

## Community Group Discussion Questions

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### “The Start of Paul’s Ministry” Acts 9:19b-31

**Sermon Series Title:** “Church Beginnings”

**Sermon Series Summary:** From now until around Easter, we will be in the book of Acts, covering chapters 1-12. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we see the NT church being born by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this series, we see the church being built, the kingdom going forth, and the gospel being proclaimed.

**Setting:** The book of Acts is a transitional book between the resurrection of Jesus and the established local churches of the epistles. With Jesus’ call to the church in Acts 1, we see how the gospel spreads to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth.

**Summary:** As we go back into the book of Acts, we start where we left off, the conversion of Saul. After he encounters Christ, believes, and is baptized, he proclaims the gospel immediately. Then, we see that God prepares him for ministry after many years. Lastly, in our passage, we see Barnabas’ intercession for Saul and God working in and through the church.

#### **Sermon Points:**

1. The Proclamation
2. The Preparation
3. The Intercession
4. The Intervention

**Main Idea:** *“Proclaim the gospel and wait on the Lord as you trust in Christ as your Savior.”*

#### **Opening Question**

1. Do you remember when you were first saved? Or baptized/confirmed? Share that experience with one another.

*(Answers will vary.)*

***We left this series off at Saul’s conversion in the first part of chapter 9. Paul encountered Christ, had his eyes opened both physically and spiritually, believed, and was baptized. Now, we will see what happens next.***

### **Read Acts 9:19b-31**

2. What does our passage teach us about sharing the message of Christ with others? Why is it so hard to do it (if it is)?

*(It shows us that sharing with others about Christ is an organic response to our salvation. Just like a baby cries when they are first born, we cry out and share about Christ when we are born again. We naturally talk about the things we worship, enjoy, love, and cherish. As we have tasted the joy of our salvation, we are able to talk about it with others.*

*Also, we see that Paul talks about Jesus even though he may not have had deep Christ-centered theology. This shows us that we don't need to be experts to evangelize, pastors to proclaim. We can share with others the little that we know, because the little that we know was enough to save us and give us life.*

*It's hard for us to share the message of Christ because of what we talked about last time. We are ashamed of it. It's an offensive truth, and we don't want to offend others. It may be that certain "Christians" have given the church a shameful name, so we don't want to be associated with them. Lastly, it may be because we don't think the gospel is that good, so it is foolish for us to call it good news."*

3. What does our passage (and Galatians 1:15-24) teach us about God's timing and preparation? How does that give us hope in our waiting?

*(You would think that God would use Paul right away. He was one of the most zealous persecutors of the church. He had this amazing testimony of his conversion. He had a background in Jewish theology already, though it wasn't Christ-centered. But God calls him to Arabia for three years. Then, he is in Tarsus for years after our passage with no word about his ministry. God uses that time to prepare and equip him. He needs to be humbled, dependent on the Lord in order to be faithful and effective. He sees that the Lord doesn't need Him, and it's an honor to be used by Him. We see this waiting and preparing with both Moses and Jesus. This is why it makes sense that Paul in 1 Timothy 3:6, 10 calls churches to elect leaders who have been tested in the faith for awhile.*

*Also, you would think that his ministry would flourish. He was passionate, bright, and well-spoken. He was a leader. His ministry did flourish when he immediately started to proclaim Christ, but soon after, the Jews wanted to kill him. They rejected him and drove him out of town. This is all part of God's plan to humble and grow Him. He learns*

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*that this is not for the applause of men or the idol of success. This is all for the Lord. The results don't define him or give him his sense of worth. He is called to be faithful and leave the rest to the Lord.*

*This gives us hope in our waiting. When we feel like things are not going our way or the way for the kingdom, we can trust that the Lord has a greater purpose. He is working in us and equipping us in the waiting. He is growing our faith and humbling us before Him. Also, we don't have to be discouraged when we don't see fruit. Fruit or success does not define us or give us our worth. It's Christ, and we are to trust in Him alone.*

### 4. What are some lessons we can learn from the example of Barnabas?

*(All the apostles were afraid of Saul and did not believe his word. I'm sure a lot of them struggled with hatred toward Saul, since he persecuted and even killed loved ones. Therefore, it makes sense why they do not receive Saul. However, Barnabas reaches out to Saul and intercedes for him. He affirms his faith and brings him into the family of God. He vouches for Saul, even though it may cost him.*

*We can follow the example of Barnabas by going out and forming relationships with others. His example encourages us to connect with the people that are usually not in our circles. Not only that, he calls us to reconciliation, discipleship, and intercession. We can intercede on behalf of others, even if that may cost us our comfort, security, reputation, and even relationships.)*

### 5. How do we see Christ in our passage? Why is that so significant?

*(We see Christ as the One who first waited and trusted. He didn't start his ministry until 30 years after his birth. He was driven into the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry. He waited for people to change their hearts in his ministry. He waited on the Lord through his trial, humiliation, and cross. Even in death, he trusted and waited. And through that death, God had a greater purpose: to raise Him unto glory and to save all of humanity.*

*Also, Christ is the ultimate intercessor, the ultimate Barnabas. He intercedes for us before God on the basis of His life, death, and resurrection. He put Himself on the line to be in relationship with us and to disciple us. And it cost Him everything. But that intercession is the foundation for our worth and our inclusion in the family of God.)*

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***Final Thoughts:*** Our passage is rich with biblical themes. We see God's call for us to share Christ with others, to wait on Him in faith, and to intercede for others. And through all these lessons, it draws us to Christ. Christ is the One who first shared with us the good news. He was the One who waited on the Lord in His life and death, and that brought us new life. He is the One who intercedes for us, and through His intercession, we are saved. And it's through Christ, we can wait on the Lord, proclaim Him, and intercede for others.