

June 17, 2017

Reflections

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⁵ *And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."*

Acts 9:5 (NASB)

ESCAPE VELOCITY

There is nothing fun about being stuck. But the worst kind of stuck, I think, is being stuck in the past. Most of the choices I made before I was a Christian, and many of the ones I made after, harmed me, the ones I love, and my Savior. But when I start to feel down about those things, when I struggle to let my past go, I am reminded of one of my favorite stories from Acts 9:1-9, which tells the story of Saul's conversion.

Saul had no use for Christians, that's for sure. And he didn't just *think* about how much he hated them, either. He *did* something about it. So, Paul had a fearsome reputation among those belonging to the Way. Imagine, then, how he must have felt when he discovered that all the hurt he had caused had hurt the very One Saul sought to honor. The zealous energy Saul expended to harm those who followed Jesus, the Son of God, harmed God. That was some past for Saul to let go of. But as Saul learned, the good news is that the gospel lets us let go.

The gospel lets us let go because, if left to our own devices, we would never have the velocity we need to escape our past. When we get stuck on our past, it stops us where we, preventing us from growing, stands in our way, preventing us letting go, and strips us of our joy, laying us low.

The gospel rescues us from being "stuck" because it lets us let go. Saul could have been wracked by guilt for the things he had done to those who follow Christ. He could have held onto that hurt, paralyzed by his own choices. But that isn't good news, and Jesus brought good news to Saul. Instead Jesus chose Saul, destroyer of the faith, and by the power of the Holy Spirit he became Paul, defender of the faith as the gospel let him let go.

It doesn't matter if what we are struggling with happened twenty years ago or twenty minutes ago. The past cannot hold us back. It does not have that power. The resurrection power of the Holy Spirit has been ignited in us. We can defy gravity and reach escape velocity through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by which we have been saved.

Today, let the Lord transform you, trusting that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is not your destiny to be defined by your past. It is your destiny to be formed by the future as the Spirit helps you abide in Christ and bear much fruit. That is Father's will for you in Christ Jesus, so that you may approve the things that are excellent. That is the good news for us this morning: the gospel lets us let go, providing us with escape velocity, so that we can move from defeated, to dangerous. Amen.

*Pray for our church plant
in Clifton Park, NY.*

Pray With Us

Melinda Goodermote: Her friend Cindy Minkler had a biopsy this past week; pray that there is no new cancer.

Jon Gerstel: Mike Fisher passed away unexpectedly, pray for his family to have peace of mind.

Craig Mosher: His dad Bruce is home after suffering a heart attack and having a stent put in. His mom had rotator-cuff surgery. Pray for both to heal completely.

Jason Capasso: They are pleased that their niece Haley is visiting for a few days. Jason and family are settling in to their new home and meeting their neighbors.

Pam Moore: Thankful Gary is feeling better and is here today. Pam is asking for prayer as she has a job dilemma and needs guidance and direction. May God grant her wisdom to make the right choice.

Dorothy Stall: A young man on the news spoke out about praying as he held two escaped convicts who were caught on his property. May we have the courage to share our faith.

Matt Olson: Pray for those shot this week in Maryland, and pray for people to step back from the anger generated by politics.

Bob Michaels: Pray for safe travel for Ed and Dorothy for the next two months. May they be lights for all the people they meet. Pray for all who were involved in the Navy ship/civilian vessel that collided. Pastor Josh needs our prayers as he returns from Summer Institute, prepares for camp, and leads the Clifton Park church. Pray for him to have peace of mind and direction.

Kevin Bonesteel: Becky is home today as she is not feeling well. Becky has some decisions to make regarding her future, may she be granted discernment, guidance and direction for this.

Chantel Bink: Continue to pray for the staff and campers that will be attending each camp. Many of the campers are unchurched so pray for the staff to have the Holy Spirit there to guide them all. Camp Harley Sutton needs staff and campers, pray for God's will to be done.

Frank Mace: Rachel, his daughter, had a car/deer accident, she is okay. Pray for her to have transportation soon so she can go to work.

Stacey Sicko: Thankful she is healing and doing better. The facility where she works needs our prayers as it may close. Pray that it gets purchased and clients and staff can stay. For all those who live in Hoosick Falls, they need our prayers with all the issues they've faced this past year. Her son John will be traveling to see friends; pray for safety and for wisdom as he makes college decisions. May God be with him.

Ellen Olson: Pray for Juliet and Jason as they are moving, may all go well. Nick & Lizzie and Matt & Emily are looking for suitable housing, may God direct each couple to the right place for them. On Monday Becca will be taking her nursing exam. Pray for wisdom and clarity of mind.

Paula Dibble: Pray for safe travel as her neighbors are going back to work in NV and TX this next week. She is thankful for the help of Jon G. and Dan S. in spreading mulch at the church.

Youth Fellowship,

Monday, 6:30-8:00 pm

(grades K-12)

Weekly Events

Women's Bible Study, Tuesday, June 13, 7 pm at Bethany Manning's home

Men's Bible Study, Thursday, June 15 at 7 pm in the church library.

Upcoming Events

Primary Camp, June 24-27, God's Little Campground, Ghent, NY

Junior Camp, June 27-30, God's Little Campground, Ghent, NY

Memorial Service for Arlie Greene, June 29th, 11am, light meal following

July 4th Parade – Line up to march - 10am Berlin Elementary School

Senior Camp, July 9-16, Camp Harley Sutton, Alfred Station, NY

Community VBS, July 10-14, 6:30-8:00 pm, First Baptist Church of Berlin

June Operation Christmas Child Collection Items

Sunglasses, jewelry, hair accessories. We are collecting items for the women of the church to pack in October for Operation Christmas Child. You can pick up items at your local dollar store and drop them off in the bin to the left of the double glass doors in the fellowship hall foyer.