

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.

"We are in our "Church Beginnings" sermon series, and through this series, we're going to see that we need to know where we come from to know who we are now and to know who we will become in the future."

Call: Judges 5:4-5

Text: Acts 9:1-19a

Title: "The Salvation of Paul"

Next Week's Call: Judges 5:31

Next Week's Text: Acts 9:19b-25

Next Week's Title: "The Start of Paul's Ministry"

Future Calls: 2 Samuel 2:1-2, 3, 4, 7, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23-25, 26-27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 40-43, 47, 50-51

Future Titles: "Dwelling in Flesh" (Daniel 2:8-11), "EM Vision" (Luke 8:40-56)

Fallen Condition Focus: We were enemies of God in our sin, deserving of God's judgment and death.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ has taken on that judgment, becoming the enemy of God, so we may be saved.

Proposition: "Trust in Christ, and you shall be saved."

Summary: In our passage, we see the story of Paul's salvation. The persecutor of the church encounters Christ and then is mobilized to be one of the greatest theologians and missionaries in history. In this story, we see the blindness of sin, the grace of God, the humble obedience of a servant, and the glory of salvation.

Reflective Questions:

1. What are some lessons we can learn from Paul's salvation story?
2. How does Ananias' humble obedience move you?

## I. Introduction

- A. Hook- Paul- one of the most influential figures in history
- B. Transition- background story of conversion from Saul that led persecution of the church; 3 times in this book- polemic for the apostleship of Paul
- C. Proposition
- D. Points

## II. A Divine Encounter (vv. 1-9)

- A. Saul is still breathing out threats.
  1. Some translations say that he is breathing out fire- resembling a dragon. Greek word for breathe- is breathing in to exhale heavily
- B. Saul believes that he is doing the Lord's work, since Christianity seemed to be deceiving his people of the truth.
- C. He wants to go to Damascus (one of the oldest cities in the world), since the gospel has spread there. We know there is a significant Jewish population there since many died there under King Nero.
  1. Way- first time Christianity is called this; this shows what the gospel is about. Not a doorway, but a pathway.
  2. Christians from Pentecost, or Judea, or Samaria (nearby)- Philip's ministry? And he is a couple steps behind, since the gospel exploded in the north with the Samaritans and then in the south with the Ethiopian eunuch.
- D. A light from heaven shone around him, brighter than the midday sun.
  1. Shine- like lightning
- E. Saul falls to the ground- that's what happens when you encounter the glory of God.
- F. "Saul, Saul"- intimately personal call: Abraham on Mt. Moriah, Moses at burning bush, Samuel under Eli, Martha with Jesus' rebuke, Jerusalem when Jesus was weeping
  1. God calls us with just as much intimacy, no matter our past and sin.
- G. Why are you persecuting me? -Unity of Jesus and the church
  1. Grace in suffering; rebuke for hating our neighbor
- H. KJV- it is hard for you to kick against the goads; probably later addition because of Acts 26; referring to stubbornness despite call of God
- I. Who are you Lord? -One of the most important questions to ask

- J. Men traveling heard the voice but saw no one. Acts 22- saw a light but did not understand the voice
  - K. Saul is without sight and fasts- praying (v. 11). Probably wrestling with the truth that he was working against God in Christ and His work.
    - 1. His physical blindness represents his previous spiritual blindness
- III. A Humble Obedience (vv. 10-16)
- A. Ananias the disciple is willing and submissive- “Here I am, Lord.”
  - B. Rise and go to Straight Street- one of the oldest streets in the world
    - 1. Saul is praying and knows what will happen.
  - C. Ananias is hesitant- maybe fear of death, doubt in God’s call, no desire to help this evil man in hatred or extreme dislike
    - 1. Evil against saints- first time church is called saints
      - 1. We are saints in that we are justified and set apart. We are also sinners and sufferers.
    - 2. He knows that Saul has the green light to persecute Christians in Damascus.
    - 3. Possibly have friends or family who have been killed by Saul
    - 4. God welcomes our thoughts and honesty.
  - D. Go
    - 1. Saul is an instrument, who will suffer for the name of Christ.
  - E. Ananias obeys, trusting in the will of God
    - 1. Opposite of Jonah
    - 2. He is used as an instrument to save the greatest theologian, and he is never mentioned again in Scripture.
- IV. A Beautiful Salvation (vv. 17-19a)
- A. Laying hands on him- touch upon an enemy; Jesus touches us
  - B. Brother Saul- we enter into the family of God
  - C. Lord Jesus appears to him- God makes the first move in our salvation
    - 1. Jesus came to earth willingly to pursue and redeem us first.
  - D. Regain your sight- we are able to see the Light of the World, the life for all men
  - E. Baptism- Washed clean
  - F. Taking food and strengthened- live for Christ
    - 1. I’d personally want to die in my self-hatred and condemnation, but Paul lives.
    - 2. He is completely resting on Jesus alone. Jesus died for His sins, so He doesn’t need to. Jesus was condemned and forsaken, so He would be redeemed. Jesus received silence on the cross, so we may receive the call of God. Jesus was the humble, obedient servant to bring to us the

good news and be the good news for us, not just risking His life but laying down His life for us. He became God's touch of love and grace for us, since Jesus received the outpouring of God's judgment and wrath. He became an orphan on the cross, so that we may be children of God and enter into His family.