gave them power to resist. In a hurting world, it enabled them to endure heartbreak or physical suffering and not to give in.” ~ William Barclay

What you stand on, what holds your life up is what you have placed your hope on.

² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:2

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 15:5-6

⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 1 Corinthians 15:7-8

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 1 Corinthians 15:9

¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. 1 Corinthians 15:10

Paul isn’t loved by God because he is good enough or decent enough or because he is doing his “best”. It is God’s undeserved gift of acceptance that saves Paul.

“Your wickedness is greater than you thought, but God’s love is greater than you ever dreamed.”
~ Timothy Keller

¹⁷ Then Jesus took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this cup and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸ I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until God’s kingdom comes.” Luke 22:17–18

¹⁹ Then Jesus took some bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the apostles, saying, “This is my body, which I am giving for you. Do this to remember me.” Luke 22:19

²⁰ In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup and said, “This cup is the new agreement that God makes with his people. This new agreement begins with my blood which is poured out for you. Luke 22:20

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He was raised. He appeared. And I believe it.