

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"

~ All articles are written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

Vol. 34 No. 3

July 2021

Terry Carter, Editor



Our Professor's Perspective!

Hard Days, Harder Life!

--By Shane Capps

If you knew that you would have to suffer continually every day for Christ and His Church, would you still be a Christian? To be honest, in our culture in America as of yet, this is not the "norm". It was what the Apostle Paul was called to.

He was told on the Damascus Road to go into the city, and he would be told what he needed to do. **Acts 9:6**

It was here that Paul fasted, prayed, and confessed the Lord for three days and nights. It was Ananias that came to heal Paul, share the Gospel, and baptize him into Christ. **Acts 22:16**

Even Ananias was afraid to go and visit Paul. It was then that the Lord shared an important truth that would prove itself out in the life of Paul.

Acts 9:15-16 says, "But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

In **2 Corinthians** Paul speaks much of his sufferings, especially in

Chapters 4, 6, 11. His sufferings began immediately and continued in unbroken succession for over 30-plus years. For example...

- After being baptized in Damascus ("many days had elapsed,") he was taught for three years in Arabia.
 - After this he went back to Damascus preaching the Gospel. They tried to kill him, so he left. **Acts 9:23**
 - He then went down to Jerusalem where he was preaching the Gospel. He wanted to meet the Church, but they were afraid of him. So, Barnabas took him to Peter and a few others. It was while in Jerusalem they tried to kill him. **Acts 9:29**
 - From here he was sent home to Tarsus, which was known as a university town, as well as a Hellenistic city. He may have been there preaching for five to eight years before he was called to his next ministry.
- It is always the hardest to preach to your family, friends, and those with whom you grew up. That would have brought troubles and challenges. **Acts 9:30**
- It was Barnabas who went and got Paul and brought him to the growing ministry and church of Antioch, which was 300 miles north of Jerusalem; 140 miles south of Tarsus. It was here that

Paul worked with Barnabas. It was here that the people of God were first called "Christians". **Acts 11:26**

- He was next called to be a "missionary," which is Latin for the Greek word "apostle." **Acts 13:1-3**
- It was from here that his sufferings would continue to grow and deepen.
- He was driven out of Pisidian Antioch. **Acts 13:50**
 - They were going to stone him in Iconium. **Acts 14:5**
 - He was stoned and left him for dead in Lystra. **Acts 14:9.**
 - In Philippi, they stripped Paul and Silas, beat them with rods, (in the marketplace before the leaders and the town's people) and put them in jail in stocks. **Acts 16:23-24**
 - In Thessalonica, the Jews tried to attack him, but after three weeks he was sent away at night by the Christians. **Acts 17:5**
 - They drove him out of Berea. **Acts 17:13-14**
 - The Jews caused him trouble in Corinth. **Acts 18:12**
 - In Ephesus, the Jews wanted to kill him. **Acts 19:29**
 - In Corinth, the Jews again planned to kill him. **Acts 20:3**

- In Jerusalem, the Jews again would have killed him if he had not been saved by the Roman soldiers. **Acts 22**
- He was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years.
- He was then imprisoned for two more years in Rome, under house arrest.
- It was while going to Rome the first time that he was shipwrecked. **Acts 27:14ff.**

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 - Paul suffered.

- Imprisonments.
- Beaten times without number.
- Often in danger of death.
- Five times received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. (This is what Jesus received before the cross.)
- Three times he was beaten with rods.
- Once he was stoned.
- Three times he was shipwrecked.
- He spent a night and a day in the ocean.
- In frequent dangers from rivers, robbers, Jews, Gentiles, in the city, in the wilderness, on the sea, and among false teachers.
- He labored in hardship.
- He had many sleepless nights.
- He went hungry without food, thirsty without water, and was in the cold without clothes.
- He had the concern for all the churches on his heart.
- At the end, he was imprisoned for the second time in Rome

where he was executed as a criminal. **2 Timothy 4:6-8**

Paul was not perfect; he was a human just like us. He was not a super apostle. At times his suffering was too much to deal with.

It was during the Second Missionary Tour that his ministry came to a brief stop! Why?

- × He was beaten naked and shamed in Philippi.
- × He had a mob after him in Thessalonica.
- × He was run out of Berea. While in Athens, he saw all the idolatry of the people.

It was while he was in Corinth that he saw the sexual sins of the people. He had been through so much. He had so many hardships, trial after trial, so much suffering, when was it all going to end? He faced one of his greatest enemies besides the devil... discouragement!

Acts 18:9-10 says, "And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."

It seems by the context that Paul's ministry was quiet when he first went to Corinth.

The Lord had to encourage him to continue his work! It was time to preach! It was time to move forward! It was time to continue, which He did continue, finishing the Second Missionary Tour, and moving on to the Third Missionary Tour. Life left Paul tired, broken, weary, and weak. His thorn in the flesh was always before him! **2 Corinthians 12:9**

He knew he would go on and win this race for Jesus.

2 Corinthians 11:29-30 says, "Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense

concern? If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:10 says, "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Where are you today, at the bottom... the very bottom of life? There is hope! His Name is Jesus.

Jesus would say in **John 16:33**... "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Paul would say in **2 Timothy 4:7**... "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"

What Do You Say Today?

- × Friend, do not quit! Life is hard.
- × There are trials.
- × There are hardships.
- × There is real suffering.

We can make it to our goal.

We can make it with Jesus!



Dr. Shane Capps is the preacher of First Church of Christ & professor of Summit Theological Seminary, Peru, IN