

An unlikely instrument of Christ

*During the Second World War a church in Strasbourg was destroyed. After the bombing, the members of the church found that the entire roof had fallen in, leaving only a heap of rubble. Much to their surprise a statue of Christ with outstretched hands that had been carved centuries before by a great artist, was still standing. It was virtually unharmed except that both hands had been broken off. The people asked a sculptor if he could replace the hands of the statue. He was willing, but when the church officials met to consider the sculptor's proposition, they decided not to accept his offer. Why? **Because they felt that the statue without hands would be the greatest illustration possible that God's work is done through his people.***

Have you considered the work you can do for the Lord? Or do you think you are an unlikely candidate to work for Christ? Remember then the history of Saul of Tarsus.

Saul is mentioned three times prior to the story of his conversion on the road to Damascus, and each time he has been revealed as a bitter opponent of Christ and his church. We are told that at the martyrdom of Stephen "... *the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul*" (Acts 7:58), that "*Saul was there, giving approval to his death*" (8:1), and that then "*Saul began to destroy the church*" (8:3), making a house-to-house search for Christians, dragging men and women off to prison. Chapter 9 resumes Saul's story by saying that he "*was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples*" (9:1). Saul had not changed since Stephen's death; he was still full of hatred and hostility toward Christ and his church.

Then Saul's hostility takes a new turn. Saul hatched a plot for the removal and death of the Christians outside of Jerusalem, in Damascus, and persuaded the high priest to give his blessing to it (9:1b-2).

Yet in Acts 9: 15 we read that the Lord said about Saul of Tarsus, humanly speaking the most unlikely candidate for the ministry: "*This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.*"

Have you ever thought of yourself in this way? Have you ever thought of yourself as the hands of Jesus and his chosen instrument?

Jesus Christ chooses to do his work through human hands. Sometimes they seem to be frail, or the least successful, or the least qualified or even the most unclean hands, but yours are the hands he uses. If Saul of Tarsus could be his chosen instrument, by the grace of God becoming the powerful apostle Paul, then you can be his chosen instrument as well.

Be blessed when you thank the Lord for the gifts you received, and serve him with passion!