

Acts 9, Part 2  
September 13, 2020  
Pastor Eva

### **Acts 9 New International Version**

**9** Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

<sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

<sup>10</sup> In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. <sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

<sup>13</sup> "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in

Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

<sup>17</sup> Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

<sup>23</sup> After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. <sup>25</sup> But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

<sup>26</sup> When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup> He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews,<sup>[a]</sup> but they tried to kill him. <sup>30</sup> When the

believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

<sup>31</sup> Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

<sup>32</sup> As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. <sup>33</sup> There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. <sup>34</sup> "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. <sup>35</sup> All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

<sup>36</sup> In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. <sup>37</sup> About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. <sup>38</sup> Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

<sup>39</sup> Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

<sup>40</sup> Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. <sup>41</sup> He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. <sup>42</sup> This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. <sup>43</sup> Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

## Acts Chapter 9 – Part 2

### Review of Part 1:

We are reintroduced to Saul:

- Saul was a significant adversary to the early believers.
- Initially introduced in Acts 7 approving the stoning of Stephen.
- Making murderous threats; Seeking out believers to imprison
- On his way to Damascus, which was a key city commercial hub

Saul was zealous, a Jew well versed in the law, and passionately wrong about Jesus until he got a revelation.

God knows how to get our attention.

- The risen Jesus appeared to Saul (lights, voice)
- Saul was blind for three days
- When Saul persecuted the church, he was persecuting Jesus

God moves in ways that are beyond our expectations, beyond our comprehension and imagination. His word accomplishes the purposes for which it was sent.

Response to revealed truth differentiates the sincere from the sinister.

Saul's response upon learning that he was dramatically wrong:

- Obedience – Followed instruction: Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.
- Humility – led by the hand into Damascus
- Fasting – did not eat or drink for three days.
- Prayer

Jesus fulfilled the old testament scriptures– everything fits like a puzzle.

### Acts 9: 10-19 – Part 2

- The Lord speaks to a disciple named Ananias – Go to Straight Street – ask for a man named Saul from Tarsus – who is praying.
- Ananias gives God “the 411” on Saul

- The Lord is gracious and firm in his reply. The Lord has it all under control - God has given Saul a vision of a man named Ananias coming to lay hands on him so that he can see again. Commands Ananias to “Go!” Saul is God’s chosen instrument “I will show him how much he will have to suffer in my Name”
- At a critical moment, God called Ananias to play a key role, sending him so that Saul would:
  - receive healing from blindness
  - receive the Holy Spirit
- Scales fell from Saul’s eyes
- Saul was baptized – public declaration of faith in Jesus

#### Reflections for us:

- Trust in God
  - God can turn around dire situations
  - God can reach and choose what appear to be the least likely candidates to fulfill his purposes
- Receptivity to God’s voice
- Staying in step with the Spirit Galatians 5:25 New International Version

<sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

- We need a clear vision, renewed perspectives spiritually and relationally (Scales removed)

Find out what pleases the Lord. Ask God what his will is for you. Ephesians 5:-8-10; New International Version

<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord.

- We’re set on a path, in a direction
- We are capable of going about our day and responding to the call of loved ones. We can also relax and respond to the Lord’s call.

We are instruments / vessels for God’s use Acts 9:15 <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Vessels is a clearer word here than instruments. Vessels are set aside for God's use.

We are clay in God's hands molded and shaped by Him Isaiah 64:8

<sup>8</sup>Yet you, LORD, are our Father.

We are the clay, you are the potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

Clay has to be soft and pliable to be shaped

Clay has to be pushed, pulled and stretched to be shaped

Vessels are filled up and poured out

Be filled with the Spirit

Acts 2:17

New International Version

<sup>17</sup> "In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams.

Ephesians 5: 18-19

New International Version

<sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions:

Discuss what it means to be pliable like clay in God's hands

Discuss ways that the Lord has shaped you or ways you believe he is shaping you as a vessel for his use.

Discuss your experiences of hearing God's voice

Discuss ways that God has done powerful, unexpected things in your life

Discuss what you are asking God to transform in your environment