

**Date:** 01/25/2026

**Location:** Antioch Baptist Church – CSFP

**Title:** The Life of Apostle Paul: **Religious but Not Redeemed**

**Speaker:** Ptr. Mark Lenon

**Scripture Focus:** Acts 7:58 – Acts 8:3

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### **Introduction: The Danger of Being Religious but Not Redeemed**

Our work as servants of the Lord is not limited to the four walls of the church; it extends to the world outside. To better understand this, we are beginning a new series on the life of the Apostle Paul, starting with a stark warning about being **religious but not redeemed**. Before he became the great apostle, we must look at where he started, when he was still known as Saul.

We often assume that attending church or knowing the Bible automatically makes us a Christian. But as we look at Saul's early life in Acts 7 and 8, we confront a terrifying reality: it is possible to be devout yet lost. You can be close to the truth, fervent in your tradition, and still be **religious but not redeemed**.

#### **1. You Can Be Religious but Not Redeemed Even Close to the Truth**

In Acts 7, we see the first Christian martyr, Stephen, preaching the truth about Jesus. Saul was there. The witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. Under Jewish law, this act recognized Saul's authority; he was overseeing the execution.

Saul heard Stephen's powerful sermon. He heard Stephen cry out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". Saul was close enough to hear the gospel and witness the power of forgiveness, yet he remained unmoved.

- **The Lesson:** "Proximity to truth does not equal the possession of truth". Being close to the fire doesn't mean you are on fire. Saul proves that proximity to the gospel doesn't save you if you remain **religious but not redeemed**.

#### **2. The Signs of Being Religious but Not Redeemed**

Saul was not just a bystander; he was zealous. Acts 8:3 tells us, *"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison"*.

To "make havoc" means to ravage or destroy violently. Saul didn't just target public gatherings; he invaded private homes with no mercy, dragging both men and women to prison.

This reveals a key symptom of being **religious but not redeemed**: having Zeal (Passion) without Salvation. Saul was fully committed to his religion, but his uncontrolled religious passion made him angry, proud, and violent rather than loving and broken.

### **3. Fighting God: The Result of Being Religious but Not Redeemed**

Perhaps the most tragic part of Saul's story is that he truly believed he was serving God. He woke up every morning convinced that God was pleased with his actions. But intentions do not sanctify rebellion.

*"Saul fought God while thinking he served him".*

This is the ultimate danger of being **religious but not redeemed**. When tradition becomes your master, truth becomes your enemy. If we prioritize religious systems over a relationship with Jesus, we might find ourselves opposing the very work of God.

### **Conclusion: Are You Religious but Not Redeemed?**

Saul was educated, zealous, and committed, but he was lost until he met Jesus personally. Salvation does not come through religion; it comes through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

As we begin this series, we must ask the question Paul later wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:5: *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith"*. Are you trusting in your church attendance, your ministry, or your family background? Are you **religious but not redeemed**?

### **Closing Prayer**

"Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word. As we study the life of Paul, we are reminded that being religious is not enough. We pray for anyone reading this who may be **religious but not redeemed**, that they may open their eyes as You have opened Paul's.

Lord, examine our hearts today. If there is any religious pride or misplaced zeal, cleanse us. We pray that our service to You would not be just a routine, but a fruit of a genuine encounter with Your grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen."