

June 25, 2017

Bless The Broken Road

READ: Acts 9:3-5 (Common English Bible)

“During the journey, as he approached Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven encircled him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice asking him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you harassing me?’ Saul asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are harassing,’ came the reply.”

MEDITATE:

Originally recorded by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on their 1994 album, Acoustic, the song, *Bless the Broken Road*, has since been recorded by multiple artist including Melodie Crittenden, Selah, Jamie Slocum, and Carrie Underwood. The highest-charting rendition is by the country music group, Rascal Flatts, who released the song in November, 2004 winning a Grammy Award for Best Country Song. Here is a moving message that describes how the process of getting over a past relationship can eventually lead to a deeper love. Every lost love is described as a star, which, collectively, all point the way to the present love: “Every long lost dream led me to where you are. Others who broke my heart they were like Northern stars, pointing me on my way into your loving arms.”

I imagine a similar song was sung in the heart of the apostle Paul, a song that remained there until he took his last breath – a song of discovering, on the Road to Damascus, his one true love, Jesus Christ. In the Book of Acts, Paul self-identifies his love for God and his disdain for those who would corrupt the faith as he understood it. Chief among those Paul hated were followers of Jesus. With authority from the highest level of the Jewish faith, Paul traveled extensively, arresting “persons who belong to the Way (Christians)” and placing them in prison. Such was Paul’s passionate hate for Christians we may assume that his faith was one of considerable “brokenness” as he traveled one road after another, spewing out murderous threats against the Lord’s followers.

During one of his campaigns to eradicate the “Christian menace,” Saul traveled a road to Damascus where “suddenly a light from heaven encircled him.” That road would become the place where Saul’s confidence in his own righteousness would be shattered. Falling to the ground, a voice thunders from heaven, asking Saul why he was following a road of hatred – a hatred of such intensity it aroused fear among the people. “Who are you, Lord?” asks Saul, whose name would become Paul. The reply would forever change Saul, both his name and the direction of his life. The “Northern star” of his passionate Jewish faith directed Saul down a road that was chosen by God to point him into the loving arms of Jesus.

“This much I know is true,” announces the song, “That God blessed the broken road that led me straight to you.” For years upon years, Saul pursued a passionate love for his God, a love that was misdirected. Saul was lost, yet he kept pushing through, unaware that God was gathering all the brokenness of Saul life for a grand purpose. “I’d like to have the time I lost and give it back to you,” sounds the second stanza. We hear this in Paul’s writings in the New Testament, Paul regarded everything before Jesus as of no value. Yet, “It’s all part of a grander plan that is coming true.” The Road to Damascus would become Saul’s “broken road” where everything would now change. God blessed that broken road and led Saul straight to Jesus. God will do the same for us.

