

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (May 12, 2024) **MOM'S Day**

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Today we celebrate Mother's Day. And we should! Today is a day we give thanks for the sacrifices and love of moms. It is also a day when heartaches are exposed, and some feel left out. Some of us did not have mothers who loved us as God intended. Others wanted to be moms but physically, or relationally, could not. And there are those who feel guilt for how they failed as a mom. Wherever you are this morning ... God knows, God heals, God forgives.

Last Sunday we had the gift of hearing the testimony of one of our own. Kathy wonderfully, clearly, beautifully, described how God has been her Father from her earliest days. Through dark and challenging times, as she faced deep grief, a dire health diagnosis, a broken marriage, she came to believe in the goodness and love of her heavenly Father. And her heavenly Father provided her the blessing of her adoptive and supportive parents and brother. If you missed last Sunday, you need to go back and watch, and give thanks to God! Today we read another life-changing testimony. Few would have thought Saul would become a Christian. As we see the transformation in Saul we discover there is hope for each of us, and those we know. Even the most hard-hearted, Jesus-hating, soul is not beyond the powerful, compassionate reach of God. Do not give up on yourself, or those you know and love. God hasn't.

The Holy Spirit Working Through Ananias (Acts 9:1-31) ESV

¹But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁵And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Here I am, Lord.'

¹¹And the Lord said to him, 'Rise and go to the street called Straight,

and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹²and **he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.**' ¹³But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.' ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' ¹⁷So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹and taking food, he was strengthened. ... (verses 20-30 omitted here) ³¹So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What does this passage tell us about Saul? About Ananias?
2. What does this passage tell us about Jesus?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. Why does, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" mean?
4. What does, "he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias" and, "I will show him how much he must suffer" mean?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. Who do you know right now who seems farthest from God? (Stop now and pray that they might come face to face with Jesus.)
6. What do you know of Saul (later known as Paul)? (Read Philippians 3, Acts 26, 2 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy 1:12-17)
7. How has God changed the direction and desires of your life?
8. Are you willing to suffer for the name of Jesus? If yes, why?
9. What does God intend you will do with the life He's given you?

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you pray for those you know who are far from God. Pray that they will meet Jesus. Trust that God can change their hearts, lives, eternities. Ask Him to keep changing yours. He will because He loves us.