

Jesus For All

Week 8: Encounter with God

Series:

- Week 1: Living for Something Bigger (Acts 1:1-11)
- Week 2: The Arrival of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-21)
- Week 3: Sermons and Gathering of the Church (Acts 2:22-47)
- Week 4: Persecution, Preaching, and Prayer (Acts 3-4:31)
- Week 5: Sharing and Purging (Acts 4:32-5:11)
- Week 6: Serving and Suffering (Acts 6-7)
- Week 7: The Truth and Baptism (Acts 8:26-40)
- Week 8: Encounter with God (Acts 9:1-31)
- Week 9: Good News for Gentiles (Acts 10-12)

Scripture:

Acts 9:1-31

Motivation (Why You Need to Know It):

What is the one moment you can look back on that changed your life?

For me, it's been my relationship with God through Christ.

Because of Jesus...

- All of the best things have come into my life
- All of the trials are better understood
- Hope after death has been assured
- Purpose for living has been defined

We want the people we know to experience a changed life.

As we have been rescued from sin, we become examples of God's grace and kindness.

Ephesians 2:6 (NLT) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. **7** So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

Information (What You Need to Know):

The Apostle Paul is one of the best examples of life change. Instead of looking at *the* moment of Paul's encounter with God (AD34), we're going to listen to him speak about it approximately 25 years after it took place (AD59).

Paul's current situation...

Acts 21:30 (NLT) The whole city was rocked by these accusations, and a great riot followed. Paul was grabbed and dragged out of the Temple, and immediately the gates were closed behind him. **31** As they were trying to kill him, word reached the commander of the Roman regiment that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. **32** He immediately called out his soldiers and officers and ran down among the crowd. When the mob saw the commander and the troops coming, they stopped beating Paul.

Process of Life Change For All...

■ Who I am Before Jesus

Acts 22:3 (NLT) Then Paul said, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today."

Paul's before Jesus story...

- Educated (Studied under Gamaliel - rigorous training, memorize Leviticus)
- Religious and zealous (law-keeping but rejected Jesus as Savior)

Acts 22:4 (NLT) And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison.

■ Who I am After Jesus

- Confronted by the truth about Jesus

Acts 22:6 (NLT) "As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. **7** I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' **8** "'Who are you, lord?' I asked. "And the voice replied, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, the one you are persecuting.' **11** I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led by the hand to Damascus by my companions. **12** A man named Ananias lived there. He was a godly man, deeply devoted to the law, and well regarded by all the Jews of Damascus. **13** He came and stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight.' And that very moment I could see him! **14** Then he told me, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and hear him speak.'"

- **Belief and baptism**

Acts 22:16 (NLT) “What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.””

- **Who I am *For* Jesus**

- **Life-change story**

Acts 9:20 (NLT) And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!” **21** All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem?” they asked. “And didn’t he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?” **22** Saul’s preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn’t refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

- **Life-long commitment**

2 Corinthians 11:24 (NLT) Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. **26** I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. **27** I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. **28** Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.

Application (What You Need To Do):

“Sometimes God redeems your story by surrounding you with people who need to hear your past, so it doesn’t become their future.” – Jon Acuff