



Links Daily Devotional

Bible Study

Week of September 30, 2007

NO DENYING PAUL

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

LAUGHED HEARTILY. My friend had just told me about a fellow he’d met at work. “Guy said he was an 11,” my friend said. “So we went out to play. He shot about 130.”

With the evidence right there for all to see, the poor hacker had to back down. He was no 11.

We have probably all been in this fellow’s camp. We’ve spoken out of turn, inflated our abilities, been called on to prove ourselves, and failed miserably. Speaks volumes on behalf of truth, doesn’t it?

That’s why I find so much strength in the life of Paul. His life revealed the truth that had flooded him—washing out the hatred, flushing the condemnation—on the road to Damascus.

Surely some who knew him wrote it off as a silly dream. Heck, doubters still do that today, along with huge chunks of the Bible. Fables, they call it. Fabrications. But they’re forgetting the evidence. Paul didn’t just wake up in the end-of-slumber sense; he woke up in every sense. He was a new man.

For instance, he didn’t just say, “Wow, I’m a wicked man. I’ll stop persecuting these poor fools. They’re weak of mind and heart anyway. No matter to me.” That’s how most of us would repent. Not Paul. His change was wholesale. He didn’t just stop beating them; he joined them. More than that, he would birth them, teach them, lead them.

And in doing all this, he went from hater to hated. For the sake of a “dream,” he withstood the long-winded hesitations of the apostles. For the sake of a “dream,” he endured the death threats and scourgings and hunger. For the sake of a “dream,” he lived as much in prison as out. And for the sake of a “dream,” he went to his death. There’s only one possible explanation for all this, you know. Paul’s “dream” was reality.

More evidence

Read Galatians 1:11-17. What did Paul have to lose by turning to Christ?

Read Galatians 1:18-24. Who was among the important leaders to evaluate what had occurred in Paul’s life? What conclusion did they draw about him?

Read Galatians 2:1-10. What was Paul’s chief calling in his ministry for Christ? What was the balance between hesitation and acceptance among those who would affirm him? How does this balance further confirm the authenticity of the change that had happened in Paul’s life?

Unto us

How does Paul’s surrendering of his “glory days” for the sake of Christ challenge and inspire you as you say *yes* to Christ each day?

Lord God, Make us more Your own with each day of surrender to You. Amen.