

Changing or Being Changed

Sunday, August 22, 2021

SERIES TEXTS:

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 Samuel 10:6

6 The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you...and you will be changed into a different person.

Are we **CHANGING** (conforming more and more to the things of this world) or **are we BEING CHANGED** (transformed) by the power of God?

We have seen that God wants to **TRANSFORM** us by giving us...

- **A CHANGED LIFE...** Mary Magdalene
- **CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES...** A father and a demon possessed boy
- **A CHANGED FUTURE...** The demoniac of Gadara
- **A CHANGED DESTINY...** Lazarus
- **CHANGED DIRECTION...** Jonah
- **A CHANGED WALK...** Jacob
- **CHANGED VALUES...**
- **CHANGED PRIORITIES...** Would be followers of Jesus
- **CHANGED THINKING...**
- **A CHANGED UNDERSTANDING** - Nicodemus
- **A CHANGED MIND...**
- **CHANGED CHOICES...** The Prodigal Son
- **A CHANGED ATTITUDE...** The Older Brother
- **A CHANGED HEART...** Jonah, James and John
- **A CHANGED PURPOSE...** Peter

Today I want us to examine the life of Paul and consider how his Encounter with Jesus **CHANGED** his **PASSION**

KEY TEXT:

Acts 7:57-8:1

⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

8 And Saul approved of their killing him.

Acts 9:1-30

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

⁵ “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. ⁶ “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

¹³ “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

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. 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? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

²³ After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰ When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Acts 11:25-26

²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

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What does it mean to be PASSIONATE?

- Eager
- On Fire
- Ready to do something
- Excited
- Yearning
- Striving
- Pressing Forward
- Hungry for More
- Filled to overflowing
- Enthusiastic
- In Love
- Active
- Strong Desire
- Going After
- Devoted
- Zealous

It's not enough to be passionate. Our passion must have the right focus.

Paul is the perfect example of Changed Passion. Before his encounter with Jesus his passion was focused on his own agenda, on persecuting Christians, on following the law and putting an end to this Jesus sect. He was willing to search them out and hand them over to the authorities to be put in prison. He was willing to stand by and approve of their deaths. He took pride in his religious training and position.

But Paul's PASSION was radically transformed by Jesus.

How about you? Does your passion conform to the world, or are you allowing it to be transformed by the power of God?

VIDEO: My Call - Priscilla

Isn't it amazing how God can change us? The power of God changed Priscilla and gave her a new passion. Paul's PASSION was changed by God too. The scriptures teach us a lot about Paul's PASSION following his conversion.

Paul was Passionate about his SALVATION

1 Timothy 1:13-16

¹³ Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Paul was passionate about TELLING OTHERS about JESUS

Acts 9:20, 28

²⁰ At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

Paul was passionate about BUILDING THE CHURCH

Romans 15:20 (NLT)

²⁰ My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- He loved the church and expressed his love
- He longed to be with them and was sad when he couldn't
- He encouraged us to be faithful to meeting together

Paul was passionate about bringing the church together in UNITY

1 Corinthians 1:10

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Ephesians 4:2-3

² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Paul was passionate about DOCTRINE

1 Timothy 4:16

¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Paul was passionate about THE LOST

Acts 16:9-10

⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Acts 16:30-32

³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

Paul was passionate about KNOWING JESUS MORE

Philippians 3:10-11

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul was passionate about GETTING RID of the OLD LIFE and learning to walk RIGHTEOUSNESS and HOLINESS

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 6:19

19 ...Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, 7

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; **4** that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable,

7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

Paul was passionate about BEING SEPARATED from the evil things of this World

Galatians 5:24

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? **15** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." **17** Therefore "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

Paul was passionate about BEING FILLED with The Holy Spirit

Acts 19:1-6

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ² and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

³ So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

⁴ Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Ephesians 5:18

¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,

Paul was passionate about THE GIFTS of The Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11, 31

12 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

1 Corinthians 14:39

³⁹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

Paul was passionate about THE FRUIT of The Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:16, 22-23

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Paul was passionate about REMAINING PASSIONATE

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:6

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Sometimes we need fresh encounters with God's power so that our Passion can be reignited