

Undeniable Proof? A Changed Life!

New Life Lessons
May 23rd & 24th, 2015
Pastor Ron Salsbury

Day One – Read Acts 9:1-8.

Paul (formerly Saul, Hebrew) was going down a very different road in his life. He was dead set on trying to snuff out this troublesome group of Jewish sect members promoting a myth of a resurrected Jesus. But something happened on that road to Damascus. He met the resurrected Jesus! Notice that Jesus charges him with persecuting “me.” And, notice that Paul immediately refers to Jesus as “Lord.” And, notice that the first directive is simply to go into Damascus and he would be told what to do. Sometimes we don’t get God’s whole plan, just the next step!

Pray and ask God to guide you today. Ask him to show you the way you are to serve him today. You may not receive the “total plan,” but simply ask for the next step!

Day Two – Read Acts 9:9-16.

Can you imagine being Ananias and hearing God’s call? Saul was the *last* person he wanted to see! That was the fastest way to be taken to Jerusalem in chains! But he obeyed and his one act of obedience changed history!

Pray –Is God calling you? You may not be thinking about changing history, but as you hear his call and obey, you will! Ask him, listen, and take that first step! Ask for his help!

Day Three – Read Acts 9:17-28; 1 Peter 3:15.

Saul began to preach in the synagogues. People must have been blown away by his story! There’s no proof more powerful than a changed life! What difference has Christ made in your life? When’s the last time you shared your story with someone?

Pray - Ask God to help you “be ready and prepared” to share you story and why you have hope in Jesus! Who knows, you just may change history like Paul did!

“Undeniable: What Even Skeptics Believe”

A .D. Series #8

Acts 9:1-28; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 12:2

Acts 9:1-16 (NIV) ¹ **Meanwhile**, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² 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.

³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, **"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"** ⁵ **"Who are you, Lord?"** Saul asked. **"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,"** he replied. ⁶ **"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."** ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸

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.

⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. ¹⁰ **In Damascus** there was a disciple named **Ananias**. The Lord called to him in a vision, **"Ananias!"** **"Yes, Lord,"** he answered. ¹¹ 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."** ¹² **In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."**

¹³ **"Lord,"** Ananias answered, **"I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem."** ¹⁴ **And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."** ¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, **"Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel."** ¹⁶ **I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."**

An Undeniable Difference

1. A Radically New Mission in Life

Acts 9:6 (NIV) ⁶ "Now **get up and go into the city**, and you will be told **what you must do**." Acts 9:15

Acts 9:17-19 (NIV) ¹⁷ 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.**" ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and **was baptized**, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul **spent several days with the disciples in Damascus**. Acts 22:12-21

Acts 9:20, 22 (NIV) ²⁰ At once he began to **preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God**. ²² Saul grew **more and more powerful** and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by **proving that Jesus is the Christ**. (Lowered in a basket Acts 9:23-25; Galatians 1:17-18)

Acts 9:26-28 (NIV) ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, **speaking boldly in the name of the Lord**.

2. A Total Change of Character

Acts 9:3-5a (NIV) ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ^{5a} "**Who are you, Lord?**" Saul asked.

2 Timothy 2:24-25 (NIV) ²⁴ And the Lord's servant **must not quarrel**; instead, he must be **kind to everyone, able to**

teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Those who oppose him he must **gently instruct**, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:11-16; 1 Corinthians 13; Romans 12:9-21

3. A Change in Personal Relationships

Acts 9:19b (NIV) ^{19b} Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

Acts 9:28 (NIV) ²⁸ So Saul stayed with (the apostles) and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philippians 4:1; Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 9:31

4. A Willingness to Suffer for Christ

Acts 9:23-25 (NIV) ²³ After many days had gone by, **the Jews conspired to kill him**, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night **they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him**. ²⁵ But his followers **took him by night and lowered him in a basket** through an opening in the wall. Acts 9:26-30

1 Corinthians 4:9a, 13b (NIV) ⁹ For it seems to me that God has **put us apostles on display** at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. ^{13b} Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

2 Timothy 1:8 (NIV) ⁸ Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But **join with me in suffering for the gospel**, by the power of God. 2 Corinthians 11:24-28

Philippians 3:10a (NIV) ^{10a} I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and **the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings**. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Romans 8:18 (NIV) ¹⁸ I consider that our **present sufferings** are not worth comparing with **the glory that will be revealed in us**.