**God Transforms (Acts 9:19b-22)**

 God changes people miraculously.

 Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we talk about a topic today that perhaps many of us have asked about. *“How can this or that person ever change?”* Perhaps your spouse, child, or relative has some unhelpful habits. Perhaps you yourself are waiting for a change in your life. Today we are going to reestablish an answer to the question above: that God is the one who changes a person. Of course, we are talking about change on the level of both personality and deeds. It is not just right works that we are referring to, but rather that God can effect a total change in our lives. Therefore, today we are going to establish, based on our text, that it is the Lord that changes man. God changes people in a wondrous, miraculous way. Let’s move onto the examination of this truth…

 It is the Lord that changes people – because He sees the whole person and knows them intimately. When we consider the background of our text for today, the Apostle Paul’s conversion is not foreseeable at all. He was somebody who was present at Stephen’s martyrdom and encouraged the execution! He was a persecutor of the church. He caused the believers in Christ to suffer and he had a reputation both among the unbelieving Jewish leadership as well as among the new believers. A human being cannot change such a person. Somebody like this has reached a stage in their perspective on life that what they believe and are convinced of has become a law of life for them. Thus, they live life according to that law, often blind to God’s desires for them. In Saul’s (or the Apostle Paul’s) case, he had confused religious knowledge and traditions with the voice of the living God who could shake history at any moment (without following all of what we respect, which are often our own human constructs). Saul, in order to change, needed a “Higher Power” (the God of Scripture, of course). Perhaps you also have met or know of such people who need a major overhaul in their life…

 There is a story of a famous artist who was once visiting a family that lived in a large mansion. One of the servants had spilled soda and left a horrible stain on one of the walls. While the family was out, the artist stayed behind and using a piece of charcoal, drew a beautiful picture around that stain, completely incorporating it into a magnificent picture. When the family returned, they saw a beautiful waterfall with animals and trees depicted on their wall. That artist used his skill to bring forth something beautiful from a very ugly situation.

 Our Heavenly Artist establishes for us through today’s passage that He is, indeed, the one who can change people. So, if you want to change, first give glory to God that He’s given you that desire, and then ask him, pray, and fast for what it is you desire (all the while giving it to him and not trying to control that which you just gave up to Him). As you do this, God will give you a way to make the right changes, whether they are a new way of thinking or a new way of working. If it is someone else (around you) that needs to change and it has been years that you’ve been unable to get them to understand or see this fact or the vision of the end result of the change, the solution is the same: surrender their transformation to the Lord, and do not try to fix them anymore than the many years that you’ve tried to do so before. In that way, you will have given the Lord permission to work on that person supernaturally (because you will have gotten out of God’s way).

 In all circumstances, if we hold tightly to God and have Him as our Helper, especially when we are bothered by the unchanging people around us, we will have that peace that allows God’s work in those around us.

 If you want people to change, do not try to change them – rather, say your piece lovingly and gently, and then completely surrender it to the Lord and do not repeat the subject with them again. God is the one who changes a criminal into an Apostle. God is the one who change the darkness in man to light. Let us trust Him today to do this. God is the One who changes people, because He sees the whole person and knows them intimately. God changes people miraculously.

 May He give us the blessing to pray so that we can patiently surrender those lives we desire to see change in to Him, so that He can change them or even us, as He sees fit and has planned.

 It is God who changes people. The Lord bless you all. Amen.