



Daily Reflections

January 25, 2018

Scripture

Acts of the Apostles 22: 3-16

Paul addressed the people in these words:

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia,
but brought up in this city.

At the feet of Gamaliel I was educated strictly in our ancestral law
and was zealous for God, just as all of you are today.

I persecuted this Way to death,
binding both men and women and delivering them to prison.

Even the high priest and the whole council of elders
can testify on my behalf.

For from them I even received letters to the brothers
and set out for Damascus to bring back to Jerusalem
in chains for punishment those there as well.

"On that journey as I drew near to Damascus,
about noon a great light from the sky suddenly shone around me.

I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me,
'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'

I replied, 'Who are you, sir?'

And he said to me,

'I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting.'

My companions saw the light

but did not hear the voice of the one who spoke to me.

I asked, 'What shall I do, sir?'

The Lord answered me, 'Get up and go into Damascus,

and there you will be told about everything
appointed for you to do.'

Since I could see nothing because of the brightness of that light,
I was led by hand by my companions and entered Damascus.

"A certain Ananias, a devout observer of the law,
and highly spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,
came to me and stood there and said,

'Saul, my brother, regain your sight.'

And at that very moment I regained my sight and saw him.

Then he said,

'The God of our ancestors designated you to know his will,
to see the Righteous One, and to hear the sound of his voice;
for you will be his witness before all
to what you have seen and heard.

Now, why delay?

Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away,
calling upon his name.'"

Our Scripture Reflection

One cannot read the account of Paul's conversion without recalling the words of the popular hymn, "Amazing Grace." Paul had been a murderer of Christians before he received the great and humbling call from the Risen Christ. Paul's life changed completely. The former murderer became the greatest missionary in the Church's history. What a turnaround story. How amazing is God's Grace!

Food for your Journey

Sometimes we need to be willing to concede defeat, take the blame, before we can arrive at the truth. Keith Larson tells the story of a young, husky 13-year-old farm boy who was very ambitious. He worked from dawn to dusk, and his parents were very proud of him. For the boy's 14th birthday, his father bought him a secondhand Gravelly mowing tractor. The Gravelly Company made very fine tractors, and the boy was thrilled. He began to earn extra money by mowing yards and fields for neighbors and the people in the nearby town. The boy took great care of his machine; he washed and cleaned the motor and shined the exterior.

One day he noticed the blade was dull. The boy very carefully drove the tractor into the barn and turned it over to take the bolt off that held the blade on. Having been around machinery a lot, he knew to loosen a bolt you turn it counterclockwise, so he put a big wrench on the bolt and gave it a turn. It only moved a tiny bit, and then it wouldn't budge. Now, this boy was very proud of his physical strength. He was a star lineman on the school football team. But he couldn't move that bolt at all, and he wasn't about to ask his dad for help on such a routine matter.

Just then he remembered what his father had told him in a similar situation. "Get a longer piece of pipe, and put it over the wrench handle to get some leverage." So he got a pipe and put it over the handle. Then he pulled on the pipe. Nothing. Then he got under the pipe with his back and tried to lift it. But the bolt would not move. Finally, in humiliation, the young man took the tractor in the family pickup to the Gravelly dealer in town. When he got there, the mechanic looked at the stuck bolt and said, "Wait a minute. Let me check something." And he looked up the model number. Then he said, "I hate to tell you this, but for several years the Gravelly Company reversed the threads on that bolt. You've been tightening that sucker trying to loosen it. And don't worry about being strong, son. You've tightened it so bad, we are going to have to burn it off with a torch." -- *A Hunger for Healing*

(HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 132-133.

He didn't want to be blamed. He thrived on praise. Humility helps us to be willing to take the blame and shows us that sometimes, what we have learned needs to be unlearned.

A Prayer from the Heart

Precious Lord, Pour forth Your amazing Grace upon me so that I can live as the person You created me to be. Amen.