

Such As I Am - cont.

live the same way?

4. Paul had a fervent love for the lost.

Finally, Paul wanted others to be like him because he loved others and wanted them to have what he had - salvation. Paul said, "I would tell God ... all that hear me." Paul truly loved the lost and he wanted them to be saved (Romans 9:1-3; 10:1). He truly sacrificed for the lost throughout his preaching career (1 Corinthians 9:19ff). He strongly persuaded others to be saved (Luke 14:23; Acts 2:40; 17:1-4). Do we do the same?

Someone today might ask, "Yes, but Paul was an apostle and we are not apostles, so how can we be like him?" We must remember that we are commanded to be like Paul. Paul wrote, "be imitators of me..." (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9). He imitated Jesus and he wanted all to imitate him.

Yes, we can and must be like Paul in saying, "become such as I am..." After you become right with God, go and tell others how to be right with God, and then show them what it means to live and be right with God.

- Chris Reeves -

- Scripture of the Week -

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"
- Genesis 1:1 -

Physicists today speak of five basic components of the universe and they are all found right here in Genesis 1:1: time (beginning), force (God), energy (created), space (heavens) and matter (earth).

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Become Such As I Am

*King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?
I know that you believe. And Agrippa
said unto Paul, With but little persua-
sion you would fain make me a Chris-
tian. And Paul said, I would to God,
that whether with little or with much, not
thou only, but also all that hear me this
day, might become such as I am, except
these bonds.
- Acts 26:27-29 -*

When the apostle Paul was on trial before King Agrippa, he made the above statement to him and he hoped that Agrippa and the others with him would “become such as I am”. This is truly an amazing statement. Paul wanted all who heard him to be just like him. Can we say the same for ourselves? Can we say that we hope that everyone around us would be just like ourselves? Something to think about.

Background

So, why was Paul on trial before Agrippa in the first place? What had he done to deserve such a trial? Paul was not on trial because he had broken some law - Roman or Jewish. He was on trial because he had been falsely accused and arrested in Acts 21 when he was in Jerusalem. From that time onward (Acts 21-25), he was placed

before various individuals who judged him until he found himself before King Agrippa in Acts 26.

The book of Acts, from Paul’s conversion in Acts 9 to Paul’s imprisonment in Acts 28, can be summarized this way:

- Paul the persecutor (Acts 9).
- Paul the penitent (Acts 9).
- Paul the persecuted preacher (Acts 9, 13-20).
- Paul the protector (Acts 21-26).
- Paul the persuader (Acts 27).
- Paul the prisoner preacher (Acts 28).

Let us now examine Paul’s statement in Acts 26:29: “become such as I am, except these bonds.” What position or blessings in life did Paul have that the others around him did not and what did he want them to have? Paul’s statement was a statement of confidence, a statement of fact, and a statement showing an exemplary attitude. Can we say the same?

I. Paul was right and he knew it.

Paul wanted others to be like him because he was right with God. Paul was not being boastful or self-righteous on this occasion (Philippians 3:9; Titus 3:5). He was not saying that he was right by his own merit (Romans 1:17; 5:1). He was not

ashamed of Jesus (Matthew 10:32). He was convinced and he tried to convince others. Do we do the same?

2. Paul was in the only desirable state to be in.

Paul wanted others to be like him because being a Christian is the only way to be in life. Note that Paul’s statement was exclusive – “as I am”. Paul was free from of sin (1 Tim. 1:13-16; Acts 22:16) and free from human tradition (Phil. 3:4-11). He was a Christian; in Christ; in the Lord’s body; in the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23). He desired that others be in the one and only state to be in - in Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Do we desire the same?

3. Paul practiced what he preached.

Paul wanted others to be like him because he not only became a Christian, but he lived like a Christian each day. Paul was consistent in his lifestyle (1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). He taught and lived an exemplary life (Philippians 2:15). He opposed hypocrisy in others (Galatians 2:11-14). He said that what he had become - a Christian - he continued to live. Do we