

January Sunday Stroll

As you begin, offer your walk to God, with these words.

**May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Take some time to reflect on the passing between 2020 and 2021.

- What three words would you use to describe the last year?
- What did you do to welcome in the New Year?
- What are your hopes for this year?

Over the next four months, we will be looking at the four elements; earth, air, wind, fire and considering how God uses these to speak to us. This month we are looking at fire, and it's property of being a light.

Read Acts 9:3-9, 17-20

³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. ¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul^[a] and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰ and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

This is part of the story of a man named Saul, who later on in the Bible is called Paul, who was a devout Jew and at this part in his story was persecuting the followers of Jesus. However, this encounter on the Damascus road, Saul's life changes forever. You can read about some of it in the latter parts of the New Testament.

- How does God use light and dark to speak to Saul?
- What does it feel like to step out of the dark and into the light?
- How do we allow positive moments change our outlook?
- Where else does God use the element of fire or light to speak?

O God of the past, the present and future years, we thank you for the element of fire, with heat to warm, light to guide, power to transform. As we set off into a new year, grant us the strength to endure the dark, patience to search for the light and an open heart to hear your voice when you turn us around and call us to follow you. Amen.