

ST. PAUL

THE LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 15

Saul of Tarsus was a real “hater”. He was educated, religious, and privileged, and he hated Christians. All his time and energy were spent hunting them down, seeking to kill as many as he could. Then one day, as he was travelling the road to Damascus (where he hoped to find and arrest more Christians), he was knocked to the ground, a light shone around him, and the voice of Jesus confronted him, saying, “*Why are you persecuting me?*”

This encounter changed his life. He became known as the Apostle Paul and instead of seeking to annihilate Christians, he poured himself out to build up the Church of Christ. By St. Paul’s own account this was not an easy mission:

“Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:24-28).

While in prison, St. Paul wrote many of the letters to the early Christian churches that are a part of our canon of scripture today. Tradition tells us that he was martyred by decapitation. But we also know that he believed all of the hardship he encountered was worth it. He wrote: “*For my Lord’s sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ, and be found in him*” (Philippians 3:8-9).

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Take some time to write out, in your own words, the Gospel story. How has it changed your life? Ask God to help you to “hold fast to the Word”.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through the following collect.

O God, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his manifold labours in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF ST. PAUL, P. 283)

ST. PAUL

1 CORINTHIANS 15: **OUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN**

¹Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

¹²Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain... ²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.... ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.