

Saul is Knocked to the Ground

August 21, 2016

Acts 9:1-25

Lessons from the life of Saul:

1) My thoughts, actions and or words could be wrong.

“At age thirteen Saul was sent to Palestine to learn from a rabbi named Gamaliel, under whom Saul mastered Jewish history, the Psalms and the works of the prophets. His education would continue for five or six years as Saul learned such things as dissecting Scripture. It was during this time that he developed a question-and-answer style known in ancient times as “diatribe.” This method of articulation helped rabbis debate the finer points of Jewish law to either defend or prosecute those who broke the law. Saul went on to become a lawyer, and all signs pointed to his becoming a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court of 71 men who ruled over Jewish life and religion. Saul was zealous for his faith, and this faith did not allow for compromise. It is this zeal that led Saul down the path of religious extremism.

Because of his extremism Saul might have been present at the trial of Stephen. He was present for his stoning and death and he held the garments of those who did the stoning (Acts 7:58). In Acts 5:27-42, Peter delivered his defense of the gospel and of Jesus in front of the Sanhedrin, which Saul heard. Gamaliel was also present and delivered a message to calm the council and prevent them from stoning Peter. From that moment on, Saul became even more determined to eradicate Christians as he watched the Sanhedrin flog Peter and the others. Saul became more ruthless in his pursuit of Christians as he **believed he was doing it in the name of God**. Arguably, there is no one more frightening or more vicious than a religious terrorist, especially when he believes that he is doing the will of the Lord by killing innocent people. This is exactly what Saul of Tarsus was: a religious terrorist. Acts 8:3 states, “He began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.”¹

Saul discovered that he was a sinner in danger of God’s judgement.

“Saul was out to arrest others when the Lord arrested him.” ~ **Warren Wiersbe**

Take your actions, words and life and look into the Word of God. Is something off?
Acknowledge it, confess it and make it right.

Allow the Word of God and “true friends” to speak God’s Truth into your life.

2) No one is too far gone (including yourself), so don’t give up on anyone!

Every life has value – God gave us life so He values our life.

Remember, Saul oversaw the killing of many Christians, potentially into the thousands and God saved him.

¹ www.gotquestions.org

Never throw anyone away; God is not done with us. Only God knows if a person will yield to Him or to the enemy, we don't, so we pray, love and speak the truth.

If you think you are too far gone, or maybe your spouse, child, parent or friend is, remember Saul/Paul.

Remember Hebrews 3:15, *"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

3) It may take more than we want for God to get our attention.

What is God trying to get your attention about? Are you listening? Are you seeking to walk your own way?

4) God does the work; He is in the life changing business.

The value of one life is great.

"The Lord had a special work for Saul to do (Acts 26:16–18). The Hebrew of the Hebrews would become the apostle to the Gentiles; the persecutor would become a preacher; and the legalistic Pharisee would become the great proclaimer of the grace of God. Up to now, Saul had been like a wild animal, fighting against the goads, but now he would become a vessel of honor, the Lord's "tool," to preach the gospel in the regions beyond. What a transformation.

Finally, we must never underestimate the value of one person brought to Christ. Peter was ministering to thousands in Jerusalem, and Philip had seen a great harvest among the Samaritan people, but Ananias was sent to only one man. Yet what a man! Saul of Tarsus became Paul the apostle, and his life and ministry have influenced people and nations ever since. Even secular historians confess that Paul is one of the significant figures in world history. On April 21, 1855, Edward Kimball led one of the young men in his Sunday school to faith in Christ. Little did he realize that Dwight L. Moody would one day become the world's leading evangelist. The ministry of Norman B. Harrison in an obscure Bible conference was used of God to bring Theodore Epp to faith in Christ, and God used Theodore Epp to build the Back to the Bible ministry around the world. Our task is to lead men and women to Christ; God's task is to use them for His glory; and every person is important to God." ~ **Warren Wiersbe**

Prayer Focus:

- I would ask God to search my heart, is there any willful sin in in my life and ask the Lord to show me is there something I am doing that I need to stop?
- That I would give up on no one because God hasn't given up on me.
- Be reminded that God is in the life changing business.