

## **Saul of Tarsus - The Power of Intervention**

Acts 9, 22, 26

**vs. 1**, Saul, breathing threats and murder against the disciples.

**8:3**, But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

**7:1-53**, Brothers and fathers (my ethnic people), fellow Jews

**8:1**, And Saul approved of his execution.

**6:15**, And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

- He heard Stephen's screams.
- He witnessed his death.
- He heard the peace which flowed from his heart, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

Often when we are confronted with the callousness of our heart, when we are face to face with conviction, we dig in our heels and rely even more on our stubbornness.

**Question:** What will it take to become aware of the areas of callousness that have developed on your heart? Is God trying to reveal truth to you and your response has been to become more stubborn? What was the last thing that Jesus did to soften your heart?

**vs. 2**, the Way

Disciples of the Lord, Men and Women as significant participants.

**vs. 3**, Light from heaven

A light brighter than the sun. A manifestation of Christ's heavenly glory.

Direct result:

Physical blindness

You must deal with your heart's blindness. Sight will only be given to you through Jesus (the messiah and resurrected Lord).

**vs. 4-5**, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

Saul was actively opposing God's saving purpose for Israel and the nations.

**Isaiah 49:6** he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Saul is immediately challenged in his belief system.

He is confronted by Jesus to accept an enormous paradigm shift.

Jesus is the Messiah.

What Stephen declared is True!

The persecution of believers is a direct attack against Jesus.

**vs. 6**, Rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.

Your faith journey starts now. Walk in obedience and follow my instructions.

**Question:** What is your response time? Immediate obedience -> We have seen this theme throughout our focus on transformation.

**Acts 13:47** For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

**vs. 7-9**, For Saul alone.

The men with him heard the voice, but saw no one.  
He has been blinded, humbled, and moved to fast.

**vs. 10**, A disciple named Ananias

Had a vision and the Lord spoke to him about Saul.

**vs. 11-16**, The Lord’s instructions to Ananias

- Find Saul
- Lay your hands on him
- He will regain his sight

Are you sure? There is real fear that must be overcome.

The Church is forming

- Your saints (believers), the Way -> disciples of Jesus
- Those who call on your name.
- (vs. 30), brothers & sisters (church family)
- Jewish opponents called “Christians” members of the Nazarene Sect (24:5)

Christian first used at Antioch in Syria

**11:26** and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

**26:28** And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”

**1 Peter 4:16** Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

**vs. 17-19**, Ananias with Saul

Brother Saul

The Lord Jesus                      Lord?

Sight will be restored

Holy Spirit present

Baptized

Fast broken (repentance & preparation for revelation/clarity)

**Question:** Are you willing to step forward in obedience regardless of the risk? How do you respond to clarity that is given to you through scripture? How do you respond to clarity that is given to you through the Holy Spirit? How do you respond to clarity that is given to you through trustworthy, Jesus-centered community?

Ananias was trustworthy and Jesus-Centered!

**Notice:** Jesus built confirmation of Saul’s transformation with multiple points of truth and clarity.

The active persecutor becomes an active preacher and evangelist.

The one who made others suffer for believing in the Messiah will himself experience suffering because of his belief in the Messiah.

**vs. 19-22**, Proclamation that Jesus is the Son of God.

Grew in strength proving that Jesus was the Christ.

Saul’s life was changed because of the truth / fact / reality that Jesus is alive.

Saul saw the resurrected Jesus and Jesus spoke to him (9:27).

Saul (Jewish identity) -> Paul (Gentile identity)

**Acts 13:9** But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

Paul became the missionary, theologian, and champion of the church that Jesus had asked him to become.

Paul became the Apostle to the Gentiles. Galatians 1:1 An apostle through Jesus.

Growth, strength, and purpose -> all given because of faith fueled obedience!

**Question:** Who has Jesus asked you to be? Are you living in the truth of his resurrection? How has your transformation poured out to others around you?

### **Acts 22**

Paul is engaged in defending himself and the gospel. The narrative focuses on establishing Paul's Greek, Jewish, and Roman credentials.

**vs. 12-16**, God used Ananias in my life, a brother of character.

**Question:** How might God use you in the life of someone? Do you live your life as a brother or sister of character?

### **Act 26**

"Paul had appealed to Caesar, making it necessary for Festus to seek the advice of King Agrippa about what he should write to the emperor when sending the prisoner to Rome. Agrippa takes charge of the proceedings, inviting Paul to speak, though Festus soon interrupts with the charge that Paul is going out of his mind (26:24). The king remains silent until Paul seeks to persuade him to become a Christian (26:26–29), and then echoes the judgment of Festus about Paul's case (26:30–32; cf. 25:25)."<sup>1</sup>

Paul's experience with truth becomes his persuasion.

**Question:** Is the truth of Jesus causing you to be persuasive? Our faith (demonstrated) in our lives should be persuasive.

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<sup>1</sup> David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 657.