

Sermon Notes 4/24/22

# “Lessons from the Life of Paul”

What can we learn from the life of Paul?

1. Let's be persistent in \_\_\_\_\_.

Acts 9:9, 11

Ephesians 6:18

2. Let's put away the \_\_\_\_\_.

Acts 9:18

Galatians 2:20

3. Let's \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel.

Acts 9:20

Romans 1:16

4. Let's \_\_\_\_\_ humility.

Acts 9:27

Philippians 3:4-7



# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 1: April 24 – May 1

Acts 9:1-31

This is the first lesson in a series on the New Testament books of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy. Whenever we study a book of the Bible it is good to know something about the author and the original audience. Paul wrote these letters to a young preacher named Timothy. Paul had been mentoring Timothy for over 15 years, training him for ministry and helping him to develop the character and skills necessary for leadership.

The New Testament tells us a lot about Paul and Timothy. And we can learn some important lessons from the lives of these men. So, this week, we are going to learn some lessons from the life of Paul. Next week, we will consider the life of Timothy.

Paul was one of the greatest Christian leaders in history. However, before he became a Christian, he was known as Saul, and he was an enemy of Christ. In 1 Timothy 1, Paul said that he was “a blasphemer, and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.” He said that he was “the worst of all sinners.” But God still called Saul to be a minister of the gospel and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

Paul was chosen by God for a unique task. God would use him to bring the Gospel to Gentile kings and rulers. God would use him to write 13 of the New Testament books in our Bible. And God would use him to plant dozens of churches throughout the Roman Empire.

The story of Saul’s conversion is recorded three different times in the book of Acts (Acts 9, 22, and 26). In addition to those passages there are several other times when Paul describes some aspect of his conversion to Christ.

## Read Acts 9:1-19

1. What does verse 1 tell us about Saul? (See also Acts 8:1 and 26:10-11)
2. Why did Saul ask for letters from the high priest in verse 2?
3. What does “the Way” refer to in verse 2? (See also Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, and 22)

4. What happened when Saul was approaching Damascus? (9:3-4)
5. By persecuting the church, whom was Saul really persecuting? (9:5)
6. What did Jesus say to Saul to do in verses 5-6?

Mark Moore describes what Saul may have been thinking and feeling during this life-changing encounter with the resurrected Christ.

This must have been one of those slow-motion moments in Saul's life where his mind worked at warp speed to figure out who this voice belonged to. Could he really be on the wrong side of divine justice? Could his nemesis, Stephen, really be right? Could the rumor of Jesus' resurrection be real? These and a dozen other questions explode in his brain. He asks, "Who are you, Lord?" ...Saul waits with bated breath. The answer falls from heaven with a thunderous crash: "*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*" This moment would stop Saul in his tracks, turn his mission on its head, and radically transform his worldview.<sup>1</sup>

7. What did Saul's traveling companions experience in verse 7? (See also 22:9)
8. How did Saul get to Damascus after he was struck blind? (9:8)
9. What did Paul do for the next three days? (9:9-11)
10. Who was Ananias? (9:10)
11. What did the Lord tell Ananias to do? (9:10-12)
12. Why was Ananias reluctant to go see Saul? (9:13-14)
13. What did God tell Ananias about Saul's future ministry? (9:15-16)
14. What did Ananias tell Saul in verse 17? (See also Acts 22:14-16)
15. What did Saul do when his vision returned? (9:18-19)

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Moore, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Acts* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2011), 175.

### **Read Acts 9:20-31**

16. After spending some days with the Christians in Damascus, what did Saul do? (9:20-21; Gal. 1:15-18)
17. How did people react to Saul's radical transformation? (9:21)
18. Why were the Jews living in Damascus baffled in verse 22?
19. What were the Jews planning to do in verse 23? Why?
20. How did Saul escape from Damascus? (9:24-25)
21. Why were the Christians in Jerusalem avoiding Paul in verse 26?
22. How did Barnabas help Saul in verse 27?
23. What did Saul do after the apostles accepted him? (9:28-29)
24. Why did the Christians in Jerusalem send Saul back to Tarsus? (9:30)
25. How does Luke describe the progress of the church in verse 31?
26. What was your conversion experience like?
27. To what ministry has God called you?
28. If you were temporarily disabled, how might it benefit your spiritual life?
29. How can prayer and fasting help us when we are facing difficult decisions?
30. How can you be a help to new Christians?
31. How can you challenge a friend or neighbor with the message of salvation this week?
32. Who can you go to for encouragement or spiritual support?