

## THE NEW YOU Sermon Series – Saul to Paul

Our names carry with it a reputation... Examples:

Have you ever wondered what reputation follows your name?

Who was Saul of Tarsus? What was his reputation?

### Acts 22:3-5

- He was a Jew
- Educated at the feet of Gamaliel
- Adhered to the strict manner of the law
- Zealous for God
- Persecuted “the Way” (Christians) to the death
- One sent out to arrest and punish believers in Jesus (Acts 8:3)

**Philippians 3:5** – If anyone thought they had reason to boast in a reputation...

- Circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day
- Of the tribe of Benjamin
- A Hebrew of Hebrews
- As to the law, a Pharisee
- As to zeal, a persecutor of the church
- As to righteousness under the law, blameless

Saul was proud of his credentials and his reputation!

His name means “to ask for...” or “the one asked for, requested” by others.

Saul lived into both meanings of his name... What he desired, what he “asked for”, was to be the one who others looked to, “asked for”, desired!

Saul was about making a name for himself! **Galatians 1:13-14**

He wanted to be the ideal example... He wanted “big” things attached to his name! And there were... This was the path, the road, that Saul was on!

But then, traveling on the road to Damascus, Saul encountered the resurrected Jesus and it dramatically changed the trajectory of his life! **Acts 9:1-22**

You might have thought that it had to have been at this moment that Saul’s name changed to Paul, to reveal the transformation that took place there.

But Saul’s name didn’t change on that road to Damascus... His name change

came later... And it wasn’t changed by God or Jesus... His name change came for a different reason! **Acts 13:9** – Saul just started going by the name Paul!

But why? Why start going by a different name?

- With his name came a reputation... and it was a hard one to undue!
- The things he was once “asking for”, were now no longer important...
- Paul was his Roman name & his new trajectory was a ministry to Gentiles.

What he was focused on, “asking for,” now was not to set himself above others, but to be whatever was needed to see others come to saving faith!

**1 Corinthians 9:19-23** – *“To be all things to all people in order to save some!”*

### Philippians 3:7-11

- *“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ!”*
- *“because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord.”*
- *“In order that I may gain Christ, and be found in him”*
- *“Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law...”*
- *“but a righteousness from God that depends on faith.”*
- *“That I may know him and the power of his resurrection”*
- *“Share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death”*
- *“that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”*

Do you know what the name “Paul” means? “Small” or “Little”!

When he was Saul he wanted to be “big”, “known”, “asked for”, but as Paul he only wanted to be an instrument whereby Christ was made “big”, Christ was made “known”, and that which people sought after was Christ alone!

Paul, like John, believed that **“He must increase, but I must decrease!”** John 3:30

- What must decrease in us, so that Christ might increase in our lives?
- What must decrease in our schedules, to make Him a higher priority?
- What must we repent of, so that Christ might be our greatest pursuit?

Does your/my life most resemble that of “Saul” or “Paul” ...?

What needs to be celebrated? What needs to change? Where do we turn?

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