

## LESSON 10



## PAUL, A PRISONER FOR CHRIST

**Scripture Texts:** *Philippians 3:4-17; 2 Corinthians 11:24-33; Acts 22:3-29*

In this lesson we study how Paul's conversion and life of hardship became a pattern of Christian living to all future Christians (1 Timothy 1:16).

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."*

*Philippians 3:7*

### His Beginning

The reasons for a strong spiritual struggle to Paul are fairly clear. Paul had to desert the law for the Gospel, which was against all his training and beliefs. For him to turn to Christ would, no doubt, sicken his parents, turn his friends from him, surrender his future, and deny his concept of God and His law. By becoming a Christian, he would open his life to hardship, persecution, and suffering, even as he had inflicted these things on others.

Who knows what all went through Paul's mind while he traveled the road to Damascus? But one thing we can be sure of was the message of a young man by the name of Stephen, whom he had seen killed for his stand for the Gospel. What an impression that man's life and death had made on Paul's mind, and he never got away from the effects of it. Paul was sincere and honest. Thus, when the heavenly vision came, he willingly surrendered his life to Christ.

### His Conversion

Paul's surrender marks one of the great events in Christian history. His beginning was amazing and his Christian life was even more amazing. Few, if any, have ever equaled his devotion to Christ; none has ever surpassed it. No wonder that he referred to his conversion as a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Christ. What an example of radiant joy, unending faith, and strength made perfect in weakness. Can one find any greater personal endurance and dependence on Christ in the face of hardship?

### His Course

A great quality of Paul's life is in his forsaking of self that Christ could live in him in his daily walk on earth. He said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Paul lost his own identity that Christ might fulfill His purpose through him. His life and message was "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." From the halls of kings' palaces, jail cells, and the shadow of death, he handed down to us a great part of the New Testament writings. What would our lives be like today if it were not for these writings of Paul? Paul encouraged us to be brethren, to be followers together, to know that Christians are interdependent upon each other and upon Christ. No Christian can live separate and apart from other Christians.

Paul would also let us know that there is a crown of life awaiting all who endure to the end, who keep pressing on "towards the mark; for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Do you consider the crown worth pressing for?

**Just a Thought**

**"Few speed records are broken when people run from temptation."**