

## Putting Feet to Your Faith

### Acts 9:21-43

- Have you ever had a conversation with someone who was so against the bible and the gospel that you thought except for an absolute miracle there is no way you could see them following Jesus and going to church, and yet one day the seemingly impossible happened, they got saved started reading the scriptures, joined a ministry and have been serving Jesus ever since. Well that's exactly what has happened here in **Acts 9**, Saul the chief persecutor of the faith, a man described by Luke as hunting Christian's in a way that a wild animal stalks his prey, has been stopped in his tracks, shown the error of his ways, and repented of his sins, and now he is going out into the streets and preaching the same gospel that he once so vehemently opposed.

#### V21-43

- **Lk 18:27** Jesus said concerning salvation > **"that what is impossible for man is possible with God"** **V20-22** after those in the Synagogue saw who it was that was preaching Christ they questioned among themselves "is this not the man who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem and has come here for that purpose to bring those in chains to the chief priests"? People are confused, they recognize Saul physically as he looks and sounds the same, but they don't know who this is spiritually, as he's speaking in a different tone and giving a different message, and so their trying to figure out what has happened to him.
- **V22** while their trying to figure him out Saul is **"increasing all the more in strength"** meaning he's exercising his spiritual muscles and growing in knowledge and wisdom, it's like someone who has changed their diet, started working out and using muscles previously doormat, but now they are awake moving and thriving causing you to become stronger and more alert and energetic. **V23-25** as you can see although Saul won the debate he didn't win their hearts, as they like he once did, now desire to kill him in order to silence the truth that he was speaking.
- But the Lord reveals their plot to the saints so that they could wisk Saul away to safety, in **2 Cor 11:32-33** Saul gives more insight to how the Jews stirred up the Arabian King to kill him, this begins what Ananias was told concerning Saul's ministry in **V16** – **"He must suffer for my name's sake"** for now instead of being the persecutor he now has become the persecuted. Also the phrase **"many days"** is interesting because at some point in Saul's life he disappeared for three yrs and went to the backside of the desert of Arabia to be taught and disciplined by Jesus Himself > **Gal 1:17-18**, many believe that it's here during this event when that happened.
- **V26-29** after three yrs he goes to Jerusalem to join the brethren and share with them all that he's learned about the gospel of grace and the Christians are suspicious of him thinking that this must be some part of an elaborate extended plot to expose the saints and have them arrested.

- Like Ananias before a man named Barnabas which means “**son of consolation**” encourager, he vouches for Saul and speaks up on his behalf telling the saints this guy is all right. Here’s a man who’s been knocked down and blinded by Jesus, goes out preaches the gospel is rejected, goes away for three yrs to the desert returns only to be plotted against, endures assassination by being placed in a basket, comes to Jerusalem where no one wants to fellowship with him, he could have easily said you people aren’t right, your suppose to be forgiving and loving but you hold grudges, are filled with fear and suspicion, I don’t want anything to do with any of you.
- **V30** with Barnabas testimony they accept him but send him away supposing for his own protection and here he stays somewhere between **8-12** yrs before we read about him going out and ministering to the gentiles. I want you to think about that for a moment, today if someone has a supernatural encounter with the Lord we want to immediately give them a pulpit, a platform, have them go out on tour, do interviews with Christianity today, write a book, get a guest spot on opra, and then we wonder why in a decade or two we read that they’ve fell off from the faith at some point, we rush into too many things instead of truly waiting on God.
- **V31-35** in the midst of all this the churches which are under heavy persecution is thriving having been discipled, edified and walking in the fear of the Lord which produces the comfort of the Holy Spirit, that draws people to the gospel causing the church to continue to grow in faith and in boldness. We see an example of that as Peter heals a man named “**Aeneas**” and notice although Peter is the instrument he makes sure “**Aeneas**” and anyone around knows it was the Lord, so that people wouldn’t be following Peter but that they should follow Jesus.
- **V36-38** were told about a woman named “**Tabitha**” that’s translated “**Dorcas**” it means gazelle, this woman is a beloved member of the Christian community known throughout for her charitable deeds and good works and sadly she has become ill and then dies. This initially seems like a tragedy as someone who is so loved and useful within the body passes away it’s a hard blow to take, and the saints reach out to Peter to come as quickly as possible and not to delay.
- **V39-43** we don’t know what they expected him to do as up to this point there is no record in Acts of any of them raising anyone from the dead, and when he comes all the widows are crying and showing him the charitable heart “**Tabitha**” had in making clothing for them. **V40** Peter has an interesting response to all this he puts them all out, and afterward kneels down and prays and turns to Tabitha’s body and tells her to arise and she miraculously opens her eyes and sits up. Then he grabs her hand helps her up and presents her alive to the saints and widows, this news traveled fast throughout Joppa and the region, this story is reminiscent to **Mk 5:38-43**.
- In that story Jesus said “**Talitha Cumi**” here Peter says “**Tabitha Cumi**” Peter remembered Jesus words while he ministers to the church and it should be the same way for you and I. We should be mimicking the Lord and not trying to do things our way, follow His example and let Him lead us and if the power of God is there to heal great, and if not that’s God’s choice as well.