

Calvary Chapel on the Horizon

October 3, 2021

Acts 9:1-31 "Saul (Paul)"

I. Introduction

Read: 1Ti 1:12-16

II. First Hand Experience

A. Against the Gospel (v. 1-2)

Act 9:1-2 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

† **Here we find Saul – the man who was at Stephen’s stoning: Act 7:58b ...and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.**

† **Acts 8:1, 3** And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

† **And we see that Saul was ABSOLUTELY against the Gospel – this “Way” was subverting their “Law”. Saul saw himself as zealot...seeking to persecute this new “Faith”**

† **Now, as a side note, have you ever wondered what did Saul look like? There is a very old apocryphal book (by Gaebelein), dating to the end of the first century, describes Paul like this: “A man of moderate stature, with crisp hair, crooked legs, blue eyes, large knit brows, and long nose, at times looking like a man, at times like an angel.”**

B. Meeting Jesus (v. 3-5)

Act 9:3-5 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

† **We get a little more detail from Paul defense to King Agrippa: Act 26:13-18** At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said,

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I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

- † **"Saul, Saul":** *When* God repeats a name twice, it is to display deep emotion, but not necessarily anger (as in the *Martha, Martha* of **Luke 10:41** and the *Jerusalem, Jerusalem* of **Mat 23:37**).
- † **(v4) "why persecutes thou "ME"":** Jesus makes this very personal! Also, take note, that when a believer is persecuted...Jesus takes it personally that they are persecuting HIM!
- † **"Who art thou, Lord?"** (Greek – Kurios) : this title is given to God, the messiah (Jesus) and is the same word found in **Rom 10:9**: "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus..."
- † **"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"** – Jesus speaks truth and His truth cuts to the bone:
 - **Heb 4:12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

C. Waiting on the Lord (v. 6-9)

Act 9:6-9 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

- † **At this point, there is NO shadow of a doubt that Saul knows that Jesus is LORD and SAVED!**
- † **But, he must wait on the Lord's timing for the "next thing" to happen in the bigger plans of the Kingdom.**
- † **This is sometimes that hardest part of our Christian walk...when God has us wait... and we "oh so often fail at patience!"**
 - **Psa 46:10** Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

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III. The Call of God

A. When the Call Appears Difficult (v. 10-14)

Act 9:10-14 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

† **Ananias: “Lord, he’ll kill me!” – Just like Abraham had to trust the Lord for Isaac at the altar of sacrifice, there are times when we must simply OBEY without understanding.**

† **Faith means stepping out into the deep and trusting Jesus to carry us.**

B. Obedience to the Lord (No Matter What!) (v. 15-19)

Act 9:15-19 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

† **God wants to show Saul the great things he will have to suffer to follow Him...**

- **Would we willingly follow Christ if He showed us all that we would have to suffer beforehand?**

† **Here, looking at Ananias', we see that sometimes our obedience is for others and not ourselves.**

- **For example: 1Pet 3** tells us that a wife is to have a quiet and gentle spirit so that her husband may be drawn to the Lord and then hear from the Lord – it's not necessarily a natural action most times but a blind step of obedience.

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† **With Ananias, we see his obedience was for Saul: 1) that the scales may come off of his eyes, (2) that he might be filled with the Holy Ghost and (3) that he might be baptized!**

† **After all of this...what did Saul he do?**

- **He fellowshiped with other believers! How important it is that once we become saved that we immerse ourselves in fellowship with other like-minded believers that:**

- 1. We might become strong**
- 2. Grow in grace**
- 3. Have accountability and encouragement!**

IV. The Love of Christ Constrains Us

A. Living for Christ

Act 9:20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

† **Paul tells us his motivation for preaching Christ in 2Co 5:14-15** For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

† **Do we see the depths of the sacrifice Jesus made for us and respond similarly?**

B. Doubting the Person

Act 9:21-22 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

† **Have you ever doubted someone's salvation because you knew who they "used to be"?**

† **Sometimes we find ourselves in the situation Jesus described: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own home town".**

C. Persecution Arises

Act 9:23-30 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the

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disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. 26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

✝ **After we get saved...often the next step is people shun us, ridicule or mock us or in some other way persecute us...Satan tries to kill, steal & destroy our faith and lives...**

✝ **But, in the face of persecution, we have to find our own "Jerusalem"; that place where we know God has called us and seek to "bloom where we are planted".**

D. The Church

Act 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

✝ **The church walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost will grow!**

✝ **The "Comfort of the Holy Ghost" is the inward knowing that God is with us: (Emmanuel, God with us). Our dependence upon His comfort, leading and guidance!**

✝ **Pro 9:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

✝ **This is one of the great deficiencies in the churches in the western hemisphere today: there is not a healthy fear of the Lord nor a walking in the comfort of the Holy Ghost!**

V. Conclusion