

Five Passions That CHANGED The World

By

Mark A McGee

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Introduction

The Need for Passion

What makes the difference in a close athletic competition? Strength? Speed? Agility? Training? How about wars? The number of soldiers? Guns? Planes? Ships? How about **passion!** Passion has been the difference in more wars and competitions than we might imagine.

The Lord's Apostles often wrote about athletic competitions and battles as examples of pushing forward in the Christian life and the life of the Body of Christ even when it seemed the cause was lost. A small group of people, trained personally by the Lord of Glory, believing deeply in His Mission, and filled with the holy Passion of Faith, touched the world in an amazing way ... and it can happen again!

Let's look at **five passionate people** in the Bible to see what we can learn from them that could make the difference in how the Church ministers to a needy world today.

Chapter One

King David: The Passion for God

We begin with a young shepherd boy who God chose to be a powerful king. In speaking of David, God said he was “a man after My own heart, who will do My will” (Acts 13:22, NKJV). High praise from the Creator of all things to say about a man.

What David may not have known at the beginning of their relationship was that God was going to use him to bring about a promise the Lord had made to his ancestor Abraham a thousand years earlier.

“And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.’” Genesis 15:17-21

God made an unconditional promise to Abram (Abraham) that included a specific area of land, “from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates.” That promise was realized for the first time during the reign of King David. How did he do it? **Passion!**

“Now when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went out against them. Then the Philistines went and made a raid on the Valley of Rephaim. And David inquired of God, saying, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?’ The LORD said to him, ‘Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand.’ So they went up to Baal Perazim, and David

defeated them there. Then David said, 'God has broken through my enemies by my hand like a breakthrough of water.' Therefore they called the name of that place Baal Perazim. And when they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire. Then the Philistines once again made a raid on the valley. Therefore David inquired again of God, and God said to him, 'You shall not go up after them; circle around them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines.' So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer. Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations." 1 Chronicles 14:8-17 (NKJV)

"When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians." 2 Samuel 8:5 (NKJV)

"I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." Psalm 145:1-3

"The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I *will be* confident." Psalm 27:1-3

"I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies." Psalm 18:1-3

“For the king trusts in the LORD, And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved. Your hand will find all Your enemies; Your right hand will find those who hate You. You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger; The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, And the fire shall devour them.” Psalm 21:7-9 (NKJV)

“Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was *done*; He commanded, and it stood fast. The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.” Psalm 33:8-12 (NKJV)

“As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” Psalm 42:1-2 (NKJV)

God will probably not call us to do all He asked of David, but God will ask us to serve Him here on earth. Having a passion for God will be vital in our that service.

Chapter Two

Jesus Christ: The Passion for Sacrifice

Next, we have the Son of God who became flesh so He could give His Life to save His people from their sins. His Passion was to sacrifice His Body to pay the penalty for our sins. His Eyes were always on the Cross. He had a **passion** for sacrifice.

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.” Luke 12:22-23

“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Luke 12:33-34

“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” Luke 12:49-50

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:26

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:27

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:33

“And when He [Jesus] was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.” Luke 19:41

“And He went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, **It is**

written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Luke 19:45-46

“This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God.” Mark 14:24-25

“And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, ‘Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written, I have written.’ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,’ that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: ‘They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.’ Therefore the soldiers did these things. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘**Woman, behold your son!**’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘**Behold your mother!**’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘**I thirst!**’ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘**It is finished!**’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. John 19:17-30

Jesus Christ made the greatest sacrifice in history—not just because He died for a cause, but because He died for the sins of the world. No other person in history can make that claim.

God will not ask us to sacrifice our life to pay the penalty of another person's sins. That payment has already been made—in full. What God does ask us to do is present our body to Him as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1, NKJV) He also requires of us that we “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2, NKJV)

Those actions of presenting our body as a living sacrifice, not being conformed to this world but being transformed by the renewing of our mind, must come from a deep passion at the core of our inner being. Nothing short of pure passion can withstand the strong desire of our flesh to come off the altar of sacrifice and be conformed to this world.

Chapter Three

Peter: The Passion for Service

The Christian Church is on the verge of something beyond our comprehension. The Bible tells us about it and gives us many examples of it, but will we acknowledge it in time to make a difference? The Body of Christ around the world needs to be filled with holy passion for the challenges that face us today and will continue to face us until Jesus returns for His Church.

Three of the men our Lord used to build a powerful army of faith soldiers that have stood the test of time and trial are the Apostles Peter, John and Paul. We begin with Peter. He had a deep passion for serving Christ with every fiber of his being. He had many lessons to learn, and learn them he did.

In these verses, we see Peter go from a position of panic and brokenness to becoming one of the most powerful preachers of righteousness ever called by God. What made the change? **Passion.**

“And the Lord said, **Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.** And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, **I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me ...** Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately,

while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, **Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.** And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

“Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed.” John 20:3-8 (NKJV)

“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.” John 21:7

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of

Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the

flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:13

“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praise of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” 1 Peter 4:11-13

“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:5-8

What an amazing transformation in Peter’s life! In the space of just three days he went from being afraid to being assured. His life and his world changed dramatically because of the **Passion of Christ**. Five specific things happened to bring that those changes for Peter.

1. **The Death of Jesus** (Luke 23:33-49)
2. **The Resurrection of Jesus** (Luke 23:1-12)
3. **The Teachings of Jesus about Himself from the Old Testament Scriptures** (Luke 24:44-48)
4. **The Ascension of Jesus** (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12)
5. **The Filling of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2)

These are the same five things that should bring about deep feelings of passionate commitment into the hearts of all Christians. How do they impact your life? How should we respond to the great gifts of God in our lives?

Chapter Four

John: The Passion for People

The Apostle John was the youngest of the Lord's closest disciples. He learned to love people by watching how Jesus loved people. John often called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John's Gospel and his Letters are a great tribute to how deeply God loves people.

John's passion was that people would know the One True God and would experience His love for them. John wanted to see God's people fellowship with God and each other and enjoy the amazing relationship only the Lord could create.

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." John 13:23

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, '**Woman, behold your son!**' Then He said to the disciple, '**Behold your mother!**' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*." John 19:25-27

"Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, and the handkerchief that

had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.” John 20:1-10

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” 1 John 1:3-4

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:1-2

“I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.” 2 John 1:4-6 (NKJV)

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” 3 John 1:2-3 (NKJV)

“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city,

and *from* the things which are written in this book.” He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.” Revelation 22:18-21

John had many experiences similar to Peter’s, but one major difference was that John outlived Peter by about 30 years. In fact, John outlived all of the original apostles of Christ. John was still alive when the Roman Army destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, carried away the Jewish people, and turned Israel into a wasteland. John was alive when the Roman government killed Christians by the thousands and attempted to stamp out the Faith. The Roman government banished John to a small island in the Aegean Sea. John lived to see the great Revelation of Jesus Christ and write about it to the seven churches of Asia Minor. What helped John stay alive and thrive during those tremendously difficult years? **Passion**. He learned it from His Lord Jesus Christ.

What have we learned from our Lord Jesus Christ? How does the Lord’s Life inspire us? What is it about Jesus that helps us thrive in life? I believe the answer is— **passion!**

Chapter Five

Paul: The Passion for Purpose

The Apostle Paul was not one of the original disciples who knew Jesus Christ from the baptism of John. In fact, Paul did not become a follower of Christ until some time after Jesus rose from the grave and ascended back to Heaven.

Paul became one of the primary persecutors of followers of Jesus Christ in Israel and Syria. Paul was responsible for the arrest and deaths of many of the Lord's followers, beginning with the deacon Stephen.

“Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” Acts 7:57 - 8:3

We see here the passion Paul had for God (so he thought) as a Pharisee. What Paul did not know was that his entire life was about to be turned upside down by the God he opposed.

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired

of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?** And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.** And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, **Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.** And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, **Ananias.** And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, **Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.** Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, **Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.** And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the

synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” Acts 9:1-31

The Lord Jesus Christ had a specific purpose for saving Paul: “for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.” Paul was a “chosen vessel” unto the Lord. His purpose was to “bear” the Name of the Lord “before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” What did Paul do? He embraced the challenge of the Lord’s purpose and threw himself fully into accomplishing God’s Will for his life.

This was the beginning of one of the most amazing lives ever lived on Earth. Paul was filled with a holy **passion** for the purpose of Christ and fulfilled it during about 30 years of phenomenal service. In that short time, Paul took the Gospel of Christ to much of the Roman Empire and literally turned the world upside down for God.

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or war? ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” Romans 8:35, 37

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14-19

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Ephesians 5:18-21

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high

places.” Ephesians 6:10-12

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.” Philippians 2:14-16

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” Philippians 3:10

“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly loved ... Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” Philippians 4:1, 4

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” Philippians 4:8-9

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” Colossians 1:9-11

“But thou, O Man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:11-12

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” 2 Timothy 2:

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

“Flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” 2 Timothy 2:22

“I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” 2 Timothy 4:6-7

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:11-13

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” 2 Corinthians 4:5-7

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be

manifest in our body.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-10

“But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceiver, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” 2 Corinthians 6:4-10

“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 3:8-9

You and I are proof of Paul’s passion—for we are saved through the ministry started among the Gentiles almost 2,000 years ago. But is it Paul’s passion that we celebrate? No, it is the **PASSION** of Jesus Christ that we celebrate. All praise and honor and glory go to our Lord and Savior for His Sacrifice and Leadership. Paul simply obeyed his Heavenly calling and did what God had purposed for him from before he was born.

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach

him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me." Galatians 1:11-24

What has God called you to do? What **passion** has He given you for the task? Will you do it? Will you take the challenge? Will you go? Will you do? Will you be all God wants you to be? May our answer be YES, LORD, SEND ME!

Conclusion

What I read in all these verses is **PASSION!**

David, Jesus, Peter, John, Paul — they all had Passion — Passion for God, Passion for Sacrifice, Passion for Service, Passion for People, Passion for Purpose.

We have a great challenge ahead of us. We will need Passion and God's Power to accomplish the great goals God has for us in the coming years. Remember that God's Passion lives "in" us. Christ is "in" us and we are "in" Christ. Our Passion is **Christ!**

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind

one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12