

# *Saul: A Change of Heart*

*September 23, 2007*

**Icebreaker:** *When did you think you were doing the right thing but it ended up hurting someone else?*

## **Acts 9:1-2**

Saul was zealous for God and for the Law. When the Christians scattered from Jerusalem, he followed. He was doing this in the name of the Lord. Little did he know his purposes were running counter to God's. It is possible to do something with great zeal and still be mistaken.

*What charge do you think Saul may have brought against the Christians he found in Damascus?*

- Probably the same charges brought against Stephen—speaking against God and the temple.

## **Acts 9:3-9**

*Whose voice does Saul hear according to Acts 9:17?*

- Jesus' voice

As far as we know, Saul had never met Jesus before. *How is it possible that Jesus says Saul is persecuting Him rather than His people?*

- Jesus is personally connected to his church. You hurt the church, you hurt Christ himself.

*What does that have to tell us about how we should treat the church today in our speech and actions?*

- We need to avoid putting down God's church because when we do so we are putting down Christ.

Blind and helpless. Saul follows the orders of Christ and is led into the city. There is quite a change in his demeanor from crusader for the Law to helpless and led by the hand into the city. *Why does God often have to humble us before we can be used most effectively?*

## **Acts 9:10-19**

In the story of Philip and the Ethiopian we saw how well God orchestrated the events. Now in this story we see God behind the scenes once again readying Saul for his life as a Christian. God certainly must have a sense of humor. God has a way of using the most unlikely of people for his service.

*Why would Ananias be reluctant to go and show God's grace to Saul?*

- He knew it was dangerous.

*When was a time in your life you knew you were supposed to risk something for God? How did it turn out?*

After regaining his sight, Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit and was baptized! He had come full circle. God certainly had Saul's attention but now he has Saul's heart as well. God has to have our attention and our heart before he is ready to send us out to do his work. Notice the next verses...

### **Acts 9:19-22**

*What would you think if the world's leading atheist suddenly started proclaiming Jesus was the Son of God? Would you trust him?*

Saul had come to take captives in Damascus but God ended up taking captive of Saul. First there were some obstacles to overcome to get him heading in the right direction. *What obstacles have you faced in your life to earnestly pursuing God's purpose?*

Saul immediately started preaching and teaching Jesus. We have seen some people get intense about reaching the lost when they first become a Christian. *Why do you think new Christians have so much energy and zeal for God?*

*Why is it easy to let that fade over time?*

*How can we re-energize our walk with God and our mission for others?*

### **Acts 9:31**

*What did the church experience that it had not had for some time?*

- Peace

#### **Application:**

*How can you use the example of Ananias to encourage you to reach out to those who may not be your first choice?*

*How can you better direct your zeal in ways that can be used for God?*

*Who are the Saul's in your life and what will it take for them to be reached?*

*What would it take for you to more fully give your heart to God today?*