

HOW GOD CHANGES THE WORLD

Our prayer today was open the eyes of our hearts because we are approaching the very exact same text we have been looking at for three weeks now. We are in a vision series called Trailblazers because our vision this year is that we would leave the familiar and the comfortable by stepping into the unknown places in our life and our city that because of our obedience more people would see God.

"To whom He was not announced, ***they shall see;***
And those who have not heard shall understand."
Romans 15:21 NKJV

And Trailblazers do not settle. They are sent.
AND YET
God has us settling in a portion of scripture.

So this week I finally asked the Lord // Lord, why are we still here.
Because when we preach at Life Church we do not just find an interesting text, or go off of a calendar. No we seek the Lord to try and discern, "God what are you saying to your people now."

As I asked that question here is what I sensed from the Holy Spirit
We can't truly start until more of us SEE. Until we have greater light, we will have to rely on might. Might can exert effort, but it cannot give the Lamb the glory and the reward He deserves.

And so from that premise, I strapped up my boots and dug back into the SAME TEXT... And I was directed to the one who saw before Saul, Ananias.

Here is what the Bible says:

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias(Disciple comes first); and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord.(notice he doesn't say what is this... remember the boy in 1 Samuel 3.. God calls and he has to be taught how to respond.. why.. he did not know him and the word of God had not yet been revealed to Him. Ananias knows God. Ananias recognizes God. Ananias is acquainted with God. Why... Ananias has seen God)"

11 So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. **12** And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. **14** And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. **16** For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." **18** Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Today I want to preach to you from this title: **How God Changes the World**

Last night we were driving home from Houston with Leo in the car. I had been struggling throughout the day to really organize my thoughts for today. As I had been preparing earlier in the morning, I felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

"If you are wanting to give people sight, you can't rely on your might."

So I had determined in my heart to not wrestle intellectually on how to dissect today's text in a way that wow you but rather to wait on the Lord to reveal His word in a way that would worship Him. Isn't interesting how often we want God to move, and yet, we flex our own muscle? Some of the greatest moves of God begin with some of the people that man calls the least. And we would be wise to wait on God instead of wrestle intellectually on how we can be great.

And so we are in the car with Leo and all of the sudden, out of nowhere, lead by the Spirit of God my little boy begins to say dad are those lights on the road. I said what are you talking about buddy. He said those things on the wall are those lights. He was speaking to the reflectors on the median walls. I said they are reflectors son. He said so are they lights.

And I said well when light hits them, yes they are. He said dad they don't shine back here. Why, he was sitting at the wrong angle.
Isn't interesting that the angle we see something from can completely shift what we see.. That is why some of us in the room today, see God as beautiful and some of us see God as boring..
That is why Stephen saw God receiving Him and Saul saw God righteously angry at Stephen.
Why one was viewing God from an accurate angle and the other was viewing God from an inaccurate angle....

And what the Christian gospel calls us to do as believers is not to move at the pace of those who have seen from the right angle, but to slow down and to serve the weakest among us so they can see from the right angle too.

So I said watch this buddy, and I turned off the lights, and said look out the front. Then I turned them on and he said wow. wow.

And what from one angle looked dull, from the right angle, when light shined on it....
BEGAN TO DAZZLE in brilliance.

This is what happened to Ananias // because he was at the right angle, when God showed up and shined light on what He was doing in Saul's life Ananias participated. Why because He was brave... no.. Because God changed how He saw Saul.. Saul went from a dull, avoid at all cost, persecutor... To a dazzling chosen instrument that Ananias called brother... Why because the light shined on it.

And my prayer today is that the light would shine on the vision. That what is dull would become dazzling in your eyes. That the light would shine on the word. That what is dull in your heart. Would begin to dazzle. Lord, open the eyes of our heart that we may know you!

For it to go from dull to dazzling we need it to go from an idea to an invitation...
From a good idea to send Bibles to Malawi to an invitation from God.
From a good idea to invest in the hope of the world church plants to an invitation from God.
From a good idea to stop settling in the familiar place of bitterness to an invitation from God to step into the unknown of reconciliation and forgiveness.
From a good idea to stop settling in the familiar place of mundane and selfishness to an invitation from God to step into the unknown of adventure and self sacrificial love.

From a good idea to be a Trailblazer to an invitation from God to take new territory for the kingdom of God for a future generation.

Imagine if God comes to Ananias and says, "Go to Saul for He is my chosen instrument and Ananias says I believe that...." That is information I believe. Let me post that... Let me journal that...

You would say... Ananias you don't see it right... **Why... Because this vision wasn't information to understand.. It was an invitation to participate in the purposes of God on the Earth.**

Leo in the car /// I know dad, I know dad, I know....

How quickly do we try to shut down the invitation with mastering the idea.. And we treat God like this.. I know... I know.. I know...

But God is not an idea you master, but rather a master who invites you into His purposes.

And we understand that idea as a concept, but you know what most of our convictions are:

- If God wants to do it, then He will do it
 - HOWEVER
 - God could have done this all on His own... But He didn't
 - And Paul, as we looked at last easter, is the example of how God works
 - So if Paul, who was Saul, is the example of how God's gospel works, then Ananias is the example of how God starts His gospel work
 - He may stop people to stir their hearts to begin to understand but He always sends His church to do the ministry...
 - This is how God works
 - photo of Graham and I
 - Your Father doesn't build by Himself. Your Father is building His kingdom through YOU!
 - IN SAULS LIFE
 - the miracle power belongs to Jesus, but the ministry belongs to the church.

AND BY THE WAY WHO DOES GOD CHOOSE IN THIS STORY TO DO THE MINISTRY

- NOT JAMES, NOT JOHN, NOT PETER
 - A CERTAIN DISCIPLE NAMED ANANIAS

- GOD DOESN'T CHOOSE, IN HIS EXAMPLE OF TRANSFORMATION, THE INFLUENTIAL, THE ONE WITH THE PLATFORM, THE PASTOR... HE CHOOSES ANANIAS..
- WHY BECAUSE GOD DOESN'T LOOK FOR INFLUENCE. GOD LOOKS FOR OBEDIENCE.
 - GOD DOESN'T LOOK FOR THE SPECTACULAR BUT FOR THE SHEEP WHO WILL FOLLOW HIS VOICE.

3 ANANIAS IN ACTS // ANANIAS IS A COMMON NAME // YAHWEH IS GRACIOUS

YAHWEH WAS GRACIOUS TO ALL 3

- BREATHE IN LUNGS
- PURSUING THEM SINCE BIRTH
- PAVED WAY THROUGH JESUS
 - AND YET
 - ANANIAS IN ACTS 5 PRETENDS TO OBEY GOD
 - ANANIAS IN ACTS 9, OUR ANANIAS, PARTICIPATES WITH GOD WILLINGLY
 - ANANIAS IN ACTS 23/24 IS BLIND TO GOD'S PLAN AND PERSECUTES PAUL
 - 3 CARRIED THE TITLE YAHWEH IS GRACIOUS / ONE OFFERED BACK HIS OBEDIENCE
 - MAYBE JUST MAYBE GOD'S VISION IS DULL IN YOUR LIFE
 - BECAUSE YOU CARRY THE RIGHT TITLE: CHRISTIAN
 - BUT YOU DO NOT PARTICIPATE WILLINGLY IN OBEDIENCE

3 WAYS ANANIAS PARTICIPATED WILLINGLY IN WHAT GOD MADE DAZZLE

1. he was willing to be persuaded
 - a. THOUGHT // Ananias had to be persuaded // YOU EVER HAVE TO BE PERSUADED
 - b. Uchiko // jacob and china // what I knew about Sushi // had to lay down what I knew and trusted what my friends had said
 - c. SCRIPTURE // acts 9:13-15 NKJV
 - d. POINT // IN ORDER TO SEE WHAT GOD IS SHOWING, I HAVE TO BE WILLING TO LEAVE WHAT I HAVE PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS REALITY
 - i. GOD CAN RE-NARRATE REALITY
2. he was willing to move
 - a. THOUGHT // Ananias had to have a light enough life to be moved by the Holy Spirit to action
 - b. VOUS MIAMI // AM I TOO WEIGHED DOWN BY NOSTALGIA, BY MY PLANS, BY MY WAYS

- c. SCRIPTURE // WHILE JESUS WAS STOPPING SAUL // HE WAS SENDING ANANIAS //GOD WAS INTERRUPTING BY STOPING AND GOD WAS INTERUPTING BY SENDING. AND WHEN YOU ARE BEING SENT SOMEONE IS BEING STOPPED.
 - d. POINT // THE GOSPEL ADVANCES NOT FROM IDEA TO IDEA BUT FROM INTERRUPTION AND INVITATIONS
 - i. EVERY INTERRUPTION ISN'T A GOOD IDEA // ITS AN INVITATION
3. he was willing to be forgotten
- a. THOUGHT // ANANIAS OBEYS AND THEN BECOMES OBSELETE TO THE TEXT. BUT HE WAS NEVER SEEKING BEING SEEN.... HE WAS JUST STEPPING IN WHAT HE WAS SHOWN.. BECAUSE HE WASN'T AFTER THE TITLE OF GOD IS GRACIOUS... HE WASN'T AFTER THE TITLE OF DISCIPLE... HE WAS WILLING TO OFFER BACK THE REWARD THAT THE LAMB OF GOD WHO WAS SLAIN RIGHTFULLY DESERVED. HE WAS WILLING TO BE FORGOTTEN BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN FOUND.
 - b. ILLUSTRATION // MY PARENTS LAYING DOWN THEIR LIFE IN SACRIFICE... MY GREATEST DESIRE IS TO GIVE THEM BACK THE REWARD BY BECOMING THE MOST FAITHFUL HUSBAND, FAITHFUL FATHER, FAITHFUL JESUS FOLLOWER THAT I CAN BE... WHY? BECAUSE THE SACRIFICE HAS BEEN SEEN FOR WHAT IT IS... FAVOR I DID NOT EARN.
 - c. POINT // GOD CHANGES THE WORLD THROUGH PEOPLE WHO LAY DOWN THEIR LIFE BECAUSE THEY HAVE SEEN GOD FROM THE RIGHT ANGLE.
 - i. CLOSE // THE PHRASE "MAY THE LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN RECEIVE THE REWARD OF HIS SUFFERING."
 - 1. MORAVIANS
 - a. SPIRIT POURED OUT IN SUCH A WAY
 - i. 24/7 PRAYER AND WORSHIP FOR 100 YEARS
 - ii. THOSE WHO WERE SENT TO MISSIONS
 - 1. IT IS WRITTEN THAT THEIR FAMILIES WOULD STAND ON THE SHORE AS THEY WOULD SEE THE SHIP LEAVING
 - a. AND THEY WOULD SHOUT MAY THE LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN RECEIVE THE REWARD OF HIS SUFFERING BECAUSE HE IS WORTHY OF IT
 - i. THEY WERE WILLING TO FORGET THEIR LIFE BECAUSE THE LAMB DAZZLED
 - ii. ALTAR CALL/ PRAYER