

The Life I Now Live

Acts 7:58: And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

Faith includes an understanding of God in the mind, belief of the truth in the heart, and an unwavering continuance in Christ which manifest before men that our faith is genuine. Saul of Tarsus truly thought he understood God in the mind. He truly thought he believed God in his heart. He made it a point to show all men that he could not be turned. Yet, Saul's refuge was a refuge of lies.

Every sinner saved by the sovereign power of God is turned TO God FROM a false refuge of lies, whether it be a refuge in religion or out. Beginning with God's first heart work within us and continuing throughout our lives, believers actively repent and believe God. But not until we are taught of God, not until God grants us faith and repentance leaving us no strength to do anything else but turn TO Christ FROM our false way. Once God has begun this good work, he must continue it or we would surely turn away from him back to our nothingness. The apostle Paul knew he was a wonder and a miracle of God's operation of grace, nothing more. Paul told the Galatians, "**I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**"

Martin Luther had this comment: "My speech is no longer directed by the flesh, but by the Holy Ghost. My sight is no longer governed by the flesh, but by the Holy Ghost. My hearing is no longer determined by the flesh, but by the Holy Ghost. I cannot teach, write, pray, or give thanks without the instrumentality of the flesh; yet these activities do not proceed from the flesh, but from God. Christ reigns in the heart with His Holy Spirit, who sees, hears, speaks, works, suffers, and does all things in and through us over the protest and the resistance of the flesh."

When we see this young man Saul we behold the condition Paul was in when God came to him in grace. Hopefully we see ourselves. Paul never boasted of his faith in Christ, but Paul constantly boasted of Christ's faithfulness toward him. Hopefully, we do too. I try to imagine Paul and Stephen side-by-side at the feet of Christ. By grace, they now sing the same song.