

Thought For The Day 15<sup>th</sup>.June 2020

WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO BE PAUL?



Acts 22 verses 1-16

Would you have liked to be Paul? Would I have liked to be Paul? NO. Here was this man, held in high esteem, a scholar of the Hebrew Law, confident in his faith who thought he understood the pattern of his life and the way Jews should live. Then what happens? The answer is the Light of God jumps into the situation and everything seems to be thrown up into the air. I can't begin to comprehend the inner conflict Paul must have experienced. He was well and truly tipped out of his comfort zone. He would be viewed by some as having abandoned his faith. As someone who challenged the position of other prominent Jews. Someone who wouldn't keep quiet. Someone who was likely to make their relationship with the Romans more complicated. Someone who, though they wouldn't admit it, was causing them to question and examine their own faith and they didn't find that comfortable. Paul was altogether a pain.

Paul wasn't daft, he would have well understood the implications. It is probably for this very reason his encounter with God had to be so dramatic. A softly, softly approach would have been too easy for him to dismiss. Similarly others would need to see a dramatic turn around in Paul for anyone to take sufficient notice. Somehow or other this man had to get across that what God was trying to convey was not that following 'The Way' was a means of negating the Law but rather its fulfilment.

This wasn't a role for someone conflict averse. It wasn't a role for someone who would dither. It was the role for a very strong and compassionate leader who could grasp the task and engage in it fearlessly. It was a role for a man of intellect able to communicate complex concepts in a way ordinary folk could understand. Someone to bring together love and law without taking the glory on themselves. Strange as it might sound it needed to be a man of humility. There is an inverse relationship between pride and success.

I like to visualise the Light as representing God's love for His people, heralding a time for them to come of age, a time for each one to share in an intimate and personal relationship with their God, their creator.

What a transformation in Paul. What a lesson in how God can further the reign of His Kingdom by the transformation of his people.

A THOUGHT FOR PRAYERFUL REFLECTION:

On a personal basis, what lessons do you think God may be trying to convey to you through the life of Paul?