



Paul's Story

Acts 9:1-22

Pastor Dwayne Smith

F. F. Bruce says, "No single event, apart from the Christ-event itself, had proved so determinant for the course of Christian history as the conversion and commissioning of Paul."¹

I. He had knowledge.

- a. Raised in Tarsus (modern-day Turkey) by a prominent tent maker.
- b. Paul was on a path to be a ruler of the Jewish people.
- c. At the age of 13, he went to Jerusalem to be trained by Gamaliel.
- d. Now, Paul was out to make a name for himself, pursuing *and* persecuting Christians. "He hated Jesus so much that he became a violent aggressor, persecuting and killing Christians in allegiance to the God of heaven."²

II. He needed experience – He met Jesus.

- a. There is a difference in knowledge and wisdom. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight."
- b. We need more than knowledge of a father; we want to KNOW our Father.
- c. Knowledge is Important!
 - i. 2 Timothy 2:15 (AMP), "Study *and* do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling *and* skillfully teaching the word of truth."
 - ii. Jesus studied and amazed the scholars of that day (Luke 2:47).
- d. Knowledge without experience is incomplete.
 - i. Paul's defense was, "Have I not seen the Lord?...this is my defense to those who would examine me!" (1 Corinthians 9:1 & 3).
 - ii. "It is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself, and unless and until the hearers find God in personal experience they are not the better for having heard the truth. The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men [and women] to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him." (A. W. Tozer)³

¹ F.F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, pg. 75.

² Charles Swindoll, *Paul*, pg. 4.

³ A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of Man*, pg. 9.

- e. Jesus approached Paul as He did with Adam at the fall in the Garden of Eden – with a question.
 - i. “Why are you persecuting me?” Jesus knew, but Paul didn’t.
 - ii. This question changed Paul forever. “He changed His mind about God, about Jesus, about the resurrection, about those who followed Christ.” (Charles Swindoll)⁴
- f. Paul’s Blindness – His blindness revealed His spiritual condition.

III. He needed a friend – Ananias.

- a. This is the way of Jesus: He befriended us, saying, “I call you friends...you did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear good fruit” (John 15:15, 16).
- b. Here is what Ananias needed to do in order to be Paul’s friend.
 - i. Hear God – this is our struggle.
 - 1. John 10:27, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”
 - 2. This is the part of the message that we often back away from with people.
 - ii. Be Bold.
 - 1. We need boldness, not deliverance – “When persecuted, the disciples didn’t pray for deliverance, they prayed for boldness.” (Don Ross)
 - a. Acts 4:29 “... speak your word with all **boldness.**”
 - b. Ephesians 6:18-20 “...that words may be given to me in opening my mouth **boldly** to proclaim the mystery of the gospel...”
 - 2. Pray for boldness!
 - iii. Obey God.
 - 1. Acts 9: 15, “But the Master said, “**Don’t argue. Go!**” (The Message)
 - 2. God brings you through it, not around it, not over it.
 - a. Going through *is* the miracle, the parting of the Red Sea.
 - b. This comes back to having a correct view of God. **When you are on God’s side, you are in the majority! When you obey Him, you are on HIS side!**
 - c. Sometimes He brings you through it to rescue someone who is trapped in the same places as you.
 - 3. We need obedience, not understanding.
 - a. There is something going on that you can’t see – GO!
 - b. What are you willing to do?

“The best apologetic is able to travel the journey with the questioner, connecting the head with the heart.” (Ravi Zacharias)⁵

⁴ F. F. Bruce. *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, pg. 31.

⁵ Ravi Zacharias, foreword in *Conversational Evangelism*, David and Norman Geisler, pg. 13.