

Last Week - Saul was **ARRESTED BY CHRIST**

Today - we turn to the **RESULTS** of Saul's Salvation

We're **NOT** going to be looking at
what we must do to **EARN** our Salvation

but instead - we'll see the **SIGNS** - of what it looks like
when we **HAVE** truly **surrendered** our life to Christ

& I'll **tell you** right **up front**

ALL of the **SIGNS of Salvation** - that we'll see today
have to do with our **RELATIONSHIPS**

When we have Truly Surrendered our Life to Jesus Christ

We have a **New Relationship** with **GOD**

We have a **New Relationship** with other **BELIEVERS**

We have a **New Relationship** with **UNBELIEVERS**

& we'll **see ALL** of that **today** - in **Saul's** life

Let's Pray

& you **gotta stay** with me on this "**New Relationship**" thing

cause we're gonna go "**Back & Forth**" in Saul's **New Relationship**
with **GOD** - - **BELIEVERS** - - **UNBELIEVERS** , OK ?

& we'll Look **FIRST** - At Saul's **NEW RELATIONSHIP** with **GOD**

But to see the beginning of it - we have to look back up to **Acts 9:9**

In the verse Just After Saul Rose up from being face down in the dirt where he met Christ - we read in V.9

Acts 9:9 (ESV)

9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

& in V.11 - The Lord tells Ananias - *behold, Saul is PRAYING*

It's pretty Safe To Assume Saul was Seriously Interacting with God during those 1st Three days

Fasting would've been common to Saul as a Pharisee as would be Public Prayer

Because Fasting & Public Prayer - FOR THE WRONG REASONS is one of the things Jesus BLASTED the Pharisee's about

But I promise you - THIS is a New Reverence - a New Relationship with God

After meeting Jesus Christ - & being Filled with the Holy Spirit Saul was experiencing - what he would later write to the Romans

Romans 8:15 (ESV)

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

& you can bet that's EXACTLY what Saul DID - during this time

He would have cried ABBA FATHER

I'm Sorry for ALL I've done against you

Please forgive me for my Self-Righteousness - & my Pride

& Father - I've had a hand in murdering your children,
Please FORGIVE me for my horrible sins ABBA FATHER

& certainly - along with Repentance - Saul would have been
talking to his ABBA FATHER about his future

Father - what would you have me to do NOW? - Everything's different
I'll never be the same - what direction do I go from here??

We can ASSUME, during this time, Saul Did
what we should be Constantly Doing before God

He RECOGNIZED his position as God's son
He REPENTED of his Sins & received forgiveness
He SURRENDERED His Will - to GOD'S Will - for his life

& HOW do we know Saul DID all these things . . .
Because of Radically Changed LIFE !!

By his ACTIONS - by the CHANGES in his life - we know
these had to be the prayers of his heart - during those first 3 days

& NOT ONLY was a NEW RELATIONSHIP With GOD started

But NEW RELATIONSHIPS with Other BELIEVERS were started
when Ananias (tho reluctant at first) - came to see Saul

The Very first words that the Previously Hate-Filled Persecutor Saul
heard from another believer were "BROTHER SAUL"

Saul couldn't see Ananias - so Ananias LAID his HANDS on Saul
not only as an "Act of Prayer" - but also as a "Gesture of Love"

Acts 9:17 (ESV)

17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

BROTHER - NOT Hater, Persecutor, Murderer . . . but BROTHER

& immediately Saul had a **NEW RELATIONSHIP**
with **OTHER BELIEVERS**

& Saul was **Filled** with the **Holy Spirit** - & his **Blindness** was **healed**

& It was Probably **Ananias** who **BAPTIZED** Saul in **V.18**
& it's probably **Ananias** who **FEEDS** Saul in **V.19**

Acts 9:19 (ESV)

19 and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.

There is an **indication** (in Gal Ch 1) that the **Disciples** at this point were **NOT** pouring **Doctrine** & **Teaching** into Saul

But they were definitely teaching him **DEEP TRUTHS** about
ACCEPTANCE, & **FORGIVENESS**, and **AGAPE LOVE** in **ACTION**

Saul was “**WITH**” the Disciples - He was becoming **ONE** with Them
He was **getting to know** his **NEW FAMILY**

& then - in **V.20** we see the **first sign** of
Saul's **NEW RELATIONSHIP** with **UNBELIEVERS**

Acts 9:20 (ESV)

20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

Saul Immediately Proclaimed the **PERSON** of **JESUS**
that ***“He is the Son of God.”***

Saul didn't know much Deep Christian Theology at this point
but he knew **ONE THING** - ***Jesus IS the Son of God***

He knew that because he had **MET** him, personally
& that was **ALL** he needed - to **start telling** people

Warren Weirsbe says - ***Paul started where he was and preached what he knew, a good policy for new Christians to follow***

If you know that **Jesus** is the Son of God
& if you **know by Faith** in Him your **sins** have been **Forgiven**

Then you know **ENOUGH** - to start **telling somebody** about Him

& **THAT'S** Exactly what Saul **did**
& that **AMAZED Everyone** - both **Believers** AND **Unbelievers**

Acts 9:21 (esv)

21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc (Lit - harassed & destroyed) in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound (as prisoners) before the chief priests?”

Luke says **ALL** who heard him were **amazed** !!
because of The **Radical Transformation** in Saul's **LIFE**

This **ENEMY** of Christ is now **BOLDLY** Proclaiming
that **Jesus** IS the **Son of God**

THAT - is what you call the **POWER** of **CHANGED LIFE !!**
& **THAT** - is the **Number ONE** - **Sign of Salvation**

It's **NOT** that we have to come from some *Horrible, Worldly Past*
in order to have this **SIGN of SALVATION**

But we've **GOT** to **be able** to **say**
Jesus Christ has **Radically IMPACTED** my life

Jesus Christ living in me IMPACTS (changes)
the way I **THINK**,
the way I **ACT**,
& the way I **RELATE** to other people and with God

Maybe you can't say - *"I once was a total scum bag LOSER"*
& if you **CAN'T** say that - then **PRAISE GOD !!**

But **EVERY ONE** of us **CAN** - & **SHOULD** be **ABLE** to say:
"Jesus Christ living in me CHANGES the way I THINK, ACT, & RELATE to other people & to God"

Please - **CHECK** your life

Make sure Jesus Christ **RADICALLY IMPACTS**
the way you **THINK** - **ACT** - **RELATE**

& if you **want** to **learn HOW** to have the Life of Christ in you
actually **CHANGE** the way you **THINK** & **ACT** & **RELATE** to others

Then go back to the Discipleship Resource table

& Ask one of the ministers there
HOW do I make this happen - in MY Life?

& those listening on Word-By-Mail - Send us an email
& we'll help you learn how to do this as well

The POINT is - the PRIMARY SIGN OF SALVATION is

The LIFE of Jesus Christ in you
Should CHANGE the way you THINK - ACT - RELATE

SAUL'S LIFE *Definitely* HAD that SIGN
& Saul was just getting started

Acts 9:22 (esv)

22 But Saul increased all the more in strength . . .

The NLT catches the intention of this line -
"Saul's preaching became more and more powerful,"

Vs 22 . . . and [he] confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus
by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

& Again - THIS RELATIONSHIP between Saul & the Jews who
were previously his friends - was DEFINITELY NEW

He's CONFOUNDING them now
He's PROVING to them that Jesus IS the Messiah

& that is Definitely NEW - for Saul's Relationship with the Jews

& at this point we think - **BAAM** - Saul is Off & Running
he should be starting churches by Sundown Tomorrow

But . . . **No** . . . God doesn't Work like we Work
God doesn't Think - like we Think

MOST scholars believe that RIGHT at this POINT
God sent Saul on a THREE MONTH Private Sabbatical

So were Back to Saul's NEW RELATIONSHIP with God

TURN over to GAL CH 1 - Which is Paul's AUTO-Biography
of this same time period

Gal 1:15-18 (esv)

15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,

16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me (or in me), in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.

Saul spent the better part of these 3 years in Arabia
ALONE WITH the Lord - before returning to Damascus

There's been a lot of "CONJECTURE" on what Saul & the Lord might've DONE together - during this 3 years in Arabia

But one thing we know for sure:

EVEN the Great Apostle Paul NEEDED 3 years ALONE with Jesus
before he was READY to begin any ministry

MOSES spent **40 days Alone with God** on Mt Sinai (Exo 24)

ELIJAH spent **40 days Alone with God** travelling TO My Sinai (1Ki 19)

Now - **SAUL** spends **3 YEARS Alone with God**
in the Desert of Mt Sinai

EVEN JESUS spent **40 days Alone with God** in the Wilderness

I **DON'T KNOW WHY** Saul got **THREE YEARS** Alone with Jesus

Maybe Saul **couldn't get it all done** in **40 days**
Or **maybe** it's cause **the other Apostles** got **3 yrs** with Jesus

But the **REAL QUESTION** is **NOT** what **Did SAUL Do** ??

The **REAL QUESTION** is **WHAT** are **WE DOING** ??

ALL THRU the Bible

God **Prepares** Men & Women - **ALONE** with Him

& **NOW** - God wants to **PREPARE US**
for the **Plan & Purpose** He has for **US**

HOW Long **HAVE** we **Spent** - **ALONE** with Jesus - *Or better Yet . . .*

HOW Long **DO** we **Spend** - **ALONE** with Jesus

In order for Him to **Personally Prepare us** - for **what He has** for us??

This falls under - a **NEW RELATIONSHIP with God**

We **may not** be able to afford **3 years** . . .

But how about **30 minutes** → →

I **PROMISE** - if you will spend **30 Minutes**
ALONE with **Jesus** - just **FOUR TIMES** a week

He will **RADICALLY TRANSFORM** your Life !!
Just **FOUR times** a week (meaning *more days than not*)
Spend **30 min's ALONE** with Jesus

& he **might NOT** make you the **Next Apostle Paul**
But He **WILL Radically Transform** your life

& again - **if** you're **not sure HOW** to do this
go back to the **Discipleship Resource Table** (next to the donuts)

& **ask one** of the ministers there to **SHOW YOU** how to spend a
QUALITY 30 min's - ALONE with Jesus - just **FOUR Times** a week

& I **Promise** - it will **TRANSFORM** your life !!

& again - for **Word-By-Mail listeners**
Shoot us an **EMAIL** - we'll teach you too

So **after** probably the better part of **THREE YRS ALONE** w/ Jesus
we **pick up** Saul's life - back up **Acts 9:23**

Acts 9:23 (esv)

23 When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him,

So **we're back** again to that "**NEW RELATIONSHIP**" you could say
with **The UNBELIEVERS**

After being **Strengthened ALONE** with Jesus for 3 years
Paul comes back to an **interesting turn of events** for Saul

*. . . his previous **FRIENDS** were plotted to kill him*

This is the same word used for the "Plotting" to kill Stephen that Saul was a part of, & possibly had even led
But now - instead of being the PLOTTER
He is being PLOTTED against

So I'll call this - the "Down-Side"
of Saul's "NEW RELATIONSHIP" with Some Unbelievers

Guys - if Our Life is changed by Jesus Christ
there will be some unbelievers who PLOT against us

Hopefully not to KILL us
but sometimes just to make THEMSELVES feel better

Pam & I were remembering the Christian Wife
whose "Friends" PLOTTED to get her to have an affair
just to make themselves feel better

& her marriage - & her life - were destroyed
by her Non-Believing, Plotting, "Friends"

So - Saul's Previous "FRIENDS" were now plotting to Kill Him

& we read in Acts 9:24-25 (esv)

24 but their plot became known to Saul (who would've known these kind of plots well). They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him,

25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

So Saul's **FIRST** Major **Preaching Attempt**
ends in a **Near Death** Experience

Which **Reminds me** of **my** first **Preaching Attempt** . . .
I was **NEVER ALLOWED** to **Preach** in That Church Again

So - **I Wasn't Killed** - but my **Preaching Career** in that church **WAS !**

Unfortunately - this was just the **FIRST** of MANY "**Close Calls**"
Saul would experience - at the hands of his **Previous** "**Friends**"

So Saul **Left Damascus** - & travelled the **150 Miles**
BACK to Jerusalem - from **where** he had come 3 yrs ago

& Now we **go BACK**
to Saul's "**NEW RELATIONSHIP**" with **BELIEVERS**

Do you see how we were just going "Round & Round" with Saul's
NEW RELATIONSHIP with **GOD**
NEW RELATIONSHIP with **BELIEVERS**
NEW RELATIONSHIP with **UN-BELIEVERS**

Saul must feel like he's in a **blender**
getting **SPUN AROUND** from one **NEW RELATIONSHIP** to Another

Acts 9:26 (esv)

***26 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join
(‘associate with’) the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for
they did not believe that he was a disciple.***

All the believers were still **AFRAID** of Saul
they **thought** he himself was **PLOTTING** against them
they **didn't believe** he had **TRULY** become a **believer**

All but **ONE** - The **incredible BARNABUS** !!

Now **HERE'S** a **NEW RELATIONSHIP** with a **BELIEVER**
that **EVERY ONE** of us **NEEDS**

Acts 9:27 (esv)

27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

MAN! - Each of us **NEED** a **BARNABUS** in our lives - don't we ?

The first line of **V.27** means - Barnabus **LITERALLY**
"Took Saul **BY THE HAND**" - & Led him to the Apostles

Barnabus must've **"Sought Saul out"** & **Looked into his eyes**
& **Heard his testimony** - & **BELIEVED** him

& then he **"Took him by the hand"**
& made **PEACE** between Saul & the Apostles

MAN! - We **NEED** a Barnabus in our lives
& we **NEED** to BE a Barnabus to others

Someone who will **COME ALONG SIDE** Us
& **BELIEVE** in Us - & **STAND UP** for Us

I'll tell you right now - **if you're** in the **Ministry**
YOU NEED a **BARNABUS** !!

I'm Extremely **FORTUNATE** to have a **NUMBER** of Barnabus'
here in this fellowship

Pastor Jeff - Nick Neel - Mike Taylor - & others
these guys KNOW my heart - they KNOW ME

& they are Willing to Stand Up FOR me - especially when people
QUESTION MY INTEGRITY

& that's EXACTLY what Barnabus did for Saul here

Barnabus did his job - as the Son of Encouragement
The Reconciler - The Peacemaker

& I hope you HAVE a Barnabus - & can BE a Barnabus

Because the efforts of a Barbabus

Often WORK OUT Great - Just like they did for Saul here

Acts 9:28-29 (esv)

28 *So he went in and out among them* (he associated with them openly) *at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.*
29 *And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists . . .*

These are the Greek-Cultured Jews - that Saul was ONE OF
& THIS is the group that got Stephen KILLED (w/ Saul's help)

& THIS is the group - that Now Wanted the SAME THING for SAUL

29(b) . . . *But they were seeking to kill him.*

Saul's 2ND Major PREACHING Attempt - -

Saul's 2ND NEAR DEATH Experience !!

Was it GOOD for Saul, or BAD

that his **First TWO** major **Preaching Attempts**
ended in people wanting **to KILL HIM** ??

It was **GOOD** for Saul !!

This is what we call "**Ministry Training**"

God was Preparing Saul - for **What** God had **CALLED him to** (v.16)

But God wasn't DONE Preparing Saul YET

Not after **Meeting Jesus** on the Road to **Damascus**

Not after **3 YEARS Alone** with Jesus in the **Desert**

Not after **2 Preaching attempts** that ended in **NEAR DEATH**

After **ALL THAT** - Saul **STILL** needed much "**Preparation**"

Acts 9:30 (esv)

30 And when the brothers learned this (that the Jews were seeking to kill him), ***they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.*** (back to his hometown)

The **fellow believers** are Now called "**The Brothers**"
Showing Saul's **NEW RELATIONSHIP** with them

& "**The Brothers**" **RESCUE** Saul from this **Death Threat**
Take him to **Caesarea** - then **send** him back (by boat) to **Tarsus**

& then - **Listen Carefully** - We **don't hear** from Saul again
for **TEN YEARS** !!

10 years later - Barnabus would **seek out Saul** (again)
& **ask him** to come help in **Anitoch**

which would **eventually** become the **CENTER** of the **Gentile Churches**

But for now - **AFTER** 3 Years of **NEW RELATIONSHIPS** with
GOD - - **BELIEVERS** - - **UNBELIEVERS**

After **ALL THAT** - God needed **10 more years** with Saul

Before he was **ready to begin**
the **REAL Work** God had **Called** him to

So long for now - to **SAUL** of Tarsus
who will **eventually Return** - as the Great **Apostle PAUL**

But **for today** - **Saul** has shown us - the **SIGNS OF SALVATION**

& Please **HEAR** me when I say

EVERY THING that God **Transforms** in our Lives
When we **TRULY** Surrender to Him as **LORD** . . .

Has to do with One of Three - NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Our **New Relationship** with **GOD**

Our **New Relationship** with **BELIEVERS**

Our **New Relationship** with **UNBELIEVERS**

So - As we **prepare for Communion** - Let me ask **EACH of US**

Has Jesus Christ **LIVING in Us**
Really **CHANGED** our Relationship with **GOD**

Has Jesus Christ **LIVING in Us**
Really **CHANGED** our Relationship with **BELIEVERS**

Has Jesus Christ **LIVING in Us**
Really **CHANGED** our Relationship with **UNBELIEVERS**

Because **THESE** are the **SIGNS OF SALVATION**

& if we DON'T SEE these signs

Then there is a **PART** - or an **ALL** - of our **Lives**
that has **NOT** been **Fully Surrendered** to Jesus as our **LORD**

So Let's **MEET** with God

& **EXAMINE** Our Lives - *before Communion*

Let's Pray

The **picture of Communion** - is Possibly the **HIGHEST PICTURE**
of the **NEW RELATIONSHIP** we have with Jesus

Instituted on the most **Solemn** & **Intimate** Night with the **Disciples**
Just **hours** before His **Arrest**

Jesus **taught** the Disciples **SO MUCH** on that night

& **then** - at the **End of the night** - Jesus **institutes Communion**

Matthew 26:26–29 (ESV)

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you,

28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

29 I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

This is the **MOST INTIMATE New Relationship**
We can have with Jesus