

Sermon Notes

Saul to Paul: A Good Hope Vision Series Part 1

September 10th – 11th, 2022

- **Saul to Paul: A Good Hope Vision Series**
- We are starting another Vision Series!!
- Let me start with telling you some things that I believe...but that I didn't used to believe.
 - o I believe that God is actually real, not a figment of our collective cultural imagination.
 - And I believe that belief in God is just as rational and reasonable as atheism or agnosticism.
 - o I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, The Messiah, who paid for the redemption of each and any person from the separation from God required by our evil and misplaced actions and thoughts into God's adoptive family and the inheritance that comes with that.
 - o I believe that God has given each of us the ability to choose to either come to Him or reject Him...and that this has present day as well as eternal consequences.
 - o I also believe that everyone who believes the statements above should be highly motivated to know God, and work together with others who believe to represent God well in this world, helping others to choose to come to God rather than reject their Creator who loves them.
- Since I believe things like this I felt I needed to do something...that something is called "Church".
 - o However, "Church" can fail to capture the simple and sublime goodness of God.
 - o My job is to keep "Church" on the right track. Right focus. Right culture. Right heart. Shepherd.
- Simplest way: Vision Statement!!!
- **Saul to Paul: Saul the Young Man**
- Let's weave a Bible story in with our Vision Series. The story of a Bible hero of mine, the Apostle Paul.
- We first hear of a young man who will become Paul, the Apostle...but who is very different at this point.
- **Acts 7:54-8:3**
 - o In this account we see an angry young man, Saul, who thought he was following God.
 - This guy needed Jesus, not religious self-righteous anger. **Acts 7:51-53**
 - Are there others that need Jesus? Today? Out there? In here??
 - o Young Saul made the aggressive mistake, self-righteous hate.
 - Some today still make the mistake of yielding to self-righteous hat.
 - Some today make the opposite mistake, apathetic disengagement.
 - Some have a toxic mix of both hate and apathy.
 - There are plenty of people in this world that need Jesus.
 - o How can you tell if you are making these mistakes? Saul was clueless...what about us??
 - The way of God is the way of Love. What's in your heart?
 - 1) Are you, like Saul, swept away by the controversies of the day into hate? You need Jesus.
 - 2) Are you bored and despondent because everything is pointless? You need Jesus.
 - 3) (Chris Hodges theologically incorrect alter call...) Are you in the Christian world but you don't have a real relationship with God? Just ideas and behaviors to fit in to the group?
- I don't want that for you. God doesn't want that for you. The good news is that A Real Relationship...
- How do you get there?
 - o You can knock and initiate that relationship. **Matthew 7:7-8**
 - o Maybe it's the other way and you need to open the door. **Revelation 3:20**
 - This is for the self-satisfied people. Either religious or not. **Revelation 3:15-18**
 - Don't shut Jesus out because you have it all under control.
 - o Maybe, like young Saul, Jesus will just kick the door down...next time...
- Let's close with something this young angry Saul would say years later. A changed man. Used by God.
 - o **Ephesians 3:14-19**. Saul found out that a real relationship with God was possible...
 - o Let's go get what this prayer wants us to have.
- Get personal prayer by emailing prayer@goodhope.ag.