

united PAUL kingdom

the Kingdom story from creation to revelation

(Acts 9:1-25)

God continues to show that the most unlikely people are those whom He has chosen for His Kingdom, and He chooses them for the purpose of spreading His Good News.

Introduction

As the church grew, so did persecution. One of the most fervent persecutors of believers was Saul, an influential religious leader.

Jesus comes to Saul



Saul was on his way to a city to capture and imprison Jesus' followers there. As he was approaching the city, a light from heaven shone down around him. "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Go to the city and wait for further instructions."

Blinded

Saul's companions had heard a voice but saw no one.

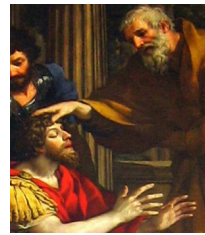


Saul was blind when he stood up. His companions led him to the city and Saul remained in a house – blind – not eating or drinking for three days.

Jesus comes to Ananias

There was a believer in the town called Ananias. Jesus came in a vision and told him to go to the house where Saul was to lay hands on him and heal him. Ananias protests that Saul persecutes believers. Jesus says, "Go! Saul is My chosen instrument to take My message to My people, to kings and to the entire world."

Ananias comes to Saul



Ananias obeyed God and went to Saul. "Brother, Jesus has sent me to you ..." Ananias lay hands on him and Saul was healed. Saul got up and was baptised to show that he had turned to God.

Saul stays on

Saul stayed and began speaking in the local places of worship, claiming that Jesus is the Son of God and Promised King. Some people became angry and wanted to kill him.

Saul's escape

Saul's friends let him down over the side of the city wall in a basket during the night. Eventually, Saul went back to his hometown and stayed there until God called him to the next place.



Weekly Meditation and Reflection

Below are some questions and further reading if you would like some extra food for thought on this story. Some may find it helpful to journal the answers, and others may simply want to read and pray through them.

1. Saul met Jesus. But for three days, he was physically blinded and in such shock that he didn't eat or drink anything. At some point, his circumstances probably contributed to his responding to God's call in humility and repentance. Have you ever had such a jolt as this that you have been humbled? Were you able to listen to God speaking? If you've gone through something like this, spend some time remembering it and thanking God for it. If you are going through something like this now, ask God to open your eyes spiritually to see how you need to respond to Him.
2. Has God ever asked you to do something for Him that just didn't make sense or even seemed dangerous? How have you responded? How does it compare with how Ananias responded?
3. Have you ever felt like you don't know what your value is in God's Kingdom? Consider this: after this story we never hear about Ananias again. Yet the role he played when he obeyed God, accepted Saul like a "brother" and prayed for him was very significant not only for Saul's life, but for the lives of the many that Saul would touch. Saul was given a seemingly large role. He immediately began fulfilling it, but soon went to his

hometown and "disappeared" for a while. You may be in that stage, waiting for God to fulfil His promises to you. In any case, you never know how your obedience will affect others. Spend some time asking God what it is that He wants you to obey for the sake of His Kingdom.

Meditate on the following passages:

1. Acts 22:1-21
2. Acts 26:12-18

Paul tells his story in these passages, and it is so powerful that people respond strongly to it. What's your story?