

Sunday Celebration (May 16, 2010)

Open House Sunday

"Landmarks on Your Spiritual Journey"

INTRO ... Landmarks

Are You on a Religious Journey? ... Do you have a "Spiritual Category" in Your Life? Where did it start? Where is it going? How do you measure progress? What are the Landmarks that explain/define your location?

Saul of Tarsus Goes on Oprah

... "Landmarks I Remember"

● ***A Conversion Moment***

"Conversion" (Def) – a change in the nature, form, or function of something
(Encarta)

"conversion denotes the human volition and act by which man in obedience to the Divine summons determines to change the course of his life and turns to God. Arrested by God's call man stops to think, turns about and heads the opposite way. This presupposes that the previous course was not directed toward God but away from Him." (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)

- **a Definitive Moment** (with unfolding & deepening effects):
More like a CAPERPILLAR Becoming a BUTTERFLY ... than the Slow
Self-Improvement of Weight Loss

Acts 26 ... Paul Recalling the MOMENT of CONVERSION ... NOTE: NOT when he
"became religious"

v. 4-5, 9-12 ... Paul was Religious and Zealous Before His Conversion – "Zealous but Mistaken"

v. 13-18 ... Paul Recounts the Events at the Moment of His Conversion

... This Recounts the Events – But What Actually Happens in This Moment of Conversion

Gal 2:20-21 ... Paul's Framing of His Spiritual Journey (in 3 Sentences)

- **"I have been crucified"** ... past tense explanation of a death
 - Biblical Imagery of the STARTING POINT of the Christian Life ... Death
 - Mark 8:34-36 "And he called to him the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."
 - John 12:24-25 "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."
 - Past Completed Action ... More Like a Caterpillar than Weight Loss
 - Perfect Indicative Passive** (verb- "I am crucified") = emphasizing a completed past action; passive because we are simply the recipients
 - ... "with Christ" necessitates that we count this act as accomplished—for Christ is no longer being crucified

● **"no longer"** ... something has ceased

REPENTANCE = a ceasing of one pattern of life... a severing of connection and identification with the life we once lived that was not rightly oriented about God

Gal 6:14 "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

"The repentance that begins a new relationship with God is not primarily a matter of drawing up lists of specific sins you are sorry for and want to change. ... The repentance that really changes your heart and your relationship with God begins when you recognize that your main sin, the sin under the rest of your sins, is your self-salvation project. ... Repentance, then, is confessing the things besides God himself that you have been relying on for your hope, significance, and security." Timothy Keller, "The Reason for God", p. 233

"... no longer **I who live**"

NO Longer Living For ME ... This is a LANDMARK!

● **"Christ who lives in me"** ... a new life source

○ **Introducing a New Concept** ... a New Life INSIDE of You!!

John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

Rom 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

○ **The Born-Again Language of Scripture**

John 3:3-6 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

This is a LANDMARK on the Biblical Journey – Being Born-Again

● ***"the life I now live... I live by faith in the Son of God"*** ... a new life lived on different terms than the old

- The consistent "Now vs Then" Language of the Bible Where is the line drawn? – CONVERSION
- The Basis of This New Life – "faith in the Son of God" [Faith in an Object—Not just faith... to miss that point opens the INFINITE DOOR of "Spiritual Journeys"]
 - **Faith**
 - **The Object of faith** = the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me
 - Not just faith in "Spiritual Journeys" or "Spirituality" or even some "Jesus Figure" (who is often a religious icon of our own making.)

... He is the Son of God (God come as a man); who loved me; and gave Himself for me... The object of our faith is in the "Person & Work of Jesus Christ"

v. 21 ... Clarifies the Need for the Sacrificial Death of Christ

- **NOTE: This is intentionally severe language!!**