

Acts # 48

**“If You Can’t Beat ‘em, Join ‘em; From Murder to Ministry” *Acts 9:1-22; Galatians 1:11-17***  
**It’s no accident that witnesses for Jesus Christ in the early church are called martyrs as this man Saul**

**of Tarsus will become one of the greatest of both.**

**But is that why Jesus Christ Himself appeared to Saul en route to Damascus?**

***No, Jesus Christ appeared to Saul, NOT because that's what it took for Saul to respond to the Gospel.***

**Jesus Christ appeared to Saul for one reason: because it's related to his commissioning as an apostle; a story that Paul tells in Acts 22; 26 and other places.**

**It was God’s purpose for Paul and God’s purpose for every believer to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives (Galatians 4:19).**

**Inhaling was an idiom which meant whatever occupied someone in life and Saul’s entire life now consisted of and revolved around the threatening and murder of Jesus’ followers.**

**It’s obvious that the high priest is not the leader in this persecution; that was Saul of Tarsus.**

***Saul has heard that there are Christians 150 miles away in Damascus, so he wants to head that way to do some hunting.***

**Due to Paul’s efforts, there’s a spread of persecution beyond Jerusalem in direct opposition to the Lord’s command to spread His message of loving forgiveness.**

**If we are following Jesus, we may suffer great persecution but we’ll never walk in darkness; meaning we’ll not be confounded.**

**The light was literal illumination but the light is also the Lord Jesus Christ who will speak to Saul of Tarsus.**

***It was a paralyzing light according to verse 7 as the entire party was halted and no one moved while Jesus Christ spoke personally with Saul and in verse 8, it was a blinding light, so bright that it blinded Saul temporarily and he was helpless in his blindness.***

**It was such an awesome light that the group was speechless with no rebuttal; no one even had a question and it was so powerful that it knocked Saul down and it was a revealing light because Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Saul at this point.**

**Paul trusted in Jesus Christ while flat on his back, so he’s saved now and the first thing he’s going to have to do is wait; are you surprised?**

**In verse 7, we have the reaction of Saul’s army; the Lord Jesus Christ dealt only with Saul here; not with Saul’s entourage.**

***The principle is: Too often when someone gets saved, people want to push him on the bandwagon and use him to promote something; they want him to give his testimony or use him***

*for fund-raising and this ruins more new believers than just about anything else.*

God doesn't need human ability and success to promote His Kingdom.

The first thing we do as Christians is nothing because we need to get some biblical truth in our souls to grow before anything else; the issue is learn about Jesus, fall in love with Him and then tell somebody what happened to you.

**The ordinary Christian life is the most difficult because it has lesser outward stimulations and requires a deeper, steadier faith-rest application.**

The common routine of life fills all the gaps in the Christian life and this quiet, unnoticed, wonderful service that Ananias renders for Paul has world-wide repercussions.

*Any believer who experiences frustration because his life is filled with monotony when he reads a wonderful missionary biography or hears a glowing testimony and makes a comparison to himself is disappointed unless he understands biblical truth and grace orientation.*

There is something extraordinary about an ordinary life which is faithful in learning the Word and orienting to grace.

**In receiving spiritual sight, Saul is going to have a number of meetings with Ananias who's going to constantly teach him but Saul's free-will must be involved.**

You have to want the Word of God to get the Word of God.

*There is no easy way to get the Word of God; it requires concentration, learning and setting aside the things that we might ordinarily enjoy and therefore, a lot of sacrifice.*

Whenever a person learns biblical truth, he does so because he wants to learn biblical truth.

All of the time that Saul of Tarsus was the worst unbeliever who ever lived, God knew what he was going to be like in the future.

**We can therefore understand that God would have patience with Saul, knowing some of his great decisions, his great thirst for truth, how he would live by God's truth and knowing what a tremendous dynamic impact his life would have on the entire human race.**

**Some of the greatest blessings in life come through suffering.**

Even though Paul would have maximum suffering conditions throughout his life as a believer, he would also have maximum blessing in those sufferings.

*The link between happiness and suffering is biblical truth.*

In the transitional days of the early church, the filling of the Holy Spirit was received by identification with an apostle, as in the case in Samaria.

There is an exception with Saul of Tarsus who received the filling of the Holy Spirit

through identification with an ordinary believer emphasizing the fact that the ministry of the ordinary believer is very important.

**Behind the greatest of believers are the ministries of ordinary believers.**

**When our lives are related to the Word of God, they have impact.**

They were amazed for 2 reasons: 1. Saul had a world-wide reputation as a religious ruler in his own land and

2. He was famous for his persecution of Christians.

*They recognized Saul by his reputation and they were astounded at his complete change of direction in such a short time.*

This emphasizes that no matter how zealous someone is in their anti-Christianity opposed to God; once he's a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the change is complete and he now has the potential to be just as zealous in service for his Lord.