

*Well, That Was Unexpected!*  
**The Unexpected Call of Paul**

April 26, 2020

We continue our worship series: *“Well, That Was Unexpected!”* We are looking at people from the Bible whom God led in surprising and unexpected ways. Their entire world was turned upside down, leaving them disoriented and cut off from the way things used to be. What can we learn from their stories that helps us in living out our story today?

Today we consider God’s call of Saul, who later went by the name Paul. God called the chief persecutor of the Church to become its chief missionary. The one who vigorously pursued those who worshiped Jesus was called to be the biggest promoter of Jesus. Well, that was unexpected! What is God saying to us today through the story of the call of Paul?

**Welcome**

**“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” (LSB 686, stanzas 1-3)**

Come, Thou Fount of ev’ry blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
While the hope of endless glory  
Fills my heart with joy and love,  
Teach me ever to adore Thee;  
May I still Thy goodness prove.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by Thy help I’ve come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wand’ring from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I’m constrained to be;  
Let that grace now like a fetter  
Bind my wand’ring heart to Thee:  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;  
Prone to leave the God I love.  
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

**Invocation**

**Pastor:** In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**People:** **Amen.**

**Confession**

**Pastor:** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**People:** **But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*(silence for reflection on God’s Word and for self-examination)*

## **Absolution**

**Pastor:** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People:** **Amen.**

### **“I Know My Redeemer Lives (LSB 461, stanzas 1,5-8)**

I know that my Redeemer lives;	He lives, and while He lives, I'll sing;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!	He lives, my Prophet, Priest, and King.
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;	
He lives, my ever-living head.	He lives and grants me daily breath;
	He lives, and I shall conquer death;
He lives to silence all my fears;	He lives my mansion to prepare;
He lives to wipe away my tears;	He lives to bring me safely there.
He lives to calm my troubled heart;	
He lives all blessings to impart.	He lives, all glory to His name!
	He lives, my Jesus, still the same;
He lives, my kind, wise, heav'nly Friend;	Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives;
He lives and loves me to the end;	I know that my Redeemer lives!

## **Readings**

### **Acts 9:1-19**

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?"

<sup>5</sup> "Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," He replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

<sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

<sup>10</sup> In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. <sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

<sup>13</sup> “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to Your holy people in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on Your name.”

<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for My name.”

<sup>17</sup> 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.” <sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

*This is the Word of the Lord*  
**Thanks be to God**

**Psalm 40:1-10**

I waited patiently for the LORD;  
He turned to me and heard my cry.

<sup>2</sup> He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and mire;  
He set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.

<sup>3</sup> He put a new song in my mouth,  
a hymn of praise to our God.  
Many will see and fear the LORD  
and put their trust in Him.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed is the one  
who trusts in the LORD,  
who does not look to the proud,  
to those who turn aside to false gods.

<sup>5</sup> Many, LORD my God,  
are the wonders You have done,  
the things You planned for us.  
None can compare with You;  
were I to speak and tell of Your deeds,  
they would be too many to declare.

<sup>6</sup> Sacrifice and offering You did not desire—  
but my ears You have opened—  
burnt offerings and sin offerings You did not require.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—  
it is written about me in the scroll.  
<sup>8</sup> I desire to do Your will, my God;  
Your law is within my heart.”

<sup>9</sup> I proclaim Your saving acts in the great assembly;  
I do not seal my lips, LORD,  
as You know.  
<sup>10</sup> I do not hide Your righteousness in my heart;  
I speak of Your faithfulness and Your saving help.  
I do not conceal Your love and Your faithfulness  
from the great assembly.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

### **Second Reading: 1 Timothy 1:12-17**

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that He considered me trustworthy, appointing me to His service. <sup>13</sup> Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. <sup>14</sup> The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. <sup>16</sup> But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His immense patience as an example for those who would believe in Him and receive eternal life. <sup>17</sup> Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*This is the Word of the Lord*  
**Thanks be to God**

### **Holy Gospel: Luke 15:1-10**

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. <sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders <sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

<sup>8</sup> “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> And when she finds it, she calls her friends and

neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

*This is the Gospel of the Lord*  
**Praise to You O Christ**

**Apostles Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Children's Message**

**"10,000 Reasons"**

**Chorus**

Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

The sun comes up it's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes

**Chorus**

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

**Chorus**

And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

**Chorus**

## Sermon

### **"O Come to the Altar"**

Are you hurting and broken within  
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin  
Jesus is calling  
Have you come to the end of yourself  
Do you thirst for a drink from the well  
Jesus is calling

#### **Chorus**

O come to the altar  
The Father's arms are open wide  
Forgiveness was bought with  
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Leave behind your regrets and mistakes  
Come today there's no reason to wait

Jesus is calling  
Bring your sorrows and trade them for joy  
From the ashes a new life is born  
Jesus is calling **Chorus**

Oh what a Savior  
Isn't He wonderful  
Sing alleluia Christ is risen  
Bow down before Him  
For He is Lord of all  
Sing alleluia Christ is risen

Bear your cross as you wait for the crown  
Tell the world of the treasure you've found

## Prayers

*Please add your prayer requests to the live chat*

### **Thanksgivings**

**Pastor:** O Lord, we praise You.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

### **Petitions**

**Pastor:** Lord, in Your mercy,

**People:** **Hear our prayer.**

## The Service of Holy Communion

### **Preface**

**Pastor:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** **And also with you.**

**Pastor:** Lift Up Your Hearts.

**People:** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**Pastor:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:** **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**Pastor:** It is truly good, right, and salutary . . .

**People:** **Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **The Words of Institution**

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**People: Amen.**

### **Communion**

Pastor: Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

**People: Amen**

*(Take and eat)*

Pastor: Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

**People: Amen.**

*(Take and drink)*

### **A Time for Prayer and Meditation**

#### **Communion Blessing**

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. His peace be with you.

**People: Amen.**

### **Blessing**

*The Lord bless you and keep you.*

*The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you*

*The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.*

**Amen.**

### **“The Day of Resurrection” (LSB 478)**

The day of resurrection!  
Earth, tell it out abroad,  
The passover of gladness,  
The passover of God.  
From death to life eternal,  
From sins dominion free,  
Our Christ hath brought us over  
With hymns of victory.

Let hearts be purged of evil  
That we may see aright  
The Lord in rays eternal  
Of resurrection light;  
And, list'ning to His accents,  
May hear, so calm and plain,  
His own “All hail!” and, hearing,  
May raise the victor strain.

Now let the heav'ns be joyful,  
Let earth its song begin,  
Let all the world keep triumph  
And all that is therein.  
Let all things, seen and unseen,  
Their notes in gladness blend;  
For Christ the Lord has risen,  
Our joy that hath no end!

All praise to God the Father,  
All praise to God the Son,  
All praise to God the Spirit,  
Eternal Three in One!  
Let all the ransomed number  
Fall down before the throne  
And honor, pow'r, and glory  
Ascribe to God alone!

### **Offering**

<http://stjohnslutheran.net/give/>

You may also mail your offering to St. John's (3521 Linda Vista, Napa, CA 94558)

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. Saul (Paul) spent three days fasting and praying after Jesus spoke to him and he was blinded by the light from heaven. During that time he probably contemplated what this meant for him as he reflected on the passages of the Old Testament he had memorized. As you have been contemplating the changes in your life due to covid-19 what has God been saying to you in His Word? And what are you doing about it?
2. God told Ananias that Saul (Paul) was His chosen instrument to proclaim His name to the Gentiles. The Lord continues to choose His followers to proclaim His name to others. Who in your life may God be choosing you to share His love with at this time? Pray for God's strength to do that.
3. In 1 Timothy 1:15-16 Paul describes himself as the worst of sinners. Knowing how much he had been forgiven encouraged Paul to share the good news of forgiveness to others. How does knowing Christ forgiveness for you help you live out the love and forgiveness of Jesus toward others?



4. So many businesses have been closed and so many activities have been canceled or postponed. The mission of God has not been put on hold. People still need to hear about Christ love for them through the cross and the empty tomb. Think of ways you can still be missional from your home.

### **Memory Verse for this Week**

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

*1 Timothy 1:15*

#### **St. John's People and Families to Pray for This Week**

- Bill and Susan Clark
- John, Laura Lee, Byron, & Charles Fitzpatrick
- Bob and Doris Klein
- Glen, Missy, & Bailey Loban
- Ali, Sally, Cameron, Christopher & Charlie Vaziri
- Rocio Canchola, & Sergio Flores
- Brian, Jennifer, Benjamin, & Emily Freeto
- Clinton, Alice, Avery, Clinton, & Payton Pridmore
- John, Michelle, & Ian Venegas

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