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The Apostle Paul

Gail Cooper

Ouachita Baptist University

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THE APOSTLE PAUL

by

Gail Cooper

for

Dr. Vester E. Wolber

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Ouachita Baptist University

THE APOSTLE PAUL

Saul of Tarsus was a devout Jew. He felt that it was his duty to persecute the foolish followers of the man, Jesus. When Saul met the Lord on the Damascus road, Jesus Christ was revealed to him. Saul's name was changed to Paul. When the truth was revealed to Paul, he did an about-face and turned his allegiance wholly to Jesus Christ. Paul knew that God had set him apart before he was born and through his grace had revealed His Son, Jesus Christ. Paul knew the truth and was determined to fulfill God's plan.¹

Paul knew that his authority of the Gospel was from God. He had a message from God—Jesus Christ and Him crucified.² This Gospel was simple, and Paul had seen God, and most of all wanted to serve God, not man. He was not egotistical—just firm and convinced that he was a chosen vessel, and no person, institution, law, or government would keep Paul from sharing this simple Gospel to all men.

¹Galatians 1:11-15.

²I Corinthians 2:2-5.

Paul felt that he had not only been chosen to preach the Gospel, but this Gospel was for all men. He said that he became all things to all men to win them.¹ He was able to meet a person from any walk of life and could share this wonderful message with him. Paul said that he became a slave and a Jew to win people; this was the sharing of his soul with his fellow man. He shared his life simply and firmly. He knew he had the truth and felt that no man had a right to question God.

Paul could understand his Jewish friends better than others because he had been on the same side of the fence. He felt that God had dealt with him in such a way that it would give him deeper insight into his Jewish friends beliefs; thereby, enabling Paul to have the ability and knowledge to meet the situation and win a victory for Christ.

Paul was a humble man. He felt that a Christian should be humble. Paul did not have to work at this humility because he only had to look at his past life and remember what he had done to the followers of Jesus.

¹I Corinthians 9:19-24.

Paul never forgot that he was an ambassador for Christ. He always wanted to be the best example for Christ. When he told his people to attend to their own affairs and be independent, he was really saying that this is what God has shown me to be and do, so you do likewise.

Paul was not a shallow person, nor did he want his people to be shallow. He felt that he must be fully dedicated to one worthwhile cause—Jesus Christ** and this he asked from every believer.

Least of all did Paul feel that he should be a stumbling-block to anyone. He wanted to do many things in life, and they were lawful, but Paul felt that they would hinder the cause of Christ; Paul would never let this happen if it was in his power. He felt that it was his duty to be the authoritative voice in these ethical teachings set forth by God. Paul would not be enslaved by anything except the cause of Christ.¹

Paul felt that he had a right to give advice about marriage. Whether he had had a bad experience, no one knows; he might have just been an individual

¹I Corinthians 6:1-20.

who was independentⁿ enough and wanted a certain type of life enough to refuse to be dictated to by his Jewish friends. Paul seemed to be very cynical about marriage, but if one looks deeper, he will find Paul's deep dedication to the Lord. This dedication to the Lord was so deep that Paul would not let himself be torn between the home and his Lord. He wanted the freedom to serve God, and he felt that the single person could be the only real effective ambassador for Christ.¹

Paul felt that he could not be a good husband and carry the Gospel of Christ to every person in the world. When Paul told the widows to stay single and if a person could not get his mind off marriage to go ahead and marry, he was not talking through his hat, but was setting down some practical principles. Paul was conscious that he spoke with authority and that these principles could apply to all generations. Paul wanted his people to know where he stood on the marriage issue. Apparently this issue had given Paul many hard battles in his churches.

¹I Corinthians 7

Paul was very conscious of the fact that he was responsible to God and God alone. When Paul said that no man could judge him nor could he even judge himself, he revealed that he was ever conscious of the fact that God was taking note of him and his work. Paul wanted to show people that they shouldn't pronounce judgment, but to work and labor, and God will judge. Paul applied the restriction of judgements to his own life, and he expected others to do the same.

Paul worked hard and set high goals for himself. He expected every Christian to fall right in behind him and do the same. Paul always kept their eyes turned to Christ. He wanted his people to see Christ through and in him.

Paul said that his Gospel was from God, not man. In the Galatian letter he does on the defensive about his Gospel. He plainly and clearly states where his Gospel came from and how he received it. Paul was very firm in his conviction and did not at any time falter, because he was sure from whom he received the Gospel because he saw God himself. He was assured that God had appeared unto him and that God wanted him to carry the Gospel to every person. Paul felt heavy

obligation to tell the Gospel to the Greeks, to the barbarians, to the foolish, to the wise, and to those in Rome. He was not ashamed of this Gospel because he knew that it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.¹

In Romans 12:1-2 Paul seemed to summarize his concept of the Christian life:

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.²

This summarizes what Paul had tried to do in his own life and what he accomplished. His readiness to completely surrender his life gave him a special place as one who has authority from God.

¹Romans 1:8-12

²Romans 12:1-2