

Why Did God Give Us the Apostle Paul?

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. Good morning, I'm Terry Kochi and I'm a member of Women Reading Women and Oikos in the Oaks.

This morning there's reading from the Acts of the Apostles as printed in your liturgy. Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples.

He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus so that if he found any there who belonged to the way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

[1 : 15] Who are you, Lord? Saul asked. I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting, he replied. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless. They heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing.

So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias.

But the Lord said to Ananias, Go. This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.

I will show him how much he must suffer for my name. Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

[2 : 30] Immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name?

And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests? Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews, but they were attempting to put him to death.

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

[3 : 47] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. All right, good morning. We all love a good transformation story, don't we? My family has always loved watching those shows on HGTV where they take an old house and they transform it into a new house.

And then at the end, you see the pictures. You can see the massive difference in the before and the after. And how much more amazing when the thing that's being transformed is not a house, but it's a person, right?

And Christians love to tell these stories about what happens when the love of God the Father and the grace of Jesus Christ and the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit comes into the life of a person and just completely transforms them.

And the transformation story before us is probably one of the most famous of all. It's when Saul of Tarsus was transformed into Paul the Apostle. And Saul is his Hebrew name.

Paul is his Greco-Roman name. You can use either. I'm going to mostly say Paul, okay? Okay. But we not only love stories of transformation, we also, I think, enjoy origin stories as well.

[5 : 04] We want to know, like, how did Tony Stark become Iron Man? And how did Bilbo find the ring? And how did, you know, Endeavor Morse become Inspector Morse?

All these origin stories, Batman, Spider-Man, Luke Skywalker, Harry Potter, we could go on and on. But I would say that the story that surpasses them all, of all those origin stories, is the Apostle Paul's.

And the reason we want to know it well is because Paul wrote 25% of the New Testament. He's the greatest Christian theologian. And particularly in the next few weeks, we're going to be looking at the story about how Paul planted a church in the city of Philippi.

And then later on, he would write a letter to that church in Philippi. And so we want to understand and appreciate who is this guy who founded that church and who wrote that letter?

What was his origin story? What was his transformation story? Now, I don't mean to make you nervous, but this sermon today has five points. And, right, I know, that's anxious laughter.

[6 : 09] I can hear it. But don't worry. I'm going to get you out of here like usual, and you will get lunch. It's going to be okay. But here it is. Smart skeptic. Inconvenient truth.

Sacred darkness. Radical relationship. And passionate mission. That's what I'm going to walk us through. Smart skeptic. Inconvenient truth. Sacred darkness.

Radical relationship. And passionate mission. Let's think about the smart skeptic that we meet here. It says in verse 1 that Saul was breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples.

And I want to suggest to you that God had been carefully and patiently and providentially developing this guy. This smart skeptic in three significant ways. Paul had been living in three worlds.

He'd been straddling three different cultures. And what was Paul's first culture? Paul was primarily Jewish. Right? He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, which is the greatest of the teachers among the Pharisees.

[7 : 14] And Saul excelled. And he became an expert in the scriptures. He became zealous for the Torah. He became zealous for maintaining Jewish identity in this all-pervasive and all-encroaching pagan world.

He became zealous for the coming of the kingdom of God. That age to come that had been promised by the prophets when Israel would be blessed. They would be vindicated.

They would be redeemed. Because God had sent his Messiah. This is what Paul is all about. If you want to get Paul at all, you have to understand that he's zealously Jewish. But what was Paul's second and third culture?

Well, secondly, he was Greek. Paul, there were three great centers of Greek culture in the ancient world. There was Athens in Greece, Alexandria in Egypt, and Tarsus in Turkey, which is where Paul grew up.

Which means that Paul could both quote the scriptures and he could quote the Greek poets and philosophers and moralists. He was absolutely immersed in their framework of thinking and their entire worldview.

[8 : 19] And then his third culture is that Paul was Roman. He was a citizen of the Roman Empire. The whole legal culture of Rome is where Paul developed his reasoning power, his logic, his arguments.

And so what I want you to see is that Paul is this multicultural genius. He's a Jewish, Greek, and Roman polymath. And he would fit in very well here in Berkeley, I think.

One scholar in Oxford, N.T. Wright, he says, Paul is one of the most seminal minds of the first or any century. I persist in regarding him as the intellectual equal of Plato, Aristotle, or Seneca, even though the demands of his overall vocation coupled with his dense style mean that what we possess of his thought is compressed into a fraction of their written compass.

So here's this really, really smart guy. Why is he so skeptical? He's so adamantly opposed to Jesus. He's so zealously persecuting Jesus' people, putting them in prison, sending them to death. Why is he so skeptical? We read on in verse 1, and it says that he went to the high priest, and he asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

[9 : 44] So Paul knows about this statement that Jesus made, this incredible claim where Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to God the Father except through me.

And that meant that all of Jesus' disciples were people who walked in Jesus' way, and trusted Jesus' truth, and lived Jesus' life, and they said, we are the people who belong to the way of salvation that only comes through Jesus.

And Paul said, looked at that in this community of people, and he said, that's ridiculous. He said, you all are, you have it so wrong.

You're misreading the Bible. You're misinterpreting God's story. You're trying to persuade Jewish people that Jesus is the new Torah and the new temple.

You're trying to tell us that he came and fulfilled and brought to a climax all the prophets and priests and kings of Israel. You're trying to tell us that the kingdom of God is not just coming, but it's already come in Jesus?

[10 : 47] And Paul looked at that, and he said, this is a blasphemous heresy. This is a dangerous movement that needs to be stamped out. And so what I want us to remember is that when we read Paul, we need to keep in mind that Paul is this multicultural genius, this highly intelligent, superbly educated, supremely literate, just seminal mind, towering intellectual figure, so that when we come to Paul, and if you ever read Paul, and you say, I don't understand what Paul is saying here, probably the misunderstanding is on your side of the conversation, not on Paul's side, okay?

He is the supreme intellect in that conversation. But also we need to remember that there was no one more skeptical, there was no one more hostile than Paul until he encountered Jesus.

And perhaps you have friends who are multicultural, they're smart, they're intelligent, they're skeptical. Maybe that describes you. And I want to encourage you, as you hear the transformation of this young man, he's in his late 20s, early 30s, I want to encourage you to consider what it might mean for your own potential transformation from who you are now to what God wants you to become, okay?

Here's a smart skeptic we're dealing with. But what happens in the story is that the smart skeptic encounters an inconvenient truth. He encounters an inconvenient truth.

He's walking this 150-mile, one-week-long journey from Jerusalem north to Damascus. And the story starts to heat up in verse 3 where it says, As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

[12 : 32] He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Paul sees a light and he hears a voice.

Right? He sees this brilliant and blinding light and he hears this commanding and probing voice. And he thinks to himself and he knows, this is the Lord.

This is Yahweh. Right? This is the creator God, the God of Israel, that God that dwells in transcendent power and glory. Right?

That God of Genesis 1 who said, Let there be light. And boom, there was light. That God who in Genesis 22 said, Abraham, Abraham. And Genesis 46 said, Jacob, Jacob.

And Exodus 3 at the burning bush said, Moses, Moses. This is the God of the Exodus. This is the God of the Passover. This is the God who parted the waters of the Red Sea.

[13 : 30] And he is speaking to me now. The Lord is saying, Saul, Saul, I have a divine revelation for you. And Paul says in verse 5, Who are you, Lord? And the answer he gets back is, I am Jesus.

I am Jesus. Jesus is Lord. The Lord is Jesus. And this is an extremely inconvenient truth for Paul. Because he has thought to himself, You know, there's no way that God could become human. And there's no way that a man who'd been crucified, Who died the death of a crucifixion, Could be God's Messiah.

And there's no way that one guy in the middle of history Would be raised from the dead. And yet, here he is. Two to three years after that crucifixion, Paul is being accosted from above By this person who identifies himself as both Lord and Jesus.

He's being confronted by this resurrected and ascended Jesus, Who is the living Lord. He's the commanding Lord. He's a probing Lord.

[14:41] And, you know, as I said before, Many of us are not unlike Paul. We're multicultural. We're smart. We're skeptical. And the question for you is, What do you do with this Jesus, Who has been thoroughly crucified?

The Romans were very good at this. He's been thoroughly crucified. This is one of the greatest, Most established facts in human history. What do you do with this Jesus who's been crucified, And yet, here he is stubbornly and inconveniently alive?

What do you do with this Lord who doesn't seem bothered at all, With meddling in the lives of people who don't believe in him? Right?

You've got to deal with this inconvenient truth, That Jesus has been resurrected from the dead. You've got to deal with all of the compelling evidence that we have, That this is a historical event. The empty tomb, The appearances of Jesus, The eyewitness testimony of the people who saw Jesus, The changed lives and the martyrdoms of those eyewitnesses, The birth of the church, The springing up out of the blue and overnight of this utterly new and distinct worldview, The absolute explosion and growth of the Christian movement over the next three centuries, Under intense pressure and persecution in the Roman Empire.

[16:07] How do you explain any of that? Have you dealt with this as an inconvenient truth, That none of these things that changed the world would have happened, Without Jesus rising from the dead?

And that the best explanation by far that all of this happened, Is that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead. Paul's eyes in this moment are open to the brilliance of Jesus, The beauty of Jesus, The authority of Jesus.

He sees that God has raised Jesus from the dead, And it begins to turn his world upside down and inside out. If you're here and exploring Christianity, I want to ask you, Are you willing to put all of your intellectual gifts, And all of your smart mind to work, On what this blinding light and this commanding voice is all about?

Especially all the evidence that I just listed of Jesus' resurrection. Are you able to come up with an alternative plausible explanation For Jesus' empty tomb, And the appearances of Jesus?

And are you willing to consider, That maybe, just maybe, There's this uncreated reality that's beyond you, That is seeking you, That there's this Lord who's up there, And he's calling your name, And there's this resurrected and living person named Jesus, Who's summoning you, With his commanding and his probing voice, Saying, Jonathan, Jonathan.

[17:48] And if that's you, If he's trying to get your attention, In the circumstances of your life, Through a friend, By just, Somehow you're here at church today, If he's trying to get your attention, What is keeping you from answering back, And with an open mind, Just asking, Who are you, Lord?

You know, Paul would go on about 20 years after this unforgettable moment, That he couldn't unsee, And couldn't unhear, And he would write this in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, Where he says, For God, Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, Made his light shine in our hearts, To give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory, Displayed in the face of Jesus Christ.

God made light to shine in our hearts, So that he could give us a knowledge, Of the glory of God, That was shining in the face, Of Jesus Christ. And the question for all of us is, If the light of God's glory, Is displayed in the face of Jesus, Then won't you allow that light, To come into your life?

Won't you allow that light, To come into all those dark places of your heart, And of your life? It's an inconvenient truth, It'll turn your world upside down, But have you considered it?

Here's this smart skeptic, He encounters an inconvenient truth, It throws him down on the ground, He's completely humbled by God, He can't live in denial, Of the resurrection of Jesus anymore, And he's told in verse 6, He's told in verse 6, That now get up and go into the city, And you will be told what you must do.

[19:33] Right? If Jesus is Lord, And if the Lord is Jesus, We're no longer in control, We're no longer calling the shots, We're no longer creating the agenda, Of our lives, As Paul says in one of his letters, You are not your own, Right?

You have a new master, When he says go, You go, And he says do this, You do this, You just have, There's no other way, But to surrender, To his authority, And when Paul does that, It plunges him into this moment, Of sacred darkness, Sacred darkness, Right?

This is, This is what we see, Paul is, The problem, He's been blind, He's seen the light of Jesus, But he's been blinded by, The light of Jesus, And in verse 8, The story goes on, It says, That Saul got up from the ground, But when he opened his eyes, He could see nothing, So they led him by the hand, To Damascus, And for three days, He was blind, He was in the darkness, And he did not eat, Or drink, Anything, He's been blinded, By the light of God's glory, Shining in the face, Of the resurrected Jesus, And it's so radiant, The face of Jesus, Is so radiant, It's so brilliant, It's so beautiful, That ironically, It renders Paul, Unable to see, Right?

For three days, He's sitting there, Just blind, And in the darkness, And you may be wondering, You know, If God loves, Paul so much, Why would he allow him, To experience, The darkness, But I want to suggest to you, That God allows people, That he loves, To enter into, The sacred darkness, As a severe mercy, Right?

As a, As a grace disguised, As a sacred gift, And here is Paul, Like Jesus, Paul's this Jewish guy, He's got so much of the Bible, The, What we call the Old Testament, Memorized, And he's got no phone, Right?

[21 : 30] To distract him, He's got nobody to talk to, He's in the dark, For three days, And so he starts going, Back in his mind, Through the scriptures, That he's memorized, And he begins to think, And pray, Through the scriptures, In the darkness, And he's rethinking, He's rethinking God, In his darkness, Right?

He's thinking to himself, If the creator God, If the God of Abraham, Isaac, And Jacob, Whose glory, I am so, Zealous to defend, If this God, Has, Raised, This crucified man, To life, Then he must be, The son of God, Right?

If Jesus has been raised, Then he must be, The person, In whom, And through, Whom God has come, To rescue us, And if he's been, Raised from the dead, Then surely he, Wasn't crucified, For his own sins, Or for the curse, For his own sins, But he must have come, And paid for the sins, Of other people, Right?

He must have come, So that we could be, Forgiven of our sins, By grace, And Paul, That everything starts, To click into place, For Paul, He says, If Jesus has been, Raised from the dead, Then there's a hope, For us in our future, That we too, Are going to be raised, That in the future, God, Is going to take, All that's wrong, With this world, And he's going to set it, Right?

And he's going to take, The whole world, And it too, Is going to be raised, And remade, And you see, What's going on, In the darkness, Is that the light, Of the gospel, Is starting to glow, In the dark, And in that place, We're told that Paul, He's fasting, He's not eating, Or drinking, For three days, In the dark, We're told in verse 11, That we didn't read, That he's praying, Earnestly praying, And I imagine that Paul, In this very dark place, That he's in, He's saying to himself, Oh God, I'm so sorry, That I've been so blind, To you, I'm so sorry, That I've been so, In the dark about you, This whole time, Oh God, Would you, I thank you, For your mercy, That you've given to me, In Jesus, In revealing Jesus to me, And God, Would you please, Forgive me, And would you please, Give me new life, Give me a fresh, Beginning, You see,

[23 : 52] The sacred darkness, Is what drove Paul, Over the course, Of those three days, To repentance, And to faith, And that's what darkness, Is always meant to do, In our lives, Is to drive us, To repent, And to believe, Okay, So you with me now, This smart skeptic, Faces an inconvenient truth, It plunges him into, A sacred darkness, And then in that sacred darkness, I think Paul, Realizes a radical, Relationship, He realizes, A radical relationship, During those three days, In the darkness, Here's one thing, I'm absolutely confident, That Paul was thinking, About and praying about, He was thinking about, Those words that for the rest, Of his life would ring in his ears, And that he could never unhear, And it was these words, That Jesus said, He said, Why do you persecute me?

He says, I am Jesus whom you, Are persecuting, And I'm sure Paul was sitting there, In the dark thinking, Wait Jesus, Didn't you mean to say, Why am I persecuting your disciples? Why am I persecuting, Those who are following your way?

Why am I persecuting, The members of your church? Shouldn't you have said, Jesus, Why are you persecuting them? Not why are you persecuting me?

But, This moment I think, Is like an absolute, Lightning bolt, For Paul, In the darkness, Because Paul begins to see, That Jesus is so, United, To his people, That, They are in Jesus, And Jesus, Is in, Them, And it's as if, He is the body, And Jesus, Is the head, So that if, You do something to them, You're doing something to me, And boom, Something goes off, In Paul's, Genius mind, Two

things happen, I think, Simultaneously, First of all, Paul sees, That this, Resurrected and living Jesus, Is wanting to have, That kind of a radical relationship, With, With him, You want to have that kind of relationship, With me?

This doctrine, That we call, The union with Christ, What Paul says, Over and over in his letters, About being, Quote, In Christ, Or belonging, To Jesus, In this unbreakable bond, Of covenant, And communion with Jesus, It's a central theme, And everything Paul will preach, And write from this moment on, Because he cannot unhear that voice, And here's just a couple of examples, He says, This is a famous example, In Galatians 2, 20, Paul says, I have been crucified, With Christ, And I no longer live, But Christ lives in me, And the life I now live, And the body, I live by faith, In the Son of God, Who loved me, And who gave himself, For me, In his greatest letter, The letter to the Romans, He says in Romans 6, 4, We were therefore, Buried with Christ, Through baptism, [27 : 06] Into death, In order that, Just as Christ was raised, From the dead, So we too might, Live a new life in him, We've been buried with Christ, And we've been raised with Christ, Ephesians 2, 6, He says, God raised us up, With Christ, And he seated us with him, In the heavenly realms, In Christ Jesus, Friends, Union, With Jesus, Means that everything, That happened to Jesus, Has happened to me, And that I am honored, With all the honor, That God gives to Jesus, I am loved, I am crucified, I am buried, I am raised to new life, I am seated even now, In that place of honor, And authority, With Jesus Christ, And Paul's genius mind, Is blown, Why are you persecuting me, Don't you realize, That they are in me, And I am in them, But there's another aspect, To this union, Because if Jesus,

Is in such, An intimate union, In such radical solidarity, With his people, Then if I want to know, Jesus, Then I must be in union, With his people, And with his church, And here's what it says, In verse 17, I love this man, We never hear about him again, In the rest of the New Testament, But it says, In verse 17, Then Ananias, Went to the house, And entered it, And placing his hands on Saul, He said, Brother Saul, Ananias didn't want to do this, He had to have God come, And tell him to do this, Because Paul is public enemy number one, Paul has been killing people, Like Ananias, But he says, Okay Lord, If that's what you want me to do, And Ananias goes, And he puts his hands on Paul, In this gesture, Of tender love, And blessing, This sign, Of welcome, And acceptance, And what does he call Paul, He says, Brother, You, You're an adopted child, Of the father, You belong, To the family of God, You, Are, A brother, With us, As siblings, Of Jesus, Welcome, Welcome to the family, He says, Brother Saul, The Lord, Jesus who appeared to you, On the road, As you were coming here, Has sent me to you, That you might see again, And that you might be filled, With the Holy Spirit, And immediately, Something like scales, Fell from Saul's eyes, And he could see again, And he got up, And was baptized, And after taking some food, He regained, His strength, Beautiful moment, We need someone, To pray for us, That the presence, And the power, Of the Holy Spirit, Would come upon us, And would fill us up, And when Ananias does that, The healing power of God, Flows into Paul, Flows into his optic nerves, So that he can see again, And then, He's baptized, As a sign that,

He's been washed, All of his sins, Have been washed away, By the blood of Christ, He's baptized, This amazing symbol, That he too, Has been buried with Christ, And that he too, Has been raised, To walk in the newness, Of life, And last but not least, This is very important, Ananias gave him some food, He took him to the potluck, And said, Hey, Welcome to the table, Fellowship of the church, Welcome to the breaking, Of the bread, Welcome to the sacred meal, That gives us strength, So the question friends, Is are we living, In union with Jesus, Are you in him, And is he in you, Are you a real, Member of the body of Jesus, Or do you just show up, From time to time, Are you an authentic, Brother, An authentic sister, In the family of God, That's woven in, With his people,

Do you have, A living relationship, With the living Lord, And with his living church, Alright, We gotta go to lunch, So I gotta, I gotta land the plane, But, Smart skeptic, Encounters an inconvenient truth, Plunges him into sacred darkness, Where he realizes, This radical relationship, And out of that comes, This passionate, Mission, Paul gets a passionate mission, You know, Sometimes our, Our transformations, Might be sudden, And dramatic like Paul, Very often they're slow, And they're subtle, But either way, We realize that Christianity, Is not a set of beliefs, It's not a set of teachings, It's not a set of ethics, That we decide to take up, Rather it's a person, And it's a power, Who takes us up, And when he takes us up, He also sends us out, With a new mission, And a new purpose, For our lives, It says in verse 15, That Ananias, Gives the words, Of Jesus to Paul, He says,

[32 : 14] This man is my chosen instrument, To proclaim my name, To the Gentiles, And their kings, And to the people of Israel, And obviously, The task of the apostle Paul, Is a unique task, But, All the disciples of Jesus, Are meant to share, In the mission of Jesus, Every baptized Christian, In their own unique, And individual way, Is a chosen instrument, To share the good news, And how did Paul do it, Well it says, Immediately, He didn't go and, You know, Take three years, Of seminary classes, It just says, Immediately, At once, He began, To tell people, That Jesus, Is the son of God, And in verse 22, It says, He began to prove to people, That Jesus is the Messiah, That the Messiah is Jesus, And in verse 28, That he was speaking, Boldly in the name, Of the Lord, What this means, Is that Jesus wants, To work through his people,

That we might faithfully pray, For our friends, Our family, Our co-workers, And our neighbors, For their hearts, To become open to God, And Jesus wants, Through his people, He wants us to initiate, Simple conversations, That can become, Serious conversations, That can lead to spiritual conversations, And Jesus wants us, Humbly, And yet boldly, Like Paul, To just invite people, To consider, Jesus, Is he the son of God, Is he the Messiah, Is he the Lord, If you ask anybody, On our alpha team, Anybody going through, Our alpha course, Anybody who came, To our alpha weekend, Last weekend, They will tell you, That this has been, An amazing new thing, In our church, As a way to, Engage with Jesus, In his mission, And we can't wait, For it to begin again, We wish it were starting sooner, So I encourage you, If you weren't part of this, First go round, To get ready, And to come, And be part of alpha, Next year, But I'll just close,

With these words, That Jesus gave, To Paul, When in Acts 26, Paul is recounting, This experience, We get a bit of a fuller, Explanation of the mission, That Jesus gave him, And Jesus says, Paul, Paul, I'm sending you out, Into a very dangerous world, I'm sending you out, Among people who, Are going to think you're crazy, I'm sending you out, Into the wider, World of Greco-Roman, Paganism, And he says, The reason I'm sending you, Is because I want you, To open their eyes, And I want, To turn them, From darkness to light, I want to turn them, From the power of Satan, To the power of God, That they might receive, The forgiveness of sins, And find a place, Among those, Who are sanctified, By faith in me, I think this is, One of the most funny stories, In the New Testament, It's absolute, Pure, Comedic gold, Because here's this man,

Who's been the most skeptical, The most hostile, The most keen, To stamp this message out, And now, He's the one being sent out, With this message, About the light of Jesus, And the power of Jesus, And the forgiveness of Jesus, And the belonging, That can only be found, In Jesus, And friends, If God can change Paul, Is there anybody, He cannot change, If God can change Paul, There is no one, He cannot change, And so the question, For us today is, Has he changed you, Have you received, This new mission, Do you see yourself, As a chosen instrument, For the good news, Do you see yourself, As a messenger, Of Jesus to the Bay Area, Are you willing, To be a strong advocate, For the gospel, In Berkeley, Or Oakland, Or San Francisco, Or wherever you find yourself, Because this is an essential part,

Of the transformation, That God, Wants to work, In each of our lives, So I pray he'll do it, In the name of the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Amen.

[36 : 30] Amen.