

WHEN YOUR PAST IS A ROADBLOCK
Summer Crossroads -- Part 1
July 31, 2011

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV) *"This is what the LORD says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.' "*

Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."*

ROADBLOCK #1: YOUR PAST

THE EXAMPLE OF SAUL...

- **HE HAD AN EVENTFUL PAST**

Acts 7:57b-58, 8:1a (NLT) *"They rushed at him (Stephen) ⁵⁸ and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. ¹ Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen."*

Acts 8:1b (NLT) *"A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles fled into Judea and Samaria."*

Acts 8:3, 9:1a (NLT) *"But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison. ¹ Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers."*

Acts 26:10-11 (NLT) *"In Jerusalem... I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. ¹¹ Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities."*

- **HE HAD A GENUINE CONVERSION**

Saul's conversion: Acts 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18

Acts 9:26 (NLT) *"When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They thought he was only pretending to be a believer!"*

- **HE HAD AN AMAZING TRANSFORMATION**

Acts 9:20-21a (NLT) *"And immediately he (Saul) began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is indeed the Son of God!' ²¹ All who heard him were amazed. 'Isn't this the same man who persecuted Jesus' followers with such devastation in Jerusalem?'"*

1 Timothy 1:15-16 (NLT) *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I (Saul) was the worst of them all. ¹⁶ But that is why God had mercy on me, so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of His great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in Him and receive eternal life."*

Romans 4:7-8 (NLT) *"Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. ⁸ Yes, what joy for those whose sin is no longer counted against them by the Lord."*

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR MOVING PAST YOUR PAST

1. READ these verses:

(Psalm 86:5; Mark 3:28; Acts 10:43; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Hebrews 10:10; 1 John 2:2, 1 John 2:12, 1 John 4:10)

2. Ask God to FORGIVE your past

1 John 1:9 (NLT) *"If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong."*

3. TALK to a follower of Jesus about your past.

James 5:16 (NLT) *"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results."*