

If I asked you to give me a word to describe God, I would expect that many of you would use words such as:- **HOLY POWERFUL CREATIVE ETERNAL**

I would also like to add the word **'SUDDENLY'**. It may seem a strange word to use but, over and over again we can read in the Bible that God did things **suddenly**. He often seemed to wait a while and then **suddenly** and unexpectedly He would step in and completely change a situation. What He did would be quite different from what was expected and would usually be so much better.

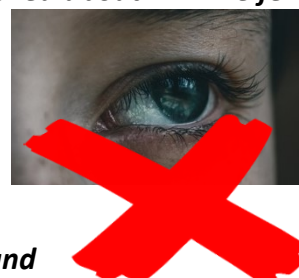


Saul of Tarsus was rather a nasty character. About five years after the death of Jesus there was quite an effort to wipe out Christians and Saul was at the forefront of some of that action. He set out to travel to Damascus in order to capture some of them and have them put in prison. Before folk were put into prison they were normally flogged and then put into



cells where there was no light, heating, running water or proper sanitation. They were often also fastened to painful leg or wrist chains. What sort of person would commit his life to such a horrible undertaking.

Saul was a very clever man but was obviously very much against Jesus and any teaching about Him. Whilst he was on his way to Damascus, this is the account in Acts 9: 3 – 9, of what **suddenly** happened to him. ***'Now as he approached Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He said, "Who are you Lord?" and He answered, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting; but rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were travelling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no-one. Saul arose from the ground but when his eyes were opened he could see nothing. They led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.'***



God is able to break into any person's life at any time. No-one is ever too bad, too uninterested or too hostile to prevent a loving God from completely changing their attitude and behaviour. He then often uses them in a very powerful way to tell others how Jesus voluntarily died such a horrible death in order to provide forgiveness and pave a way to an eternal life in Heaven.

Never too bad

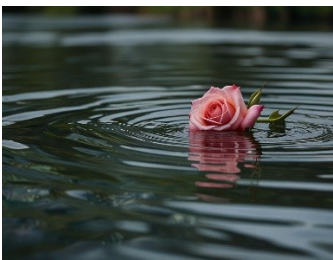
Never too uninterested

Never too hostile

The amazing revelation to Saul does not end on the Damascus road. God directed a Christian named Ananias to go to the exact street and house where Saul was staying and pray for him. How about that for God's guidance! Ananias was quite dubious about doing this because he had heard how Saul was out to capture as many Christians as he could and imprison them so he was far from enthusiastic about acting on what God was asking him to do. God then assured him that Saul had been especially chosen for the specific purpose of spreading the gospel in an unprecedented way. Ananias completed his God-given task and went on to see how Saul was telling everyone that Jesus was the Christ. What a tremendous turn-around!

From this Putting Christians out into prison
To this Publicly preaching about Jesus

Yours may not be a 'Damascus road' experience but the change that Jesus has made in your life can have a strong impact on the lives of others. What is more satisfying than knowing that you have played a part in the salvation of the life of someone else. One thing that I have definitely found out in my Christian walk, is that if God asks us to do something, then He equips us to do it. He uses our natural abilities to achieve things for Him and does not ask us to do something that we are incapable of doing.



Ripples

I firmly believe in ripples. One person tells another about Jesus and that person goes on to tell two or three others who then repeat the pattern so that the ripples gradually spread out in all directions, just as they do when we throw something into a pool of water. Think about the ripples from Saul on the Damascus road. He spoke to hundreds of people during his lifetime but also, the letters that he wrote, that we can read in our Bibles, have rippled out to millions of people all over the world for almost 2,000 years. They tell of the risen Jesus, the Jesus who listens and speaks to us, the Jesus who saves us as no other can, the Jesus who loves every one of us and wants us to be with Him for eternity.

What ripples – And all from one

‘SUDDENLY’!

Jesus can change our lives **SUDDENLY,** unexpectedly and permanently.