



Sunday Worship Bulletin

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Welcome!!

Welcome to worship! We are glad you are here today. Whether you are a longtime member or a first-time visitor, we pray you feel God's presence, peace, and love among us.

When We Are Confronted By The Lord

Saul of Tarsus was traveling, accompanied by a group of men (likely temple guards), along the road from Jerusalem to Damascus. Having received letters from the high priest authorizing him to arrest those of The Way, Saul was intent on imprisoning and executing those who were following Jesus called the Christ. Something totally unexpected

occurred stunning Saul and causing him to fall to the ground. An intensely bright light shone down from heaven and a voice called to him, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*" Saul responded questioning the speaker, "*Who are You, Lord?*" "*I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,*" came the reply from above. Then came the question that should be the response of every individual when they are confronted by the God, "***Lord, what do You want me to do?***" (*Acts 9:6*)

For the first time, Saul understood that he had been working in opposition to the Messiah and Emmanuel – God in the flesh. What an awakening that must have been for this man whose heart was intently set on serving Jehovah God to suddenly come to the realization that he had been mistaken in all of his efforts to stamp out this movement. Instead of helping the cause of God, Saul had unknowingly been working in direct opposition to Him! This unexpected encounter completely changed the direction of Saul's entire life. He changed from being a persecutor of the church to an ardent preacher of Jesus Christ.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit guided the twelve apostles to preach the first gospel message. Many of the Jews who had had a part in Jesus' death were confronted, not by the Lord Himself, rather by the words of the Spirit. They had put God's Messiah to death! This message touched their souls when "the light

came on" - the realization that they were responsible for crucifying God's Son. Being cut to the heart, they cried out to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "***Men and brethren, what shall we do?***" (Acts 2:37)

In each of these two situations, the question was essentially the same, as so was the answer. Saul was instructed by Ananias to "***Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins***" (Acts 22:16). Being guided by the Holy Spirit, Peter responded, "***Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins***" (Acts 2:38).

Jesus will not confront you nor I today in a personal and direct manner as He did Saul of Tarsus. He utilizes the instrumentality of the gospel (whether preached orally or read in written form) to confront us with our sinfulness. We are reminded of the power behind His message, "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*" (Hebrews 4:12). The word of God confronts us with the same power and authority as if Jesus Christ were speaking to us face to face. It strips away our unrealistic view of ourselves and uncovers our sinfulness and the fact that we have rebelled against the Lord by living selfish and sinful lives. When confronted with the reality of our lost condition and our need for forgiveness, our cry should be the same

as Saul's. "***Lord, what would You have me to do?***"

The Holy Spirit's message remains the same today for those who are willing to humble their hearts and turn to a loving and merciful Father for grace and forgiveness. Repent (have a change of mind which results in a change of direction in your life) and be buried together with Christ Jesus in baptism for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38, Romans 6:4)

We should live each day thereafter asking, "***Lord, what would you have me to do this day to serve and honor You?***"

HOW WILL YOU RESPOND WHEN CONFRONTED BY THE LORD?