

CP - 10/2/22

Acts 9:1–9 - The Conversion of Saul

Sermon Outline:

Introduction:

- The most important figure, second to the Lord Jesus Himself
- The man who wrote 13, maybe 14, of the 27 NT books
- The man who the Holy Spirit used to write deep doctrines and the “one another” commands
- The man who was called to get the Gospel to the Gentiles
- The man who would become known as Paul— an apostle and the greatest missionary the world has ever seen
- Was the man who at one time wanted to extinguish the witness of Jesus?
- How did was his life changed? How did it happen?
- What can make a man who hated something change to love it, and what can make a man want to end something change to continue it?
- **The grace of our Lord Jesus**

1. Who is Saul?

- First introduced in 7:58, 8:1, 8:3
 - What could cause a man to do this? How could he be so blind?
 - The answer: What he believed to be true..
- Born in Tarsus in Asia Minor
 - Jew with a Roman citizenship
 - Pharisee
 - Studied under Gamaliel (beauty of the law)
 - *Philippians 3:4–6, Acts 26:9–11*
 - He believed he was doing the Lord’s work.
 - He was sincere yet blind.

2. Saul’s plan (9:1–2)

- Still breathing threats and murder
 - Breathing in - his life goal and energy was doing this
- Seeking warrants to enter synagogues in Damascus to arrest Christians
- Anyone (man, woman, boy, girl)
- The Way - Jesus’ words

3. God’s plan (9:3–9)

- v. 3, “Now as he went on his way” - Sudden and unexpected
- -v. 4, “Saul, Saul”
 - “Why are you persecuting me?”
 - He was persecuting men and women, but Jesus says “you’re persecuting Me”
 - These words reflect the inseparable link between Jesus and His body.
 - No blow struck on earth goes unfelt in heaven by our sympathetic High Priest.
 - Saul’s sin wasn’t merely against others; it was against Jesus. Saul’s sin was rejecting Jesus.
 - Saul knew about the Christian faith and responded in rejection and hatred.
 - He heard Stephen preach it.
 - He heard about the miracles and the work of the apostles.
 - He has responded in rejection, but that was about to change.
 - God had been laying the groundwork through Stephen and the others.

- v. 5, “Who are you, Lord?”
 - Recognition of deity
 - It’s not hard to believe that he knew the answer to his question already.
 - By faith or fear, he asked.
 - His worst fear was coming true, as he was discovering that Jesus was the Messiah, Christianity was true, and the gospel was God’s truth.
 - “I am Jesus, who you are persecuting”
 - It was confirmed.
 - The message he knew, debated against Stephen.
 - This Jesus, whom he thought was dead, was alive and who He claimed to be.
 - **Acts 26:14**
 - “Saul, your effort is futile.”
 - His soul was crushed.
 - *It’s a futile work to try to extinguish the gospel and the Church of Christ.
 - All efforts will prove to be pointless and insufficient.
- v. 6, Acts 22:10 - “What shall I do?”
 - The genuineness of his faith became evident.
 - Surrendered to Jesus’ Lordship
 - Jesus is Lord with or without human response.
 - The question is whether we are submissive to His Lordship or not.
- v. 8, Obedient, blind, and crushed
 - He made it to Damascus, just not the way he thought he would.
 - This is a work of grace.

4. Gospel Truths

- **Salvation is by God’s grace alone.**
- **Salvation involves a life-changing encounter with Jesus.**
- **Salvation involves a recognition of sin.**
- **Salvation involves surrender to the Lordship of Jesus.**
- **Sincerity alone doesn’t save.**
- **Any sin is first a sin against God.**
- **God can save the worst of sinners.**

1 Timothy 1:13-17

Small Group Questions:

1. What from the Bible passage and sermon spoke to you?
2. Read some of the other passages related to Saul’s conversion and note similarities and differences. (Acts 22:1–21; 26:12–13; Romans 1:1–5; 1 Corinthians 15:8–10; Galatians 1:11–24; Philippians 3:4–11; 1 Timothy 1:12–17)
3. How was Saul sincere, yet blind? What does that mean? How is it relatable to today?
4. What does this passage teach about God’s grace in salvation?
5. Pastor Justin stated, “There is no blow struck on earth that goes unfelt in heaven by our sympathetic High Priest.” How does that encourage you?

6. How was Saul's sin against the church actually a sin against Jesus?
7. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone apart from works. How is the genuineness of faith made evident through obedience? What does it mean to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus? Can you be saved and not surrender to the Lordship of Jesus?
8. Read 1 Timothy 1:13–17. How was Paul an example of the grace and patience of God? How is your story an example of God's grace and patience?