

A Dramatic Conversion
April 20, 2008
Acts 9:1-19

We all know this lesson is about the conversion of Saul the zealous Jew to Paul the committed Christian.

Sometimes dramatic choices have to be made. What are some examples of big, life-altering decisions we're asked and required to make? Yogi Berra said: "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Which of the following choices or 'forks in the road' were hard for you to make?

1. Life of a carefree single the life of a family person
2. small town life..... big city living
3. following my dreams..... following a practical career
4. doing it 'my way' doing it the Lord's way

Saul was faced with a significant choice. What was he leaving? What would make choosing this particular change very difficult? Have you had to make any kind of choice like this?

Let's study Paul and apply his choice to our situation. These passages are all from Acts.

1. 9:1-6. What answers are you asking of Jesus today? What is He asking of you?
2. 9:7-9. In what ways are you 'blind' right now? To what do you think God want you to open your eyes?
3. 9:10-15. Ananias was fearful of Paul. How are you letting fear come between you and others who are your brothers and sisters in Christ?
4. 9:32-35. In what ways are you 'paralyzed'—not acting when you need to act? What needs to happen for you to be 'healed'?
5. 9:36-39. If you were to die, what would friends and family remember most about you? Would you be remembered as you would want to be, or in a manner different from your hopes?
6. 9:40. What is dead inside you that needs to be brought to life? How could faith help make you well?
7. 9:41. Whom do you need to 'help to their feet' right now?

What was Saul's mission in life? What motivated him to try to stop this new 'way'?

In what ways can Saul's conversion be important to us today? What gave Saul the power to change?

In your coming to Christ, who was the Ananias that God used to turn you around?

Paul's witness was particularly powerful in light of the dramatic change in his life. Can our witness be powerful, even if our conversion was more another step along the same path, rather than a complete reversal of course?

What is our mission as a Christian? What is our mission as a church, the body of Christ in this community?

Action steps:

1. Share your faith with at least one person you have previously seen as distant or as a threat.
2. “Adopt” a new Christian in our church. Establish a new relationship of mutual support and spiritual growth. Challenge each other, be accountable to each other, and be an encourager.
3. Do you need an *Ananias* to help you? How would you go about finding someone to call you to live more closely on God’s agenda for your life?

Next week’s lesson: The Community Grows -- Acts Chapter 10