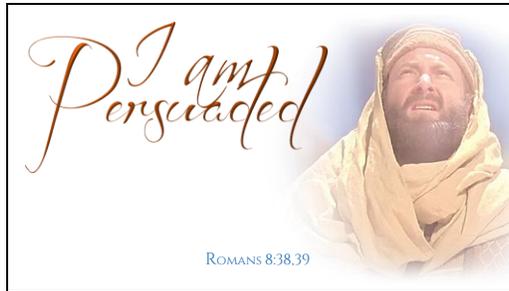


Slide 1



I Am Persuaded

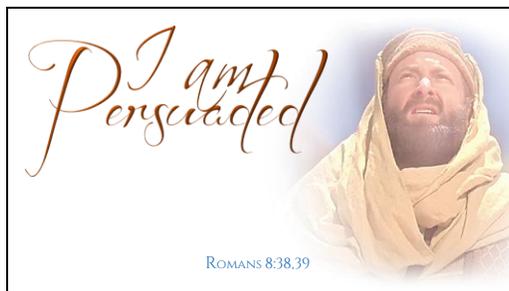
Romans 8:38, 39

517 My Faith Looks Up To Thee

511 I Know Whom I Have Believed

(reworked from *Persuaded* -2007)

Slide 2



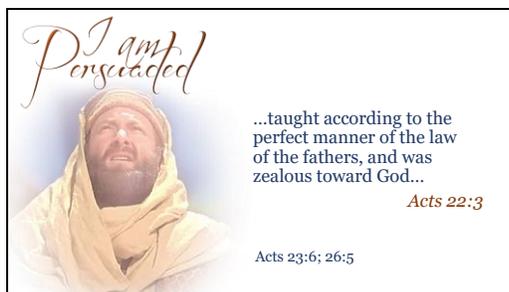
Saul of Tarsus... was an up and coming young man... with a bright future:

He was a Roman Citizen by birth... A Jew of the Tribe of Benjamin...

He was a brilliant student... sitting at the feet of Gamaliel (gam-al-ee-ale')... the eminent doctor of the law:

Scripture says he was:

Slide 3



Acts 23:6 ...He was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee

Acts 26:5 ...and after the most strict sect of his religion lived a Pharisee,

He had a promising future... lineage... education... skill... friends in high places...

And a zeal... that would have taken him... to the top of the Jewish chain... of Command and Influence (Acts 22:3, 4)

One day... he met Jesus... and all that changed

He lost all his friends... his future... His associates scorned him... in fact sought to kill him...

I'm sure his family... ostracized him... on

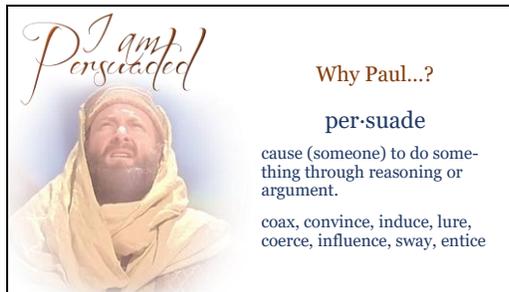
top of that... the ones he joined... didn't even trust him.

He took a... definite pay cut... became an traveling preacher...

He suffered much... for his new found faith... the very ones... he once sought to kill...

He now hung out with... and was willing... to die himself for... he was persuaded

Slide 4



I am Persuaded

Why Paul...?

per-suade
cause (someone) to do something through reasoning or argument.
coax, convince, induce, lure, coerce, influence, sway, entice

One would ask... Why Paul... Why did you do it?

Why did you give up... the good life... your friends... your family... your comfort... and join that cult... Can't you hear Paul reply:

I've been Converted... I am Persuaded... that Jesus is... the Way... the truth... the life

What was your conversion like... what did you... have to leave behind...
Did you loose your friends... did your family throw you out...

Has someone tried... to take your life... did all your plans... for the future get altered permanently... what happened when you met Jesus?

You may not have had... a blinding encounter... on a Damascus road... that knocked you... off your high horse... and radically changed your pursuits

But can you say with Paul... I am Persuaded?

Persuaded... a synonym of convinced... is more than an intellectual assent...

"I believe there... was a man named Jesus... or even that he... was or is the son of God

Persuaded... is more than this...especially for Paul... he was certain... so certain... That he was willing... to give all... suffer all... go to the ends of the world... and life itself... for Jesus

Persuasion... to Paul... was more than... a mere acceptance...
Because it was born... of personal experience and tribulation

Paul was persuaded... so much so... that he affirmed it... with these words:

Slide 5

I am Persecuted 

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life,
nor angels nor principalities nor powers...

Romans 8:38-39

Slide 6

I am Persecuted 

...nor things present nor things to come, nor height
nor depth, nor any other created thing...

Romans 8:38-39

Slide 7

I am Persecuted 

...shall be able to separate us from the love
of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

Paul was so persuaded... that he spent... the rest of his life... trying to find others who... might like him be persuaded too

But his experience... had brought him... to the persuasion... that there wasn't anything... Christ couldn't do for him...

In him... and though him... and anyone else also... who would be likewise persuaded

In Romans 8... we find at least... a half dozen well known... quotable quotes...

It is a power packed chapter... full of enlightenment and encouragement...

Not the least of which is verse one:

Slide 8

Principle - 1

I am Persecuted



There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:1

Saul of Tarsus... the persecutor of Jesus... the assailant... the assassin of Jesus' followers...

When he met... the resurrected and ascended Jesus... in all his glory and power... face to face

He probably expected... to be stuffed out of existence

And if he... the Christian killer... the witness at... the stoning of Stephen

If he found... mercy and forgiveness... what about you and me?...

There's no sin so big... God can't forgive... that is... except the one... you won't let him forgive

Paul was persuaded... first and foremost... because he himself... Found mercy and forgiveness... in Jesus Christ... instead of condemnation... he found life...

Forgiveness is... the first Principle... of Christian Persuasion

But... what does God... want us to learn from... Paul's experiences?

Where did Paul get his strength?... how did he face... his trials, troubles, sorrows?

Perhaps... by his example... and that of others... we can be strengthened too...

Paul recognized this writing:

Slide 9

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Romans 15:4



Romans 7:8-11; 1 Corinthians 10:11

As I read afresh... this 8th chapter of Romans... I spotted something... By God's grace... that I hadn't seen... or pondered before...

I saw both the depth... and source... of Paul's persuasion... And it caused me... to ponder my own claim... my own depth... of being persuaded

Paul had previously... put his trust in... what he terms the flesh... in other words it was in himself

In his ability... to conform... to the basic tenants of his religion... he was a zealous Pharisee (*Romans 7:8-11*)

Yet... as the scales fell from his eyes... he began to see... that he had built a belief system... on a false hope The things... the forms... the compliances... were faulty:

Slide 10

Principle - 2

I am Persecuted



For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us

Romans 8:3-4

Isaiah 64:6, 2 Pet 3:18

Paul's second... Principle of Persuasion... came when he realized that Isaiah 64:6... all our righteousness... is as filthy rags...

Thus he realized... his flesh was weak...

Everything he had been... shooting for... and attempting... had amounted to nothing... he was going the wrong way

One I think... is both necessary and healthy... "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2Pet 3:18

This is a Damascus experience... one I think Paul... had more than once... in His life

Paul was persuaded... because he came to realize... experientially... That what he had been... trying to accomplish... in his strength externally... was something... only God could do in him:

I think... this eye opening... reckoning with self... the realization... that we have trusted in the flesh... Perhaps... heading the wrong direction... for all the wrong reasons...

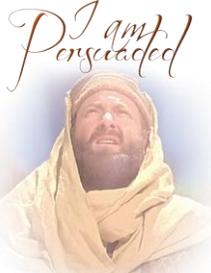
Paul was Persuaded... because he had... personally experienced... not only mercy But also... the life changing power... of the indwelling spirit:

Is an experience... I personally have had to... recon with more than once...

Listen to his personal testimony:

Slide 11

I am Persecuted



Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

1 Timothy 1:13

2 Timothy 3:5

Paul used to be... but he was changed...

How?

Romans 8:11

Slide 12

I am Persecuted



But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Romans 8:11-13

Paul's Persuasion... rested in the fact... that he had obtained mercy... no longer condemned...

But even more... he became a partaker... of the spirit of God... and was converted...

From the sinful man... of the flesh... to a child of God...

Not only... in a philosophical sense... but in realistic outward action

That's why he could say from experience:

Slide 13

I am Persecuted



Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation...*

Because of the radical change... this encounter... Old things pass... All things are new

Thus because of... his new orientation... new destiny...this persuasive power... that altered him

Paul... knew that he was now... not only a physical descendent... but a spiritual descendent... of Abraham:

Slide 14

I am Persecuted



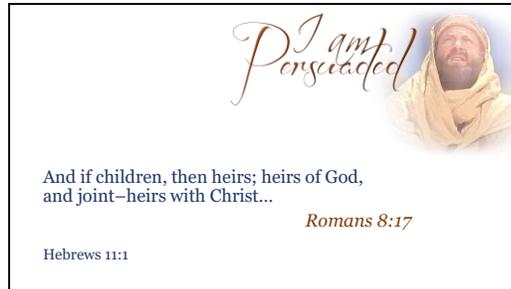
And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3:29

Rom 4:12,13,16; Gal 3:7,8

Follow this... Romans 8... concurs with this point:

Slide 15



I am Persecuted

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...

Romans 8:17

Hebrews 11:1

Paul's receipt... of mercy was real time... here and now...

His conversion... was also thus real time... here and now...

He wasn't waiting... for some future heavenly change... but experienced... the present change... of both heart and actions

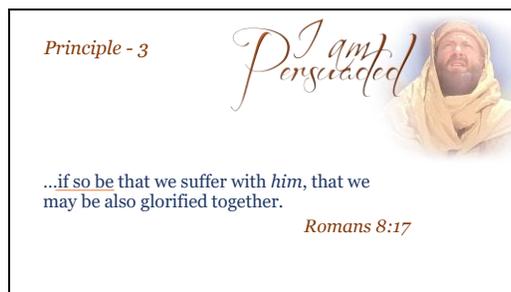
This real time... mercy and conversion... Persuaded Paul further... that he could also

Have faith... i.e. the belief in things hoped for... the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1)... in the future promise

To be Persuaded... of Heavenly realities is revealed when... I take on... a whole new perspective... a new outlook on Life

Look at the second half... of this verse:

Slide 16



Principle - 3

I am Persecuted

...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:17

What does this mean?

Simple... this being persuaded... not only changes our "bad doings" into "good doings"

Principle 3... it gives us a new mind

It radically alters... our out outlook on life!

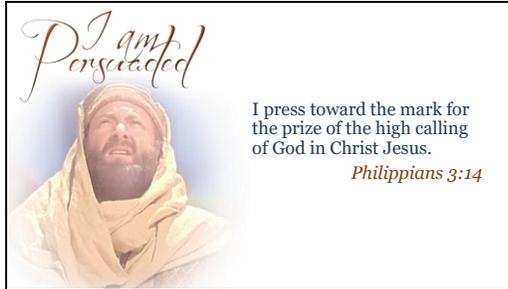
Alters our goals... our purposes... our perspectives... into a Christ first mentality... a "walk in His footsteps" approach

A willingness to suffer... if need be... with Him... for Him...

This is Persuasion!

Like he says in Philippians:

Slide 17



Paul's whole point is simple... I found something wonderful... life changing... revolutionary
And I want... as many people... to experience it... as are willing to follow Christ

Are you persuaded like Paul?

Persuaded... that God has had... mercy and forgiven you...
Have you been persuaded... by the real time change... of the indwelling... spirit of God?

This is what I asked myself... Kevin... how Persuaded are you... to what extent...

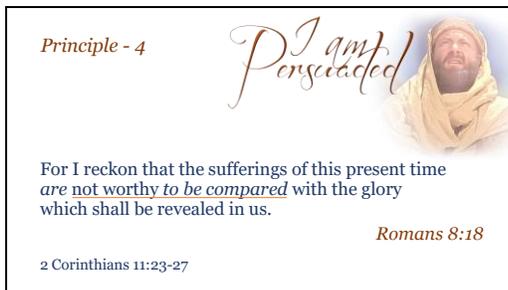
How deeply persuaded am I?

What made Paul so willing... to lay it all on the line?

It gets deeper... back to Rom 8:

What made him so persuaded?

Slide 18



Paul was so Persuaded... of the surety of the future... based on the present realities

That he was certain... that the sufferings... of the here and now... are nothing to be compared with... the glory of tomorrow

Paul wasn't talking philosophy... or fluffy idealism... he was talking of a real time experience... of trials and tribulations...

We read some of his experiences in:

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 ...I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods,

once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

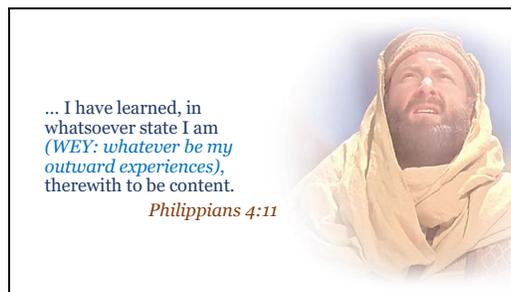
Paul knew... what it meant... to be fully persuaded... not just in terms of radical... fanatical... dedication to a cause...

Or an idealistic... hope of future reward

It was because... of a real time... living relationship... with a risen savior

The result being:

Slide 19



It's easy to say... we are Persuaded... when things are easy
But where the... rubber meets the road... is when things are hard

When things are not... goes as we hopped... or planned... when things are challenging... and down right nasty... This is were Persuasion's... depth is revealed

Persuasion... real persuasion... brings the hopes of tomorrow... into the context and experience of today... And interprets them... in light of that Persuasion

Because it is based in trust and relationship:

Slide 20

I know how to be abased,
and I know how to abound.
Everywhere and in all things
I have learned both to be full
and to be hungry, both to
abound and to suffer need.
I can do all things through
Christ who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:12,13



Not only had Paul... experienced real time Conversion... but he experienced real time... here and know... contentment

This alludes... too many of us... too often...

When times get tuff... and not even... as tuff as they were for Paul

We fall apart... What does this say... about our persuasion... our connection with Christ

Paul gives us... the remedy... the hotline to power:

Slide 21

Be anxious for nothing, but
in everything by prayer and
supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made
known to God

Philippians 4:6



The key... to Paul's contentment... was his connection to Christ

Not only had Paul... experienced real time Conversion... but he experienced real time... here and know... contentment...

Through prayer and supplication... it didn't necessarily... take away the suffering... it put it in the perspective... of Persuasion and hope

What ever situation... and there were some tough ones... Paul had come to realize that He could be content... Because he was "persuaded" ...that the king of the universe... had it all under control!

Persuasion looks... straight into the eyes... of present storm... and speaks of heavenly realities
As it draws deeps drafts... from the fountain of strength... in Christ

That's the place to be!

Persuaded to the place... of contentment in tribulation... and that is what Paul is calling us to be... And telling us how to get it!

Paul could say with a certainty:

Slide 22

Principle - 5

I am Persecuted



And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Romans 8:28

To be persuaded... is to know... that all things work together for good

Are you persuaded... do you believe these words... is this your reality?

Persuasion... real persuasion... effects who we are... what we say... how we act...

We are changed by it... and our decision are made... in consideration of it...

We live it... and breath it... this is persuasion

It believes:

Slide 23

I am Persecuted



If God be for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31

And it asks:

Slide 24

I am Persecuted



Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:35

Slide 25

I am Persecuted 

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
Romans 8:37

We are not simply overcome... nor are we bear-with-its...

We are more than conquerors... through him that loved us...

Do you think Paul... ever questioned...

Why am I here Lord... What do you want me... to learn from this?...

Do you think he had doubts... sorrows... pains?... I think so!

But what does God... want us to learn... from his experiences?

Where did Paul get his strength?... how did he face... his trials, troubles, sorrows?

What is your current state of affairs... what are your circumstances... your seeming realities...

The things... that bother and annoy... the things that discourage and disappoint... your lack... your loss...

Have you allowed them to separate you from the love of Christ?

Slide 26

I am Persecuted 

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers...
Romans 8:38-39

Acts 26:28

Paul was persuaded... Just think by contrast... Agrippa's words...

"You almost persuade me... to become a Christian."

Persuasion will never... be coercion!

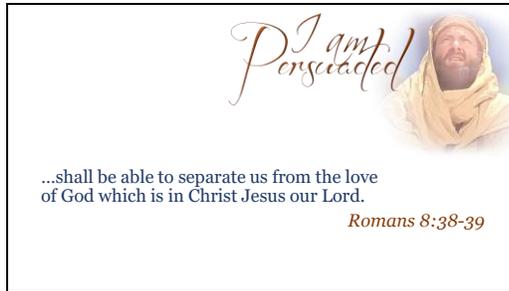
Paul continues:

Slide 27

I am Persecuted 

...nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing...
Romans 8:38-39

Slide 28



Paul's Conclusion... I am persuaded... That the love of God... for you... is greater than any thing else... in the universe

Greater than... all your trials and circumstances... even the what-ifs... of the future

When Paul wrote these word... I believe it was more... than to tell them of... his personal convictions...

This is what I want... to be persuaded... like Paul was persuaded... by experience

I believe it was... to challenge them... to a higher level... of personal persuasion

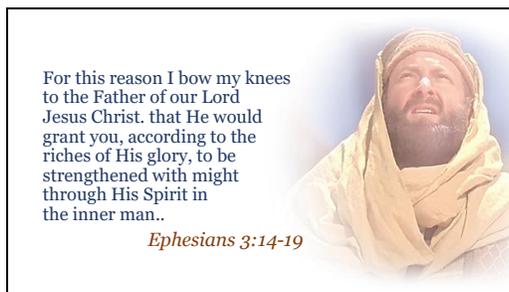
How about you?

I Can't help... but think... that some of the things... that bother me... challenge me...

Lets close... with Paul's prayer... to the Ephesians... and perhaps we will see it... in a different light

Would to Paul... have been nonsense... perspective... this confronts me... that I need to know Jesus... on a deeper level...

Slide 29



Slide 30

...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height...

Ephesians 3:14-19



Slide 31

...to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:14-19



AMEN!

Slide 32

I am Persuaded

ROMANS 8:38,39



511 I Know Whom I Have Believed