

Acts: The Gospel Gone Viral
Lesson 18 “The Calling of Paul”

I. Introduction - We are in a series on *Acts*. We are going through the entire book and looking at how the Church was born in revival and this caused the Gospel to go viral.

A. We've also made the point that *Acts 8* was a major turning point because after Steven was martyred the church began to experience real persecution for the first time.

B. Simultaneous to Phillip going out we see God call another young man that He will use mightily. The second half of *Acts* follows this young man exclusively and we are going to begin studying him today. This is Saul of Tarsus (Paul).

II. The Calling of Paul - The goal of today is to learn how God called Paul and then learn how to practically discern God's call for our lives today.

A. Saul's Background **Acts 9:1-2**

1. Then Saul....As Phillip is going to Caesarea to preach the gospel, Saul goes to Damascus to get letters that would allow him to arrest Christians. **Evil will always try to stop good.**

2. Saul has a righteous, violent indignation to put a stop to the Way. Why?

a. He is bound in legalism. This is why he wants to bind others. ex: Man who thought we were wrong to teach on healing. He was bound, wanted to bind others.

b. He studied under the tutelage of Gamaliel *Acts 22:3-4*. Gamaliel was a Pharisee and part of the Sanhedrin. The Pharisees focused on keeping the law because they believed the reason the Jews were carried off to Babylonian captivity in the 6th century B.C. was because of sin.

c. Their motive was fear based. (Under the Old Covenant the Jews were cursed if they didn't keep the law which is what brought fear. They just didn't understand Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant and ushered in a New Covenant that revealed the grace of God.

B. Saul's Conversion **Acts 9:3 - Acts 9:9**

1. Paul fell to the ground and trembled. Why? He probably thought God was going to kill him. That's what Saul did to his enemies.

a. What we believe about God determines how we live and how we will treat others. We must change our believing to change our actions.

b. Paul really appreciated the grace of God because he didn't deserve it.

2. God had been pricking Saul's heart for some time. Most likely he was present in *Acts 5* when the apostles were on trial. God was dealing with his heart about

Jesus while he persecuted Christians. He was kicking against the call of God, which is partly why He was angry.

3. **Acts 22:9** Those who were with Saul heard a sound but didn't understand what God was saying. Without a revelation of the grace of God we won't be able to *really hear what God is saying*. What we expect of God will often determine what we are able to hear.

C. Ananias's Vision **Acts 9:10 -16**

1. God gives Ananias a vision and He is able to see Saul at a house praying.
2. Saul has a vision of man named Ananias coming to pray for Him.
3. **In the calling of God your vision and other people's visions will come together and agree. We don't have to make things fit. They just fit.**
4. *Verse 14* Ananias gives God all the reasons why him going to pray for Saul is a bad idea. We often do this because God's vision for us seems so big it would kills us if He doesn't come through we will die.
5. *Verse 15* God calls Saul to preach to Gentiles, kings, and children of Israel.

D. Saul receives his sight **Acts 9:17-18**

1. The scales (husks) fell from his eyes. This was true both naturally with his physical eyes and spiritually where he could see his call.
2. **Acts 22:10-15** God spoke through Ananias what Paul was called to do. I personally believe this confirmed things that were in Paul's heart.

III. Conclusion

A. How to discern God's call for your life?

1. God had to first change Paul's perception of God before He could reveal the specifics of the plan.
2. God spoke to Paul through another person but it bore witness with his heart. The Holy Spirit will always bear witness with our heart.
3. Your vision will coincide with the vision of the people you are called to.
4. There will be confirmation. Ananias was a confirmation of Paul's calling (others will see the call of God on your life too.)

B. Call Up Prayer Team

C. Pray Closing Prayer