

# Lessons from the Early Church

## Pt. 4 – The Power of a Second Chance

*Acts 2:47* Every day the Lord was adding to their number those who were being saved.

*Acts 6:8* Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.

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

*Acts 9:1* Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> 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.

### Lessons from Saul:

God knows where I am.

*Acts 9:3* As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" <sup>5</sup>"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting..."

God knows my name.

God still has a plan for my life.

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

*Acts 9:7* The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. <sup>10</sup>Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. <sup>11</sup>The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. <sup>12</sup>In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." <sup>13</sup>"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

God will give me a second chance.

*Acts 9:15* But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup>I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

**My response to God’s grace: Change now.**

*Acts 9:17* Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup>and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

**Lessons from Ananias:**

Listen to God.

Obey.

*Is. 55:8* “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup>“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Extend God’s grace.

*Acts 9:17* Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

*Acts 9:19* Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup>At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup>All those who heard him were astonished...

When I trust God and follow His plan, the results are astonishing!