



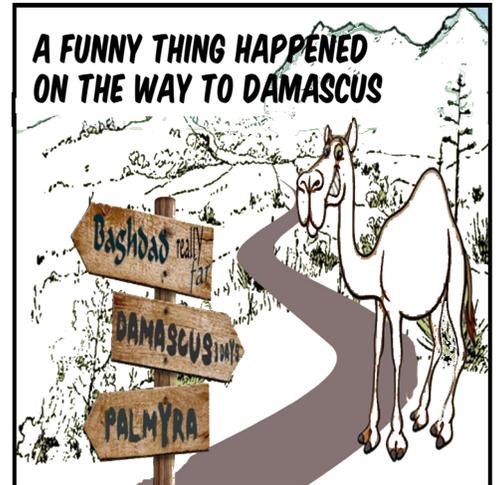
This Sunday we will continue with our series on salvation, looking at figures from the New Testament and their conversions. Today we will consider Saul (Apostle Paul).

(based on Acts 9:1-18)

Saul filled with rage, was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So with permission from the high priest and letters requesting help from the local synagogues there, Paul headed to Damascus to arrest any who were "followers of the Way". He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains (where they would face imprisonment or death)

As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting Me? It's hard for you to kick against the goads." "Who are You, lord?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one! Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

The Lord told Ananias (one of His faithful followers) to go to Saul. So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized.



WHAT CAN WE GLEAN FROM OUR BIBLE PASSAGE?

- **RELIGION WILL NOT SAVE OUR SOULS OR ALLOW US TO REACH GOD - NO MATTER HOW ZEALOUS WE ARE**
Saul was a religious man who practiced his religion with heart felt zeal... but he didn't recognize God when he met him face to face! He said, "Who are You?".
He was sincere...but sincerely wrong!
- **GOD REACHES OUT IN LOVE TO US WHILE WE ARE IN OUR SIN** Saul was in the middle of his sin, marching to Damascus, to arrest, and have God's people put to death. It was in his darkest hour that God reached out to him and showed him his need of a savior! While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. **Since Jesus was willing to die for us when we were sinners... how much more does He love us now that we are his?**
- **GOD USES PEOPLE FOR HIS PLAN!** God shook Saul's life up by knocking him to the ground and having him lose his eyesight. When it was time for Saul to be healed instead of just reaching out to him, the Lord chose to send a Christian to pray for him!
God reminds us that He wants to use us to do His will!

- **WHEN THE LORD SAVES SOMEONE, HE REQUIRES THAT WE FORGIVE AND ACCEPT THEM** - When the Lord told Ananias to go to Saul and lay hands on him that he might be healed, he responded in fear. To paraphrase he said, *“Hey now, Lord! I have heard a lot about this Saul and none of it was good! He has been persecuting Christians and arresting them”*. But the Lord said, *“Go! I have chosen him and have plans to use him”*. In other words: Ananias, you will have to forgive and accept him, because I have given him a new life! The Lord reminds us that we are to do the same!
- **SAUL WAS A SINNER, SAVED BY GRACE... AND SO ARE WE!** We should keep in mind that if it wasn't for the grace of God ...we would be without help and without hope. When we remember this it helps to keep us humble, thankful and merciful toward others!
- **BAPTISM IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF SALVATION!** Each lesson we have looked at from the new testament concerning conversion has included the person who was saved getting baptized! In Saul's case, after going blind, he was fasting and waiting to hear from the Lord. Ananias comes and lays hands on him and he is healed. ***So what does he do?*** *Well, after three days of fasting you would think he would go and eat...* but God's Word says in Act 9:18 *“... and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized”.* *Saul wanted to make everything right with God, & that included baptism- as soon as possible!*
- **THERE IS NO ONE WHO IS “UNSAVABLE” OR WITHOUT HOPE!** Saul, went on to becoming the greatest apostle, is a reminder to us - even those who hate God and seem unredeemable can be saved by God's wonderful mercy! Truly, there is nothing impossible with God. Paul summed up his salvation in 1 Timothy 1:16, *“... God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.”* Amen!

WE DON'T ALL HAVE TO HAVE A PAUL EXPERIENCE... BUT WE ALL NEED TO EXPERIENCE GOD!

Let us pray:

Father we thank You for Your Word that allows us to know how we should live and what we should believe. Help us to live out Your Word and walk in Your ways each day. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen!

*May the Lord bless you and take great care of you
 May the Lord be kind and gracious to you;
 May the Lord look on you with favor
 and give you and your household peace.*

Blessings,

Pastor Michael & Mary

Please call to set up a home visit for communion or prayer.

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