**An event that Changes your life**

Have you ever had something happen to you that changed your life in a moment? You were heading in one direction when something happened and next thing you knew you were heading in the other.

I remember once driving home on a business trip. The freeway was pretty clear and I was probably going around 65 miles an hour driving in the center lane. As I was rounding the top of an overpass I saw all the cars directly in front of me were at a dead stop. I immediately knew that there was no way I could stop in time. There was less than a few car lengths till impact. So I did the next common sense thing. I closed my eyes, gripped the wheel and braced for impact. I don’t know my exact words, if I said them out loud or in my head but it was something like “oh dear God”. Then it happened……… nothing. It was like I waited an eternity but there was no impact. I opened my eyes and somehow I was flying down the off ramp. I don’t know how I got there from the center lane but somehow God had delivered me. He changed the direction I was going in a moment.

# The disciples were your average everyday people. The bible tells us 4 were fishermen (Peter, Andre, James, john) and one was a tax collector (Matthew). When Jesus called them they immediately stopped what they were doing to follow him. (Matthew 4:18-22)

* **When Jesus calls you, there should be a change in your direction**

For the next couple of years, they spent walking and talking with Jesus. They witnessed amazing miracles and He was their friend and teacher. But they didn’t know then what was coming nor did they understand why it had to happen.

Then everything went wrong.

As they came to take Jesus prisoner all the disciples abandoned him (Mark 14:50). Peter denied knowing Jesus (Luke 22:54-62) for fear that he would be imprisoned or killed. None of them showed for his trial or crucifixion (except for John - John 19:26). Then after his death they all hid in a room for fear of persecution.

John 20:19 on the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, **with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders …**

Then we are told the disciples, thinking it was all over, returned to their old way of life.

John 21:2-3(ESV) Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.  Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

The disciples thought it was all over, they feared for their lives so they just returned to what they were doing before they ever meet Jesus.

**Then everything changed!**

They witnessed the risen Christ (John 20:19) and received the holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13). Now they were willing to suffer great persecution in the name of Jesus the son of God, The Christ.

So If we look at peter before the resurrection, Just before Jesus was taken to be crucified, Peter had told Jesus 'If I must die with you, I will not deny you' (Mark 14:31). Later that night, Peter cursed, swore and denied ever knowing Jesus three times (Mark 14:71).

Now if we look at Peter after the resurrection, We find in Acts that peter heals a Lame man in the name of Jesus and was then arrested by the temple Guard and taken before the Jewish elders, teachers of the law and high priest and there peter states:

Acts 4:8-11 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is

“‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Does this sound like the same Peter who denied ever Knowing Jesus? Peter experienced a life changing event and it showed in his and the other disciples behaviors. IT changed their lives

We do not have exact records of how all the disciples died but from ancient literature we find the following

**The Death of the Disciples**

* John the son of Zebedee: Lived the longest but was banished on the island of Patmos for his testimony of Jesus
* James (John’s Brother): was put to death, decapitated, by Herod Agrippa about 11 years after the death of Christ. (Acts 12: 1-2).
* Simon Peter died 33-34 years after the death of Christ. He died in Rome with Paul for preaching about Christ. Peter felt himself unworthy to be put to death in the same manner as his Master, and was therefore, at his own request, crucified with his head downward.”
* Andrew (Peter’s Brother): reported to have been crucified on an X shaped cross
* Thomas(Doubting): Believed to be martyred by a lance/speared to death
* Bartholomew: Skinned alive and beheaded
* Simon: Sawed in Half
* Phillip: Hung upside down by hooks in his ankles
* Matthew (The Tax Colector): Lived many years but legend says that he died a martyr in Ethiopia.
* James Alpheus: was thrown down from the temple by the scribes and Pharisees; he was then stoned, and his brains dashed out with a fuller’s club.

Does this sound like the same disciples that hide in a room after Christ death too scared to even show up during his trial and crucifixion? But After his resurrection no one could stop them from preaching the name of Jesus, even when faced with death.

**James & Jude the brothers of Jesus**

In John 7:5 we find that “even his own brothers did not believe in him.” Apparently, the Resurrection changed their minds, because they joined Mary and the disciples in the Upper Room to wait for the Holy Spirit.

Jewish historian Josephus reported that Jewish leaders stoned James to death for his belief. Both James and Jude wrote letters supporting Jesus that are now books in the bible

We also find 1000 of Jews who lived a strict Jewish lifestyle following the laws and sacrifices turn to follow Jesus (5000 just at Pentecost)

**Then there was Paul.**

Paul’s letters cover a large portion of the New Testament (13 of 27 books), and it is safe to say that he is one of the most read authors in human history. His abrupt turnaround from zealous persecutor of Christians to one of Christianity’s greatest proponents surely shaped the history of the early Christian church. But who was Saul of Tarsus before he became the apostle Paul?

* Saul of Tarsus studied Scriptures in Jerusalem under [Rabbi Gamaliel](http://www.gotquestions.org/Gamaliel-in-the-Bible.html), a well-respected leader in the Jewish Sanhedrin.
* Saul was a dedicated Jew that would protect the integrity of the Jewish traditions and law at all cost.

Most likely Saul was present for the trial of [Stephen](http://www.gotquestions.org/life-Stephen.html) that resulted in Stephen becoming the first Christian martyr and Luke tells us that Stephen’s executioners laid their garments at the feet of Saul who was in full approval of the mob’s murderous actions.

Saul later ravaged the new Christian church by entering the homes of believers and committing them to prison. Saul had no patience for Christians and wanted to see the entire movement crushed by imprisoning and/or sentencing the leaders of the movement to death for violating the Jewish law.

But then one day while on his way to Damascus to arrest and extradite Christians back to Jerusalem, Saul was confronted by the very One whom he was persecuting, Jesus Christ. What followed was one of the most dramatic conversions in church history. Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul, a dedicated missionary to an unbelieving world and a fine example of faithful service in the face of fierce persecution. Saul’s education, his background as a Pharisee, his Roman citizenship, and his unwavering zeal all contributed to his success as a missionary.

Paul’s persecution for preaching the Gospel was recorded in 2Cor. 11: 25-28.

Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Paul did not question his mission even when being persecuted. He waited in prison for two years but did not give up on Christ (God probably had him there so he would write the letters we have today)

Acts 16:22 The multitude rose up together against them (Paul & Silas), and the magistrates tore their clothes off of them, and commanded them to be beaten with rods. When they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely, who, having received such a charge, threw them into the inner prison, and secured their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. …

Paul made a 180 degree turn, changed everything he believed in, suffered all these things, dedicated the rest of his life and finally put to death for his faith. Would you do all this for a lie or something you didn’t truly believe in. You would only go this far for something you knew to be 100% true. Each of these men obviously believed in what they were preaching so much they were willing to die for it.

This is not saying that anyone should wish to die. I believe God used the death of each of these disciples to show the world their commitment to what they believed. If they all lived rich rewarding lives for what they were teaching would you trust what they were saying?

God does not call all of us to die for him but he does call everyone to let their will (Self) die for his will.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ yet I no longer live, but Christ lives in me and the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Bottom line is when you experience the Risen Christ and his spirit comes into your life it should be a life changing event. The old you should pass away and you should now live for Christ.

How many of you claim “Jesus Christ is Lord” but would not tell a friend or much less a stranger on the street. Don’t feel bad I have been there many times. You have to make a stand for Christ. He made one for you on the Cross!

In Philippians 1:21 Paul said to live is Christ and to die is gain. Meaning as long as he is alive he will spread the word of Christ until he dies and receives his reward in heaven

Where do you stand in your life?

• To live is money and wealth and to die is to lose it all

• To live is fame and to die is to be forgotten.

• To live is to have lots of friends to die is to be alone

Paul saw his life had no other meaning other than to glorify Jesus even until his own death. Is Christ calling you? Maybe you should answer. It could be a life changing adventure

Everything starts with a first step. God calls you! You must take the first step and except him as your personal savior and put your trust in him. After that He will call you to do something, a door opens, and you take that step. When you obey, another door will open and you take another step. The adventure will not begin until you take the first step, and you will not see the next step until you have completed the first one. If you feel God prompting you today to do something: take the step. If these men had not taken that first step we would not be reading about them today

IS Christ calling you? Is He calling you to make a change? Will you let him change you?

Let Christ make a **life changing event in you!!!**