

Week 2 The Conversion Acts 9:1-19

God wants your attention 2 Corinthians 5:17

Distraction is a way of life for many. Cell phones, televisions, and especially Facebook are things that can really distract us from being productive and sticking to the task. Many a near collision while driving can be avoided if people were not on cell phones. We need to pay attention to what we are tasked to do or are doing. If not, something of significance may be required to get our attention. In the case of Saul, he was playing for the wrong team. God had other things in mind for him. He will need a major incident in his life to get his attention.

Read Acts, Chapter 9. We find the church growing despite the persecution. Saul was at the center of the persecution. He was relentless and his actions did cause many to go into hiding. People were afraid of admitting they were a follower of Jesus Christ.

We read that Saul sought confirmation to do what he did from the high priest in Jerusalem. He took authorization letters as he wanted to go to Syria to hunt down the people who were part of the Way. The Way is mentioned as the name for the early church. People who believed in Jesus were now part of this group.

On his way to Damascus, Saul was blinded by a flash from heaven and he fell to the ground. He heard a voice:

"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you Lord?" Saul asked. "I am the Jesus whom you are persecuting, " He replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."
Acts 8":4-6

A conversation between Saul and Jesus took place. This will not be the last one. We can observe a few things as we read on:

- A flash of light from heaven... enough to knock Saul down.
- The men who were with him saw it, heard the sound, but could not hear the voice.
- Saul was blinded and in need of help.

If this did not get his attention, nothing would. He was knocked down and blinded. He knew he was dealing with someone powerful, yet he was not afraid. The voice was firm and yet comforting. The message was to him and not to the others. He was the leader and the one chosen by God. Saul was left helpless and in need of saving. What was going through his mind? Is this Jesus who he has been persecuting his followers be real?

Many people don't believe that God is real. They will deny the existence of him and ask for proof. On the other hand, they cannot provide proof that he does not exist. Some believe in God, but do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah. This was Saul's case. He was

so zealous for the Law that he did not have a relationship with God or understand his goodness. He did not know God's grace and mercy and his plan for man's salvation. The Bible says:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Proverbs 1:7

Saul was an educated man and did not rely on others. He will be at God's mercy now and rely on his goodness. God was about to demonstrate to him who was in control. God had already called to a believer by the name of Ananias who lived in Damascus. The irony here is that is a person who Saul was on his way to capture and imprison would be the many help him. God told Ananias:

"Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.
Acts 9:11

Ananias was afraid. He knew of Saul of Tarsus and that it was Saul's mission to persecute all who believed. Ananias trusted and obeyed God. He placed his hands on Saul. Saul's sight was restored. Saul was a new man. He learned the grace and mercy of God. He learned that Jesus is real and is the Son of Man foretold of in the Bible. He learned that God is approachable by his followers. He wanted to tell the whole world who Jesus is and what he had done for him!

At once he began approach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.
Acts 9:20

What was it like when you asked Jesus into your heart. For many, the scales fell off their eyes and they can see the world differently. The world is filled with blind people in need of help. The burden of sin's condemnation was lifted and a new life of promise was ahead. This hope is promised to all who believe.

What will it take to get your attention? Do you have to go through life failing, hurting, and unloved? God promises you a new life filled with adventure and promise. There may be hardships along the way as we will see in Saul's life, but it will be worth it when we stand before God and he tells us "well done good and faithful servant. Choose the new life. Choose the better life. Choose the eternal life with Jesus.

Memory Verse

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17