



# Acts

Amplifying Hope | November 12, 2023

**Sermon:** The Story of a Life-Changing Encounter

**Scripture:** Acts 22

**Summary:** Have you ever thought of your life in terms of story? The stories of our lives and our families convey history and values in compelling ways that unite us. To be human is to be enthralled with a good story. The story of each authentic follower of Jesus Christ includes the story of a life-changing encounter with Him. Sure, some stories of conversion are more dramatic than others, but EVERY believer is changed by Christ. We will consider the Apostle Paul's story of Life Change as we are challenged to consider our own story of encountering Jesus.

## Acts 22:1-22 ESV

1 "Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you." 2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: 3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. 6 "As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 8 And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10

And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' 11 And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. 12 "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. 14 And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' 17 "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' 21 And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' " 22 Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AND AN EXERCISE TO COMPLETE:

After listening to the teaching, spend time reviewing the three universal components of a Life-Changing encounter with Christ.

Write out your story in the following three, broad paragraphs:

1. My Life Before Christ,
2. My Encounter with Christ,
3. My Life With Christ.

Share your story with other believers and be prepared to share your story with those who do not yet believe, just like the Apostle Paul did in Acts 22.

## The Three Universal Components in Everyone's Story of a Life-Changing Encounter with Jesus Christ:

### • Life Before Christ (Acts 22:1-5)

What my life was like before I met Christ?

What were some common circumstances an unbeliever would identify with?

What was your attitude that an unbeliever would identify with?

What was most important to you?

What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life (sports/fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/ alcohol, having fun, entertainment, popularity, hobbies, etc.)?

• **Encountering Christ - in a Life-changing Way (Acts 22:6-16)**

How did I realize I needed Christ and committed my life to Him?

What significant steps led up to your conversion?

What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God?

How did God get your attention? What motivated you?

What specifically did you do?

Where did it happen?

What did you say in your prayer/confession of need for Christ?

• **Life With Christ (Acts 22:17-22)**

How has Christ changed my life?

What benefits have you experienced or felt?

What problems have been resolved?

How have your motives changed?

How has it helped your relationships?

**Question:**

How can I have a life-changing encounter with Christ? How do I explain the Good News of the Gospel that creates Life-change to someone?

**Answer:**

By embracing the Good News!

**What Is the Good News of the Gospel?**

1. God became a man so I could relate to him.

**ROMANS 1:3-4 (NLT)**

The Good News is about his (God's ) Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, 4 and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. Jesus died for my sins so I don't have to.

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:2-4 (NLT)**

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. 4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

### **2 CORINTHIANS 5:19 (NLT)**

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

3. Jesus destroyed death so I could experience eternal life.

### **2 TIMOTHY 1:9-10 (NLT)**

For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. 10 And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News.

4. Salvation is a free gift so I don't have to earn it.

### **ROMANS 3:24-25 (ICB99)**

People are made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. God gave Jesus as a way to forgive sin through faith.

5. Salvation is based on faith so by God's grace, I repent, believe, and receive.

### **MARK 1:5 (NIV)**

Repent and believe the good news!

### **ROMANS 1:17 (NCV)**

The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself—that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, "Those who are right with God will live by trusting in him."