

Life Group Lesson

SUPERNATURAL • Week of September 11

Introduction

Not many of us would boast about our weaknesses, shortcomings, or mistakes and failures. Yet, this is the very thing the apostle Paul learned to do. Paul (formerly Saul of Tarsus) in his younger years, persecuted Christians. In his own words, he violently opposed anyone who followed the way (Acts 26:9-11). But one day, on his way to persecute believers in Damascus, the risen Christ intervened and confronted Paul: “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:3-4). Blinded by the glorious light of God’s Son, Paul was led by the hand into the city and sat in darkness three days before a man named Ananias was sent by God to pray for Paul, and something like scales fell from his eyes. Paul became a new man. No longer was this former Pharisee a violent enemy of the church, he became a most effective proclaimer of Truth.

Paul and traveling companions planted numerous churches across various provinces of Asia minor and the Mediterranean world. Upon sharing the Gospel (Good News) of Christ, Paul and his teams would raise up, train and equip indigenous leaders to carry on ministry and growth; thus, Paul carried in his heart the burden of all the churches he started (2 Corinthians 11:28). What we know as ‘epistles’ in the New Testament, are the multiple letters of encouragement and instruction that Paul wrote and had delivered to the churches. In his second letter to the church in Corinth, Paul speaks of a ‘thorn in the flesh’ which kept him humbly reliant upon the Lord’s grace and power. While God used the ‘thorn in the flesh’ to keep Paul humble, certain ‘super apostles’ surfaced in the church to lure away believers with their ‘spectacular ministry.’

Background

God’s holiness, grace, and power show up when Christ shows up. Think about it: John the Baptist came preaching the message of repentance in preparation for the coming of God’s Kingdom; as a result, people actually turned from their sin and self-saturation and humbled themselves in baptism. Jesus Christ had no sin from which to turn, but in obedience to His Heavenly Father, He also humbled Himself in baptism. Upon coming up out of the water after being baptized by John, the voice of the Father from heaven declared: “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy” (Matthew 3:17). Immediately, Jesus’ obedience was tested in the wilderness. With every step of faith we take, the enemy is keeping pace – and God allows it – in order to strengthen us too. We will be

tested like Jesus; like the apostle Paul. There is no reason to think that something new is happening to us (see 1 Corinthians 10:13).

As soon as the baptized, tested Jesus left the wilderness, He returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit and began His public ministry. Jesus picked up where John left off, continuing the same message—the coming Kingdom of God is here. Signs of supernatural wonders confirmed that God was in their midst. Crowds of people saw their sick healed and the dead raised. Could this One who refers to Himself as the ‘Son of Man’ also forgive sin? Could this be the prophet for whom we have been waiting (Deuteronomy 18:15), the anointed Son of David (2 Samuel 7:12)? Upon Christ’s ascension into heaven, the apostles (disciples) and eventually Paul, picked up where Jesus left off. Today, we as Christ-followers carry on the Good Message – forgiveness of sin and hope for new life is available to all exclusively in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.

There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11b).

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges we face in our world today is the worship of self. It seems just about everyone wants *their* name to be famous. According to Scripture, we are to worship only God, and have no other gods before Him (Exodus 20:1-3). All of us struggle with selfishness and are prone to live a superficial life. But once we meet the risen Christ on the road of life, as Paul did (on his way to persecute believers)—we have a choice to make. Will we move from the kingdom of self to the kingdom of Christ, or will we continue down the dead-end path of unbelief; and as a result, never experience the supernatural work of God until we stand before Him in eternity? Embracing a superficial life over the eternal (unseen) treasures of a relationship with our Savior will keep you from the supernatural work of God in you.

Reading the Text

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

In Closing

We must understand: God has not changed. We can still witness the supernatural work of God in our midst. Yet, we must also understand that throughout Scripture, there is no such thing as *man* in his own strength accomplishing a ‘spectacular ministry’ apart from the Holy Spirit. If in our desire to see the supernatural we attempt to conjure up or manufacture something fake or counterfeit, we bow to another god – ourselves. Genuine work of the supernatural will first bring glory to God alone, be accompanied by a clear proclamation of Truth, and result in obedience to that Truth. And remember Truth is embodied in a Person, the Christ of God.

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

One Year Bible Readings

September 11: Isaiah 8:1-9:21, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Psalm 55:1-23, Proverbs 23:4-5
September 12: Isaiah 10:1-11:16, 2 Corinthians 12:11-21, Psalm 56:1-13, Prov. 23:6-8
September 13: Isaiah 12:1-14:32, 2 Corinthians 13:1-14, Psalm 57:1-11, Prov. 23:9-11
September 14: Isaiah 15:1-18:7, Galatians 1:1-24, Psalm 58:1-11, Proverbs 23:12
September 15: Isaiah 19:1-21:17, Galatians 2:1-16, Psalm 59:1-17, Proverbs 23:13-14
September 16: Isaiah 22:1-24:23, Galatians 2:17-3:9, Psalm 60:1-12, Proverbs 23:15-16
September 17: Isaiah 25:1-28:13, Galatians 3:10-22, Psalm 61:1-8, Proverbs 23:17-18

SUPER NATURAL

Text: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Plain Truth:

Embracing the _____ keeps you from
the _____.

How to eliminate supernatural blockages in our lives:

1. God is more likely to show up if _____.
2. If you don't pray for _____, then you're not _____ them.
3. Embracing _____ opens the door for the grace of God to turn _____ into _____.
4. Grace turns _____ into _____ so we can point people to _____ Story.

September 11, 2022