# LESSON #2- THE CHARACTER OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

## Goal:

To live with the character of Saint Paul, his traits, missions and messages

## Reference:

Acts 13, 14 16-20

## Reminder of last lesson:

Summarize the lesson outline and of the first three points

## Lessons Outline

1. Demography
2. The Persecuting Pharisee
3. The Converted
4. The Missionary – Journeys
5. The Preacher
6. The Persecuted
7. The Prisoner
8. Saint Paul Is

# 4. ST PAUL THE MISSIONARY

**Acts chapters 13 & 14**
Although Saul's Jewish background and training gave him a distinct edge in preaching the Gospel to the Jews, the Lord called and commissioned him to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17-18).

**A MAN WITH JEWISH HEART, GREEK TONGUE AND ROMANS MIND**

Jewish Heart, having the love of God filling his heart

Greek Tongue, preaching to the gentile in their language -Geek

Roman Mind, franchise mind set just like the Roman Empire, go in countries with different languages and religions and implant communities and cities in each a big Roman city, like in Alexandria, Egypt

having Roman theaters, Roman schools, Roman art, Roman civilization through which they invade the country and transform it into Roman style. This was Paul's mind set in implanting churches everywhere he goes to be a center of radiating light to all gentiles and countries he goes to.

His first task was to become a pioneer missionary to the Gentiles living in the countries on the northern and eastern coasts of the Mediterranean. He travelled thousands of miles by land and sea, was constantly in danger, experienced shipwreck on three separate occasions and endured great hardship and persecution (2 Cor. 11:23-25). He travelled with a variety of companions, among whom were Barnabas, John Mark, Silas, Luke and Timothy. He was, without doubt, the world's greatest missionary.
Travel was not easy:
Most of his journeying was made on foot or by small coastal boat.
Travel was very dangerous in Paul's day.
He usually starts by the Jews in every city then when they reject him, he preaches to the gentiles.

**For thought and contemplation:**
Our own conversions may not have been so dramatic as Paul's and yet think about it: weren't we equally ignorant of God and determined to follow our own ways? Do you thank Him for calling you to be His chosen instrument?
"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV)

# 5. St Paul The Preacher

Acts chapter 17

Paul was evidently a powerful preacher who proclaimed the Gospel of Christ wherever he went. On one occasion, he is recorded as preaching all night (Acts 20:7-12). His general practice, when visiting a city, was to preach first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. In most places, he was compelled to turn to the Gentiles because the Jews rejected his message. One welcome exception was at Berea, where the Jews eagerly listened to what he had to say and examined the Scriptures to see if they confirmed his statements. When convinced of the truth of his arguments, many of them believed the Gospel. As a result of Paul's preaching, many new churches were founded, and the Gentiles became a significant part of the Church which, in its formative years, had been exclusively Jewish.

**For thought and contemplation:**
Have you ever come across a definition of preaching? Well, here's one by Dr. W.E. Sangster which many preachers like: "Preaching is the manifestation of the Living Word, through the written Word, and by the spoken word." Like it? We do!
"Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16, NIV)

**Paul is restricted to house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16, 30-31), yet he has an active ministry. We all have various limitations and handicaps, but we must not let those keep us from serving Christ to the greatest extent possible**

# 6. St Paul The Persecuted

**Acts chapter 16**

Paul's preaching and the many miracles which accompanied his ministry brought severe persecution from **both Jews and Gentiles**.
From Jews: Early in his Christian life, he had been smuggled out of Damascus to escape the murderous hatred of the Jews there.
Later, at Lystra, he was stoned and left for dead by Jews who had pursued him from Antioch and Iconium.
He also records in 2 Corinthians 11:24 that he was flogged five times by the Jewish authorities.
From Gentiles : Gentiles also reacted violently when, as in the case of Demetrius at Ephesus (Acts 19:24) and the owners of the slave girl at Philippi (Acts 16:16), his words and actions directly affected their livelihoods.

For thought and contemplation:
Saul the persecutor becomes Paul the persecuted. Yet he was as determined to continue in the face of persecution as he was to cause it. Paul—as he was now called—was certainly not half-hearted about anything. A good trait—don't you agree?
"…how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God." (1 Peter 2:20, NIV)
***Paul speaks to governors and kings about Christ about righteousness, self-control and judgment to come (Acts 24:24-25; Acts 26). We must be winsome when that is required. But we must also be willing to speak the clear, unwelcome truth when it is time, at whatever personal cost.***

# 7. St Paul The Prisoner

Acts chapters 24-27
Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years under Felix, who sent for him often to talk with him, hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe to secure his release (Acts 24:26-27).
When Felix was succeeded by Festus, the new governor called Paul before him and asked whether he would go to Jerusalem and have the charges brought against him by the Jews heard there. Paul responded to this by stating that he would exercise his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar to obtain the justice which was denied him in the provincial court.
Later, after his arrival in Rome, Paul spends a further two years under house arrest, but continues to preach and teach without hindrance (Acts 28:31). Where he sent four letters

**For thought and contemplation:**
Although Paul was often found in prison, he never regarded himself as a prisoner of Rome, but a 'prisoner of Jesus Christ' (Eph. 3:1). Rome could bind his body with chains, but nothing could bind his spirit. Remember this the next time you feel 'imprisoned' by your circumstances.
"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love," (Eph. 4:1-2, NIV)
The lesson to be learned from Paul

To try to comment on the life of Paul in a few words is like trying to take a five-minute tour of the galaxy. His conversion to Christ was one of the most transforming experiences of history. Down the ages, millions have been converted through reading the account of his conversion or hearing a sermon on the theme. Indeed, as someone put it, "His conversion still converts."
Out of the many wonderful lessons that we can draw from the life and character of the apostle Paul, the most important is that of whole-hearted commitment. There was nothing half-hearted about the great apostle. His commitment to Christ was so total and complete that someone said of him: "No other individual Christian has made such an impact upon history, or upon the thinking of the world." How does your commitment to Christ measure up against that of this unique and amazing man?

**Lessons learned from the life of St Paul:**
***Paul looks beyond his impending death to seeing Christ and to receiving a "crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:8). We must move our eyes from the pain to the promise.***
***Paul sees death as being "at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8), just as Jesus talks about inviting his disciples to "my Father's house" (John 14:2-3). He sees heaven as "far better" than our earthly life (Philippians 1:23).***
***Paul doesn't prefer life over death, but whichever gives Christ the most glory (Philippians 1:20, 22-24). Since, heaven is "far better" (Philippians 1:23), he believes that "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:20-21).***

# 8. THE APOSTLE PAUL IS

**FRUIT-BEARING,** "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering…" (Galatians 5:22-23)
**BURDEN-BEARING,** "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)
**SEED-BEARING,** "for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap." (Gal. 6:9)
**BRAND-BEARING,** "I bear in my body the marks [or brands] of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17)

| Paul before Conversion | Paul after conversion |
|---|---|
| Committed | Humble |
| Integrity | Servant-heart |
| Compassionate | Unprejudiced |
| Fearless | Spirit-Led |
| Faithful | Spirit-filled |
| Warrior | Visionary |
| Diligent | Shepherd |
| Responsible | Passionate |
| Zeal for Judaism | Shepherd-developer |
| | Giving |
| | Pray-er |

**Servant may summarize the text in the boxes to review the lesson with the students**