



Lessons on the Life of Paul

Review and Discussion
After 11 classes

7/22/26



Lessons on the Life of Paul

- 5/6/26 - Saul (Pre-Conversion)
- 5/13/26 - Saul (Pre-Conversion) continued
- 5/20/26 - Saul's Conversion
- 5/27/26 - The Beginning of Saul's Sufferings
- 6/3/26 - The Beginning of Saul's Suffering continued
- 6/10/26 - Paul's Zeal
- 6/17/26 - More on Paul's Zeal
- 6/24/26 - Alter the Approach, Not the Message
- 7/1/26 - The Apostle Paul On His Missionary Journeys
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- 7/22/26 - Review & Discussion
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Class 1: Saul (Pre-Conversion)

Date: 5/6/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

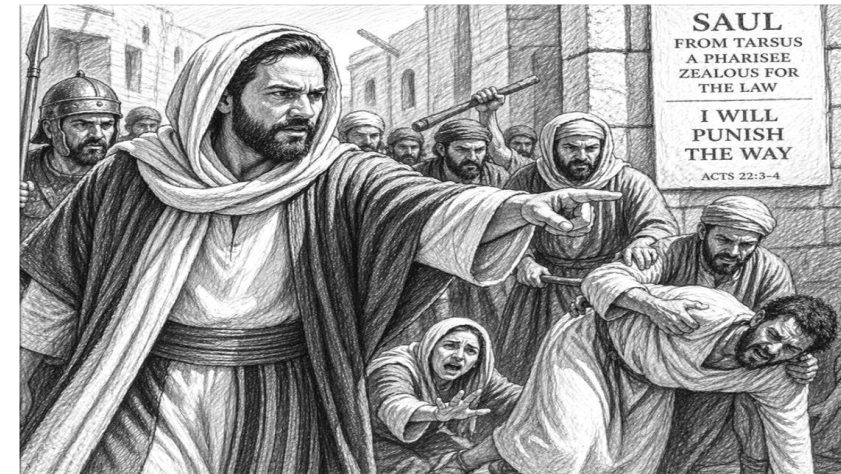
Before his encounter with Christ, Saul was a Pharisee of Pharisees, meticulously observing the Law and zealously persecuting the fledgling church. This lesson examined his rigorous upbringing in Tarsus and his education at the feet of Gamaliel, which prepared him to be an expert in Jewish tradition. We see how his sincere devotion was fundamentally misplaced, blinded by a desire for righteousness based on works. Saul represents the ultimate example of how religious fervor without Christ can lead to destructive ends. **His early life challenges us to examine the root of our own zeal** and whether our devotion is truly aligned with the Gospel.

Key Verses (ESV):

Philippians 3:5: "circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;"

Acts 23:6: "Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, 'Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees.'"

Acts 9:1: "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest"



Class 2: Saul (Pre-Conversion) continued

Date: 5/13/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

We analyzed Saul's role as the primary persecutor of the early church. His actions in Jerusalem and beyond were driven by a conviction that Christianity was a dangerous heresy undermining the covenant of Israel. We explored the psychological weight of the martyrdom of Stephen, which Saul witnessed and approved. This class emphasized that Saul believed he was doing God a favor, showcasing the tragic reality of human logic separated from divine revelation. We ultimately see the stark contrast between his violent intensity and the radical, **transformative grace of God that was soon to shatter his world.**

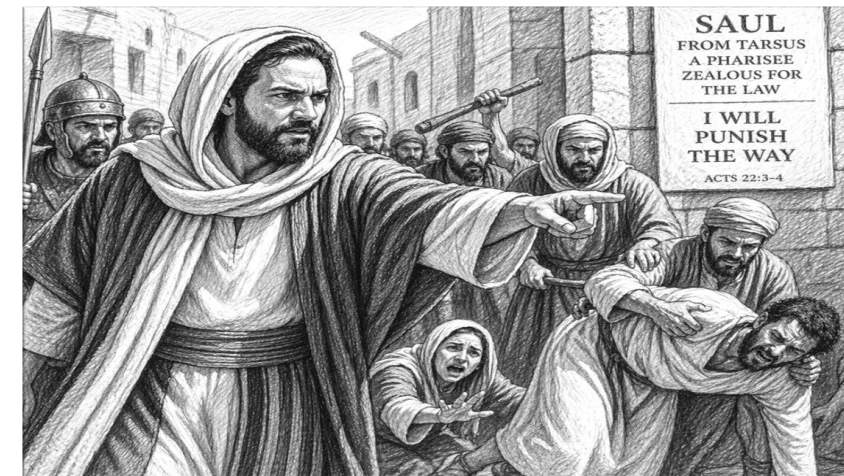


Key Verses (ESV):

Acts 8:3: "But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prisons."

Acts 9:2: "and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

Acts 22:4: "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,"



Saul (Pre-Conversion)

Review Discussion Questions

1. **Identifying Our "Zeal"** In our study of Saul, we saw that he was incredibly sincere and zealous, yet he was moving in the wrong direction because he lacked the light of Christ. Looking back at your own life before you became a follower of Jesus, **what was something you were "zealous" about or invested your identity in, and how has your perspective on that pursuit changed now that you are in the body of Christ?**
2. **The Impact of Transformation** Saul's life was completely redirected by his encounter with Jesus, turning him from a persecutor into a proclaimer. **How has your personal story—the specific way you were brought to Christ—shaped the way you view your purpose and your relationships with others within our church family today?**
3. **Finding Common Ground in Grace** The transition from being "Saul" to "Paul" was a humbling process that required him to reckon with his past. **As we grow closer as a church family at Oak Hollow, how can sharing our stories of life "pre-conversion" help us be more patient, empathetic, and unified as we support one another in our current walk with the Lord?**

Class 3: Saul's Conversion

Date: 5/20/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

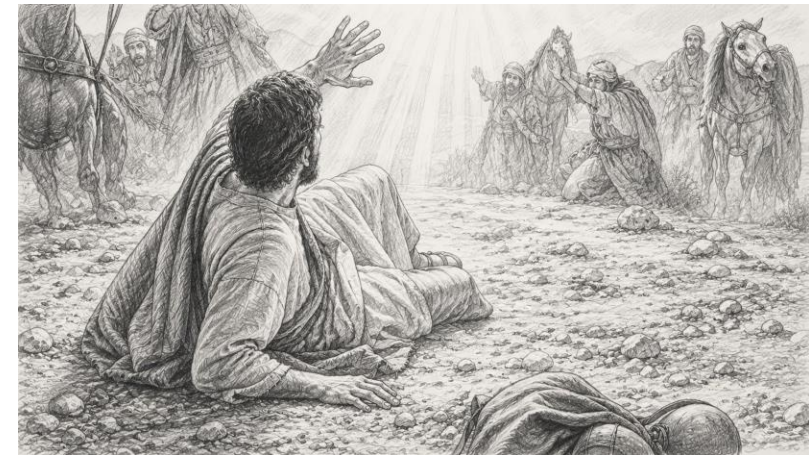
The road to Damascus serves as the most famous conversion story in human history. Saul, intending to imprison believers, is instead confronted by the blinding light of the resurrected Jesus Christ. This encounter leaves him physically sightless, forcing him to rely entirely on the Lord he had been opposing. We trace his transformation through Ananias, who obediently reaches out to his enemy, and Saul's subsequent baptism. This moment marks his transition from persecutor to the Apostle to the Gentiles, **illustrating that no heart is too hard for the Savior to reach and redirect.**

Key Verses (ESV):

Acts 9:3: "Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him."

Acts 9:5: "And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'"

Acts 9:18: "And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;"



Saul's Conversion

Review Discussion Questions

- 1. The "Road to Damascus" Moment** Saul's conversion was a sudden, life-altering encounter with the living Christ that shattered his previous worldview. Looking back at your own journey to faith, **was there a specific "turning point" or a series of moments that brought you to surrender to Jesus, and how does remembering that moment impact your commitment to Him today?**
- 2. Leaning on Each Other** Saul's conversion was a major life transition, and he needed the support of others to help him see the way forward. Looking at our own lives, we all go through seasons where we feel a bit "blind" or uncertain about our next steps. **How can we make it easier to reach out to one another here at Oak Hollow when we're feeling stuck?**
- 3. The Beauty of Radical Change** If the early church had judged Saul solely by his past actions, they might have rejected him—yet God saw a vessel for His glory. **How does the reality of Saul's total transformation encourage you to view other people in our community who may not yet know Christ?**

Class 4: Beginning of Saul's Sufferings

Date: 5/27/26 | Speaker: Randy Wooten

Almost immediately following his conversion, Saul faces the **bitter irony of being persecuted by the very groups he once led**. In Damascus, he begins to preach Jesus as the Son of God, causing confusion and eventual murderous rage among the Jews. This lesson investigates the beginning of Saul's life as a man marked by suffering, fulfilling the Lord's prophecy that he would "suffer for my name." We discussed the necessity of this suffering in shaping his apostolic character and proving the sincerity of his faith. He learns early on that identifying with Christ means sharing in his cross.



Key Verses (ESV):

Acts 9:20: "And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'"

Acts 9:23: "When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him,"

2 Corinthians 11:26: "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;"



Class 5: Beginning of Saul's Sufferings (Part 2)

Date: 6/3/26 | Speaker: Randy Wooten

We continued the narrative of Saul's early apostolic life, focusing on his dramatic escape from Damascus. Being lowered in a basket is a humiliating and sobering reminder of his complete vulnerability. This lesson highlights **the importance of the community of believers**, specifically the role of Barnabas in advocating for Saul among the skeptical apostles in Jerusalem. God's providence is evident as he guides Saul through these dangers, preserving his life for the global mission that lies ahead. We see that God rarely uses a "lone ranger," but instead builds and preserves His servants through the local church.

Key Verses (ESV):

Acts 9:25: "but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket."

Acts 9:26: "And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple."

Acts 9:30: "And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus."



Paul's Sufferings

Review Discussion Questions

- 1. Finding Purpose in the Hard Times** We often think of growth as a linear path, but for Paul, some of his greatest spiritual development came during his most difficult seasons of suffering. When you look back at a time in your life that was particularly challenging or "painful," **what is one thing you learned about God's character or your own faith that you might not have discovered if life had been easy?**
- 2. Supporting Each Other Through Life's "Hard Seasons"** Suffering often makes us want to pull away or hide our struggles, yet we are called to bear one another's burdens. As we grow closer as a church family, **what is one simple way we can create a culture at Oak Hollow where it's okay to admit we are going through a tough time, and how can we better support one another when those "seasons of suffering" arise?**

Class 6: Paul's Zeal

Date: 6/10/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

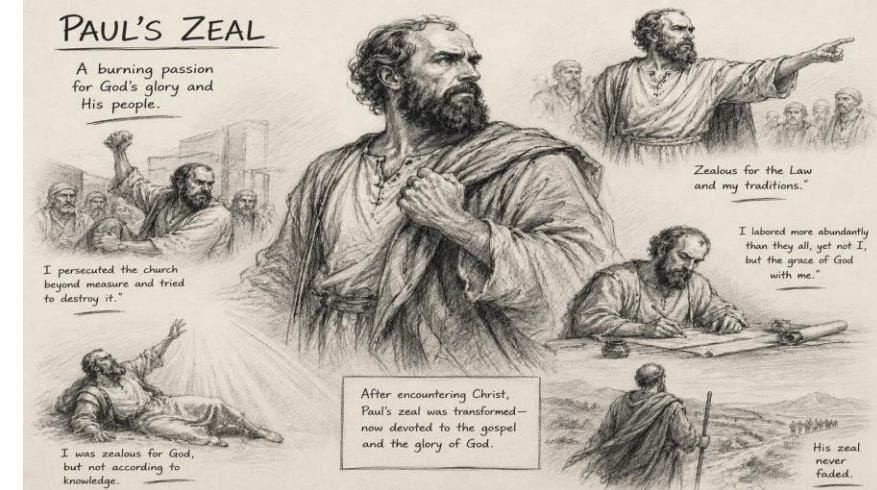
Zeal was the defining constant of Paul's personality, only the object changed. In this lesson, we explored how his once-destructive, self-righteous passion was redirected by the Holy Spirit into an engine for Gospel advancement. We discussed the necessity of zeal in the Christian life—not merely as an emotion, but as a disciplined commitment to the Kingdom of God. Paul teaches us that if we were capable of being passionate for our own works, we are certainly capable of being passionate for Christ. **This session challenged us to evaluate whether our current level of devotion matches our potential in Him.**

Key Verses (ESV):

Romans 12:11: "Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord."

1 Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward 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."

Galatians 1:14: "And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers."



Class 7: More on Paul's Zeal

Date: 6/17/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

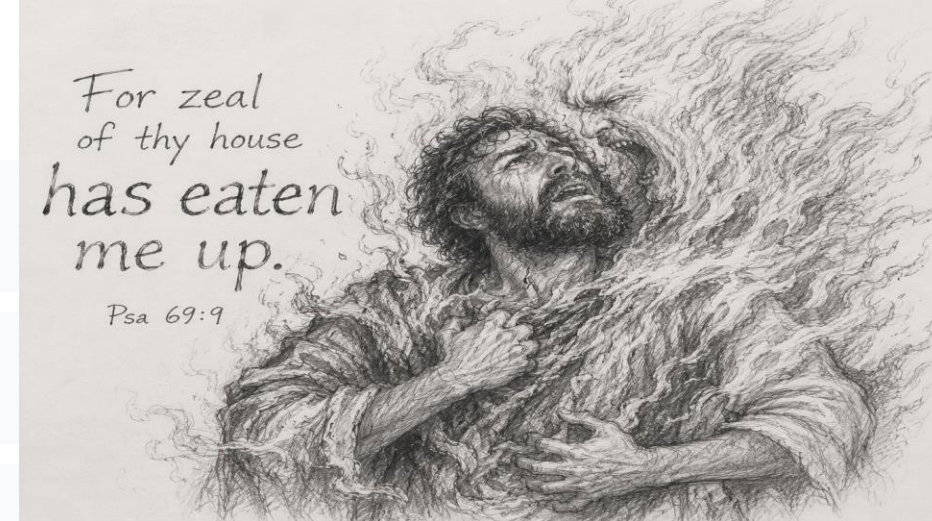
We looked at how Paul maintained his fervor while facing the daily pressure of opposition, physical pain, and the "anxiety for all the churches." His zeal wasn't just found in preaching; it was present in his endurance through beatings, shipwrecks, and imprisonment. We analyzed how his intimacy with Christ served as the fuel for this endurance, contrasting his spiritual fortitude with typical worldly responses to stress. The lesson concludes by **calling us to a "strategic intent" in our service**, emphasizing that a life without fervent service to God is an empty life.

Key Verses (ESV):

Titus 2:14: "who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

2 Corinthians 11:28: "And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches."

Philippians 3:14: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."



Paul's Zeal

Review Discussion Questions

- 1. Directing Our Passions** Before his transformation, Paul had an immense amount of energy and passion, but it was headed in the wrong direction until Jesus redirected it. **Looking at your own life, how has your focus or what you care about changed since following Christ, and how do you channel your natural energy into serving Him today?**
- 2. Encouraging One Another's Enthusiasm** It is contagious to be around people who are excited and passionate about their faith. **Who is someone in your life—or here at Oak Hollow—whose zeal for God has encouraged you, and how can we help each other keep our enthusiasm alive when life gets tiring?**

Class 8: Alter the Approach, Not the Message

Date: 6/24/26 | Speaker: Randy Wooten

Paul shows us the best way to fit in with different people to share Jesus. Whether he was at the Areopagus in Athens talking to Greek philosophers or in a synagogue explaining the Scriptures to Jews, he adapted his rhetoric to reach his audience without ever watering down the truth of the Cross. This lesson identifies the fine line between being "all things to all people" and compromising the message. We explore how modern believers can **engage a post-Christian world through intentional, thoughtful delivery** while keeping the content of the Gospel firmly anchored in the authority of Scripture.

Key Verses (ESV):

1 Corinthians 9:22: "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some."

Acts 17:23: "For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you."

1 Corinthians 2:2: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."



Alter the Approach, Not the Message

Review Discussion Questions

- 1. Connecting in New Ways** Paul was incredibly intentional about how he shared the unchanging truth of the Gospel, adapting his style to reach the people in front of him. **In our own lives—whether with family, friends, or coworkers—when have you found a "new way" or a different approach to share your faith that made the conversation feel more natural and less forced?**
- 2. Learning From Each Other's Perspectives** We all have different personalities, experiences, and ways of talking about our faith. Since Paul adapted his approach for different people, we can learn a lot from how each of you shares your love for Jesus. **What is one thing you've seen someone else in our church family do or say that made you feel more comfortable talking about your faith?**

Class 9: Paul's Missionary Journeys

Date: 7/1/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

Paul's missionary journeys are the backbone of the expansion of the church in the Mediterranean. We traced his travels, examining the deliberate strategy behind his church planting efforts: returning to cities to strengthen disciples, appointing elders, and coordinating resources. Paul was not an aimless wanderer; he was an apostolic leader with a burning vision to see Christ honored among the nations. We analyzed the logistical burdens of his ministry and how **he leaned on co-workers like Timothy, Silas, and Luke**. This study reveals the heart of a true visionary who gave his life to establish the Kingdom.



Key Verses (ESV):

Acts 13:2: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

Acts 14:23: "And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

Romans 15:20: "and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation,"



Paul's Missionary Journeys

Review Discussion Questions

- 1. Finding Our Own "Mission Field"** Paul's journeys took him to many different places and people, showing that the mission of God happens wherever we are. **When you think about your daily life—your neighborhood, your workplace, or your family—where do you feel God has "placed" you right now, and what is one small way you can be an encouragement to those around you in that space?**
- 2. Walking Side-by-Side** Paul always brought friends and partners along on his travels to encourage one another when things got tough. **As we live out our faith day-to-day, who is someone you rely on to keep you going, and how can we be that kind of steady friend to someone else here at Oak Hollow?**

Class 10: Paul's Struggle with the Flesh

Date: 7/8/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

Even the great Apostle Paul was not exempt from the internal war against sin. In this candid lesson, we explored his struggle with the flesh, an experience that resonates with every believer who has felt the tension between wanting to please God and the persistent pull of their fallen nature. Paul illustrates that this is a universal battle, but he points to the victory that is found only through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We learn that **acknowledging our weakness is the first step toward spiritual maturity**, as it drives us to depend entirely on the grace of Christ.

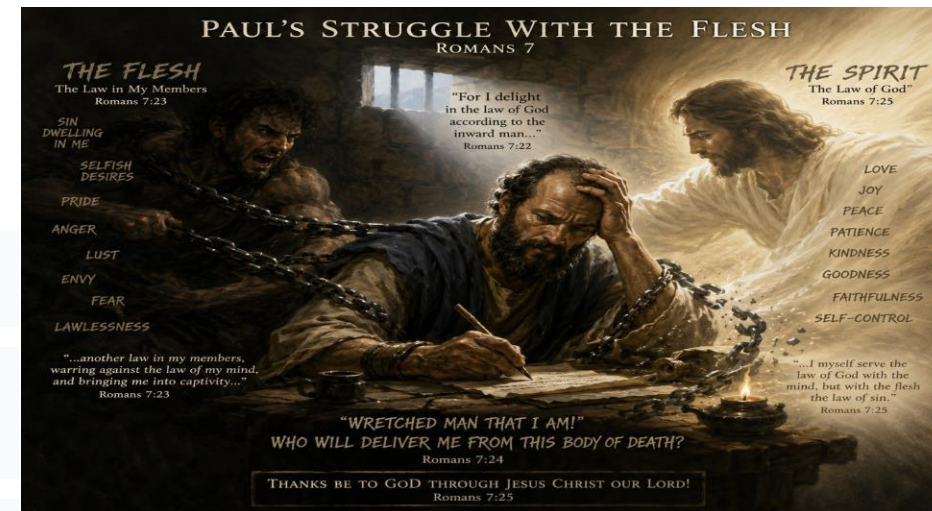


Key Verses (ESV):

Romans 7:21: "So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand."

Romans 7:25: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin."

Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."



Paul's Struggle With The Flesh

Review Discussion Questions

- 1. Finding Comfort in Realism** Paul was very honest about his own struggles and shortcomings, which can be a great relief to those of us who feel like we have to be "perfect" Christians. **How does hearing about Paul's daily internal battles change the way you feel about your own struggles, and why do you think it is so important for us to be open about our own imperfections with one another?**
- 2. Leaning on God's Strength** Even when he felt weak or frustrated by his struggles, Paul consistently turned to the grace of God as his source of strength. **When you are having a "tough day" internally, what is a specific practice or a favorite passage of Scripture that helps you stop relying on your own strength and start relying on God's grace again?**

Class 11: Paul's Humility

Date: 7/15/26 | Speaker: Steve Bookout

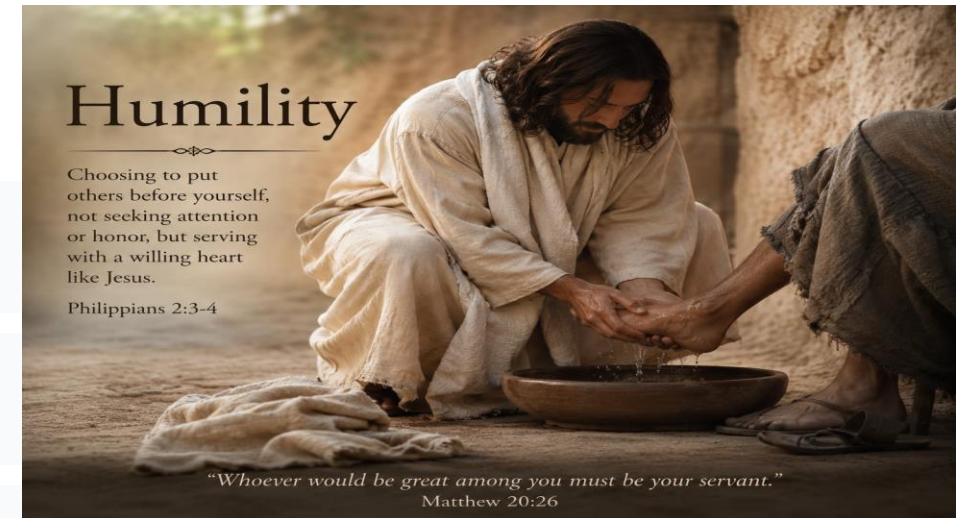
Despite being perhaps the most influential theologian in history, Paul remained profoundly humble. He consistently attributed his success not to his intellect or hard work, but to the unmerited favor of God. This lesson examined how he viewed himself as the "least of the apostles" and the "chief of sinners." His humility was not a performance; it was the natural outcome of having truly encountered the glory of Christ. We see that **Paul's refusal to exalt himself was exactly what allowed him to be used so mightily for the Kingdom.** He models the paradoxical truth that in God's eyes, the lowest place is the place of true greatness.

Key Verses (ESV):

1 Corinthians 15:9: "For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

1 Timothy 1:15: "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."

2 Corinthians 12:9: "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."



Humility

Choosing to put others before yourself, not seeking attention or honor, but serving with a willing heart like Jesus.

Philippians 2:3-4

"Whoever would be great among you must be your servant."
Matthew 20:26

Paul's Humility

Review Discussion Questions

- 1. The Beauty of Being "Last"** Paul often spoke of himself as the "least of the apostles," finding his true strength and identity not in his own achievements, but in the grace, he received from God. **In a world that often encourages us to highlight our successes, what does "true humility" look like to you in your daily life?**
- 2. Appreciating One Another** True humility often looks like celebrating the gifts of the people around us rather than focusing on ourselves. **Who is someone in our church family whose quiet service or kindness has blessed you, and how can we make sure they feel appreciated?**