

## St. Patrick's Purpose-Driven Life

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Having noticed that on St. Patrick's Day there are many of us who go "a wear-en o' the green," it seemed incumbent upon me to address that gentle man whose life occasions our adornment. I think the life of St. Patrick will come as a great surprise and astonishment to many, when we consider this man, the Roman Catholic patron saint of Ireland. What was he really like?

Here are some facts. (1) *He wasn't Irish.* (2) *He wasn't born on March 17th.* (3) *He didn't drive the snakes out of Ireland.* (4) *He wasn't really a Roman Catholic,* and he may never have had anything to say about the Shamrock and the Trinity. Here we have exploded the myth of St. Patrick. However, behind the myth there was a real person, and I think that you might find that the life of the real Patrick is as amazing as the myth about the legendary one.

St. Patrick, born 389 A.D. in Roman Britain, grew up a preacher's kid, and like some, he paid little heed to what his father had to say.



One day Patrick tells us about playing with two other boys on the beach at Bannavem where he lived. Suddenly, the boys were captured by pirates, bound and dragged on board their ship, and taken away to Ireland.

Patrick was sold into slavery. And there, for six years he languished. As he did, he remembered the words of his father telling of a true God—a God that would deliver—a God who cared.

In the midst of his dreadful solitude, he decided to seek out God and wondered how he might find him. He remembered the stories he had so often heard about Jesus, who was bruised for his iniquities. Patrick remembered the waywardness of his life and the sins for which he felt he was now being punished. He says that by means of those tender memories, he turned with his whole soul to his Redeemer.



Then, he had a dream in which he heard a voice say, "Lo, thy ship is ready!" The next morning he fled his captors and staggered 200 miles through the dense forest of Ireland, finally arriving at the sea, where a ship was waiting.

It sailed him to Gaul and after some years, he returned to his home in Britain, but he could never get out of his mind those Irish Druids that had held him captive. For years, he planned revenge. But it was a different kind of revenge; it was noble revenge in which he would bring to them the light of the Gospel.

After 20 years had passed, Patrick had another vision. He

believed that he had been called by God to return to the land of his slavery. So he returned proclaiming the Evangel of Jesus Christ—the simple Gospel of Christ. There was hardly any place in the Emerald Isle where the breath of the revival brought by Patrick did not reach. The results were astonishing!



Encyclopedia Britannica declares that Patrick himself baptized 120,000 persons. That is incredible when we realize that the population of all of Ireland at that time consisted of only 300,000 people. He found the island a completely pagan and savage land, and left it mostly Christianized. For his part, he said, "I am greatly a debtor to God. What have I done to deserve the grace that has been so bountifully bestowed upon me?"

He established over 300 churches, from which missionaries began to pour forth to cover most of Europe. He came to the place where he declared along with St. Paul in Philippians 1:21: "For to me, to live is Christ...."

For me to live is Christ! That is the real meaning of St. Patrick's Day!

Is it the meaning of **your** life?

