

# The Making of a Trailblazer

## PREFACE

### VISION + TITHE + PAUL/SAUL + TEXT + TITLE

This week, we are in part two of our vision collection. Vision is important because vision gives us clarity and sets our course. This year we know we are unifying around getting off of our campus and trailblazing new ways for those who have not yet heard about Jesus to hear about Him. Our anchor verse is the same anchor verse that Paul used as his vision for trailblazing. It is in Romans and it says this:

**"To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand."**

We are inviting you to grab a card out in the lobby, to go onto our trailblazer website, and to pray for open doors, plan to participate on the dates we have listed, and to pave the way by committing to the tithe in 2026. We learned on financial report Sunday that there is at least 3.8 million dollars more in the room, and we have 500,000 worth of trailblazer vision to bless our community. And that is going to happen by each of us taking the first 10% of our income and offering it back to God as worship. So if you have your tithe today, go ahead and grab it and let's pray over it.

Today's text is in Acts Chapter 9. We are going to look at the origin story of the trailblazer named Paul from last week. If you are unfamiliar with scripture, Paul was formerly known as Saul. Rappers weren't the first with a formerly known name. God followers were. Why? Because when God interrupts your story with His grace, He gives you a new identity. Anyone grateful that we serve a God that interrupts our former life in order to invite us into our future?

Paul formerly known as Saul is seen in Acts 9. And I want to give you the bookends of one of Saul's trips. Saul before he was Paul was a Christian killer. And Paul had persecuted and imprisoned all of the Christians he could find in Jerusalem, and so now he needed to go out to find more Christians to persecute. And he doesn't have any legal authority so we see this trip he is gonna go on begin this way in Acts 9:

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Now watch what happens friends, if you've been reading Bible and Breakfast you know, you read yesterday, shoutout Bible Nerds, but if not watch what happens, verse 23-25

**Acts 9:22**

**But Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving Jesus is the Christ**

What in Tarnashish happened to Saul from Tarshish. My man went from a Jew going to kill Christians in Damascus to a man being chased by the Jews out of Damascus. What in the world?! Today I want to look at what changed in Saul's journey. And I want to preach to you from this title:

**The Making of a Trailblazer** not the Making of a Murderer where all my Netflix lovers, no the Making of a Trailblazer

BLOCK A:

Have you ever noticed this about you and I... We want change, but we hate confrontation. We want different, yet we get stuck in the same. We want to blaze new trails through the wildernesses of our life for God, yet we want to wait for all of the obstacles to be removed before we do.

**Phone - familiar vs unknown - active participant passionately protecting that which God asked me to put away**

This year I am using a dumb phone. It's what some of the youngsters around me are calling a brick! I am doing this because I feel like God called me to make this change. To blaze a new trails through and to experience transformation in my life. Now when I first got this phone, it was easy because my obstacle, my iPhone, was playing worship music in a hospital room in Houston. However, my iPhone, just like Cere praise God, finally came home. And when it did, I thought, I'll just use it at the office for work. But wouldn't you know that slowly but surely this little device has crept its way back into my life. Because that which you tolerate in your life, will gladly win back territory in your mind and in your time if you allow it. You got to be careful the things that you tolerate in your life. What you tolerate today becomes what you are stuck in tomorrow. That's not even my message. That's free that's free. So this week, I have been trying to recommit my phone back to its prison. But one night, I had grabbed it from the office because I was taking care of something for my wife and uhm so I got home and I had to um I had to uh well lets be

honest I had to do what everyone of us do sometimes I needed a couple minutes in the throne room if you will to kinda hide and uh reset for the night. And so I take care of what I need to do from the throne room if you know what I am saying and as I am my son opens the throne room door because when you have a 5 and 7 year old you GET NO PRIVACY! And lex is standing there and she says what are you doing with your phone. Because she knows what God has asked of me. What was my response: Babe you are so right here is my phone thank you so much for helping me to stay faithful to the call of God. I WISH NOPE I said I was doing something for you. Oooo. In that moment I wasn't ignorant to the truth. I wasn't a random spectator to the situation. I wasn't a victim who needed to be consoled by my wife. . And I chose to settle in a familiar land instead of learning to be a trailblazer. I was an active participant in protecting that which the Lord asked me to put away.

Saul still breathing threats - release vs rumination- Threats released are from thoughts He is ruminating on- Active Addiction

In our text today, this was Saul. Saul is an active participant. I.e, Stephen and he couldn't see past his passion.

Text

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

Greek

Now where are all my Bible nerds at? If you have an NIV it says breathing out threats and murders. Why? The NIV is a thought for thought translation and it seeks to think of the english reader and help you not stumble. However, in the greek, that is a horrible translation.

The greek word for breathing out is ἐκπνέω(ekpnéō)

The greek word used is empneo which means breathing in

Every scholar I read agrees. This is not an accident. This is intentional from Luke the writer. He is showing us that threats and murder are not just coming out of Saul's mouth, but that they are the air he lives on. The threats he is releasing are from the thoughts he is ruminating on. He has become addicted to being hostile towards that which God calls holy.

Where have you ruminated passionately on that which God has asked you to put away and in doing so have become addicted to being hostile towards that which God calls holy?

You cannot trailblaze reconciliation why you are still passionately addicted to ruminating on how that its everyone else's fault.

You cannot trailblaze healing why you are still passionately ruminating in your brain that its impossible for you.

You cannot trailblaze being your families provider why you are still passionately ruminating in your mind that you will never have enough.

You cannot trailblaze being an overcomer why you are still passionately ruminating on the lie that their actions will always cause there to be a ceiling over your future potential.

And Saul could not be the trailblazer that God had chosen him to be while he was still passionately ruminating that Christians deserved to die.

My prayer is that your mind would be RENEWED today!

Saul we see goes to the chief priest and he decides, let me go find the Christians hiding in Demascus.

Acts 9:2

and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Demascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

And suddenly as he is near Demascus God shows up.

Demascus is an interesting place.

Damascus isn't new to Scripture.

In the Old Testament it's:

- a rival power
- a threatening place
- A symbol of the people outside of Gods covenant

Now in Acts 9:

- Jesus reveals Himself to Saul here
- in enemy territory

Watch what God does: **He doesn't avoid enemy territory. He arrives in enemy territory to win back the one He has chosen.**

Both of my kids are getting better at baseball. And we aint out here trying to win trophies yall. We just trying to get better. We will go out and hit and he might miss a couple and I can see it. I can see him start breathing in the threats of the enemy. I can see the enemy starting to take terrioty in his mind. Maybe I am not that good. Maybe I'll always be this way. And I can see him start to participate with that and start to gain certainty. And so what I do as a loving father is I enter demascus. I enter into enemy territory. And I swoop in

and I say boy, you about to hit this next one. And I show up. And I bring glorious thoughts. And almost without fail he will smoke the next hit. Why. **Because his dad doesn't run from his wrong thinking. His dad runs to his wrong thinking to correct it and to put him back to how he was always supposed to think.**

Is anyone grateful that you have a God who isn't running from where you have given the enemy territory, isn't avoiding where you've thought wrong, isn't stepping aside from where you have participate with the enemy to persecute what God has called holy in your mind, but that He comes near you, He offers you another chance, He offers you restoration, He offers you redemption, He offers you the truth. He offers you right htinking. Come on somebody Give Him some praise if you believe that God isn't avoiding the areas of your life where you have given the enemy territory but He is arriving to win back that ground! You may have put up a boundary with your decisions but I am so glad we serve a God that can break your boundaries and can get you back on your feet.

Acts 9:4

Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

I am so glad that God is willing to enter enemy territory for me, but can I remind you, that for Him to make us into a trailblazer, He can not merely console us. **He has to be able to confront us.**

Confrontation is rarely comforting in the moment, but confrontation is the road to becoming who God has called you to be. He doesn't torment us. He teaches us. And remember He confronts us because we are headed in a direction that will harm us.

I heard a pastor recently say, "You have to be willing to have confrontation in your organization without people getting their feelings hurt. Why? Because the mission of the organization is greater the feelings of the individual. The mission is the priority"

**Can I remind you: God owning all of the territory in your life is the mission, and that mission is greater than your feelings.**

Oh man: The mission of God is greater than how you feel about your sex life.. Ooops..

The mission of God is greater than how you feel about your past...

The mission of God is greater than how you feel about what they deserve because they wronged you.

Jesus says Saul its hard to keep kicking against the goads.

This was a **well-known proverb** long before the New Testament. It consistently meant:

- resisting what you *know* is inevitable
- rebelling against an inner or divine pressure
- Ruining yourself by fighting what is already pressing you forward

A **goad** was a pointed stick used to keep oxen moving in the right direction.

If the animal kicked back, it only **drove the spike deeper into itself**.

Gods hand of correction only comes against that which is harming you from being able to move forward in what He has for you.

I don't know about you, but I want the mission of God to be the direction of my future and not the foolishness of my feelings. So heres what I say: Lord confront whatever contradicts how you've chosen to use me on the earth. Confront whatever is propelling me in a direction that is wrong for the call that you have on my life. I'd rather have the confrontation of the Lord change my direction, then the direction of my life cause me to not complete what God put me on this earth to do.

Anybody else say Lord, confront me when I am choosing to have certainty about the wrong direction of my life.

Saul says Lord what do you want me to do. This is the phrase of every trailblazer. Lord what do you want. Lord what do you want. Lord what do you want.

Oh let us be a church, Lord what do you want. Lord what do you want.

Not what your family wants

Not what your feelings want

Not what your flesh wants

LORD WHAT DO YOU WANT

The Lord says arise go into the city and you will be told what you must do.

Now whats interesting is this:

Saul gets up blind.

Saul can hear a voice but he cannot see.

Saul has to get up and he has to be led by others. The leader had to be taken by the hand and led. OOOO you ought to admit you can't see sometimes and let others lead you to the place where God has called you. I am blind to my attitude. I am blind to my mentality. I am blind to my wrongs. Can someone in the church lead me.. Ok ok thats not the point of the story but its true...

For three days he is blind. And God goes and gets a trailblazer named Ananias. And Ananias has the trailblazers response. Here I am, Lord. He says go to Saul and lay hands on him that he may see. Ananias is like yo I heard about this guy. HE GONNA KILL me. God says go Ananias for this is my chosen instrument.

And Ananias went his way. Can we celebrate all the Ananias's in our life who obeyed God fearful who obeyed God on a word who obeyed God. They blazed a trail so we could see and we could hear. Come on. And by the way. We can't all have the influence of the apostle Paul, but we can have the obedeince of Ananias.

Business leader breakfast billy graham story.

Ananias enters the house and touches Saul. He says BROTHER SAUL..... Man. I tell you what when God shows up in your enemy territory and God says get up out of your sin and walk in my forgiveness and you get up and go like He says... You go from a betrayer of God to a brother in Gods family. Before you ever do a thing. Why? Because before God changes a trailblazers course, He changes a trailblazers identity.

Ananias obeys and something like scales falls from Sauls eyes. Now watch this:

### **Scales imply covering.**

Blindness wasn't just physical—it was protective

God didn't just remove blindness.He removed what Saul had been **protected by**.

Saul's certainty.

Saul's theology without Jesus.

Saul's confidence that he was right.

Saul and the law vs grace

Saul was protected by what was familiar to him.

Some of us aren't blind—we're *covered*.

***The making of a trailblazer is someone who lets the conviction of the Holy Spirit lead them from what was familiar into the unknown.***

We often let comfort and familiar keep us blind where we know God is calling us to blaze new trails.

Cere in hospital. Driving from dropping off boys. I had to choose. Would I choose the familiar or would I let the touch of the spirit cause something like scales to fall off. And guess what, when I got there I didn't know how to act. I didn't know how to walk. I didn't

know. I had never been this way before. But what I love about Jesus is this. He promised us that when we got into I don't know moments. His Spirit would give us what we need. I can never know the Spirit of God in a way that is unfamiliar to the world if I stay in what has always been familiar to me.

Whats amazing is, I have always felt insecure as a husband. The enemy has had that territory in my mind. Not because my wife makes me feel that way, but because I have breathed in the thoughts of the enemy. And a week into driving up to the unfamiliar and doing what the Holy Spirit said. A new trail was blazed in my brain. The enemy lost territory as my wife said, "I am so glad I married you. There is no one else I would want to walk through with this."

What happened? As the Holy Spirit was proving Jesus to me by scales falling. I was proving Jesus to my wife. Thats how a trailblazer is made.

My final question for you today is will you be concrete in your ways in 2026 or will you be moved by Him how Saul was moved by Him. Quickcrete. Set it out. lol.

Water and a craftsman moving it.

Let this be a year where we are watered by the Word of God and moved by the Spirit of God so that we can flow everywhere He has for us.