

The Light of Jesus

December 3, 2017

I. Introduction

Acts 9:1-2 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Acts 8:3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

1 Timothy 1:13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

A. The early church found its identity in Jesus being the way to life.

B. It is possible to spend good energy in a bad direction.

Acts 26:9-11 "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

- 1. People are often convinced that they are right about the wrong thing.*
- 2. People who cannot see are people who cannot see.*

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

II. What happens when you see the Light of Jesus?

Acts 9:3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

Acts 26:13 About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions.

Isaiah 9:2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind

A. Light is a Biblical symbol of the presence and glory of God.

Acts 9:7-9 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

- The spiritually blind will require divine light to see.

Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

B. The presence of Jesus changes everything.

Acts 9:4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

1. *God goes to great lengths to get our attention.*

- Life change begins with who we are.
- Confrontation with our sin is the way to righteousness.

2. *We see ourselves more clearly in the presence of Jesus.*

3. *The first step towards salvation is realizing you need a Savior.*

C. Life change shows us who Jesus is.

Acts 9:4-5 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.

1. *We see Jesus more clearly when we are in His presence.*

- Jesus is alive.
- Jesus is with His people.

2. *Jesus' followers are His representatives.*

- When we live, we are living for Jesus. When we suffer, we are suffering for Jesus.

D. Life change leads us to obedience.

Acts 9:6 “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

John 12:24-26 Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

Luke 9:23-25 Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

1. *Eternal life begins with dying to self.*

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

2. *We must choose what life we want to live.*

Mark 10:28-31 Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

3. *We will never be first until we are willing to be last.*