

Jesus, Radically Changing Lives

Acts 9:8-22

Introduction:

1. We learned last week that one of the most significant events in the Bible is the salvation and conversion of Saul of Tarsus (better known as the apostle Paul).
2. Paul was a blaspheming Christ-rejecter on his way to Damascus to arrest believers. On the road to Damascus he had a face-to-face encounter with the risen Savior, Jesus! Paul was the chief enemy of Christ, but that day he became a believer.
3. Let me tell you, Paul was a changed man! This blasphemer of Christ was now preaching Christ to anybody who would listen, and others were amazed by the change. vs. 20-21
4. When a person opens up his heart to Christ, and His Spirit comes to live within, there is always a change. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philemon 10-11; Mark 5:15
5. Paul later wrote that his salvation was a pattern to all those after him who would believe on Christ (1 Timothy 1:16). This is great news! What Christ did for Paul He can do for you and me today! Christ is still radically changing lives.
6. No person is beyond the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and no person is beyond the life-changing power of Jesus Christ.
7. Every person can have his or her life radically changed by Jesus Christ. Paul did a complete 180, and Christ is still doing this for people today. Jesus Christ can give you:

A true longing to talk to God

1. After Christ appeared to Paul, and Paul believed on Christ, Paul got up from the earth, but he was blinded (vs. 8). He was physically blind, but now he had spiritual vision. vs. 9
 - They led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.
 - There was the arrogant, obnoxious, self-righteous, Pharisaical, Christ-rejecter (Saul of Tarsus), now a saved man, but sitting in a stranger's house for three days, completely blind, with no food or drink. What would he do for those three days?
2. Christ then commissioned a disciple by the name of Ananias to go to Paul and give him instruction (vs. 10-11). What was Paul doing according to the end of verse 11? *"For behold [surprise, surprise!], he prayeth."*
3. Paul was not known as a praying man before he came to know Christ. He was a self-righteous, religious man. So, I'm sure he repeated memorized prayers. But, with all his religion, he did not know Christ and did not truly know God.
 - There was no relationship. Therefore there was no true, sincere, prayer.
4. But once Paul came to know the saving love and power of Jesus Christ, it changed him completely. This once proud man now humbled himself in prayer. He used to feel very comfortable cursing, swearing, and blaspheming Christ. Now he prayed to Him!

- Paul became known as a man of prayer. One verse says that Paul was praying exceedingly night and day. 1 Thessalonians 3:10
5. His first prayer was, “*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*” This is a great place to begin your Christian life. Begin reading your Bible and asking yourself as you read, “Jesus, what do you want me to do? How do you want me to live? What areas of my life do You want to change?”
 - As you pray sincerely, the Lord will answer your prayer and change your life!

A sincere desire to obey God

1. This man, Saul of Tarsus, was sitting helpless among the people he came to persecute, arrest, and kill. He was sitting there with letters in his pocket that commissioned him to arrest and jail believers in Christ. He must have been thinking, “What do I do now?”
2. This man, who was leading the rebellion against Christ, sat humbly waiting for instruction. God sent Paul instruction through a man named Ananias, a little-known disciple that is only mentioned this one time in all of Scripture. vs. 10-16
3. Yet Paul submitted to him and obeyed diligently all that Ananias told him. vs. 17-18
4. Do you know what we see in Paul after his salvation? We see a pattern of obedience to God. Paul was a rebel, but now he had a heart to obey Christ.
 - Jesus told him, “*Go into the city and wait.*” Paul obeyed and sat there patiently, waiting for three days while blind. vs. 6-8
 - Jesus said to Paul in a vision, “A man named Ananias will come, and you do what he says.” Again, Paul obeyed. vs. 10-12, 17
 - Ananias told Paul he needed to be baptized (22:16). This was absolutely crucial for a Jew in Israel’s kingdom program. It secluded them from the rebellion against Christ and identified them with the believing remnant of Israel. Again, Paul obeyed.
 - Ananias said, “Paul, you are to be a witness for Christ to others” (Acts 22:15). Paul obeyed. vs. 20
5. When people become Christians they are not suddenly sinless and perfect, but there should be a new **desire** to obey God. Romans 6:17-22
 - **Illustration:** Kids’ Song – “There’s Been a Great Change”

A burden to see other lives changed

1. Paul was a changed man. He knew that it was Jesus Christ that had changed Him. Nobody else could have changed him the way Christ did.
2. Do you know what we see in Paul right away? He had a desire for others to come to Christ. He wanted others to know the truth about Jesus. He wanted them to know that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. vs. 20
3. He wanted the Jews to know that the one they crucified was, in fact, the very Christ, the Messiah they had been waiting on for centuries. vs. 22
4. It wasn’t smooth sailing for Paul once he began to witness to others of Christ.

- Some people were amazed and didn't know how to take it. "What has gotten into this guy? Has he gone crazy?" vs. 21
 - Others were simply hopping mad and angry. "He's a traitor!" vs. 23
5. Once a person experiences the joy of salvation, it is only natural to have a burden for others to come to Christ (friends, family, etc.). We may feel scared or apprehensive but, nevertheless, the desire is there to see others come to Christ.
 6. But let me warn you, you may be misunderstood or even resented by those to whom you try to witness. But don't let this discourage you. Paul went through the same problems. **Illustration:** Tim Tebow (Some are confused; some simply hate him.)
 7. But here is the positive side of this: Many people listened to Paul and had their lives changed like Paul did. Paul led multitudes of people to Christ.

In Conclusion:

1. What a change Jesus makes! Paul truly was a changed man. 1 Timothy 1:13-15
2. How about you? Can you point to a time when Jesus changed your life?
3. Christ not only changed Paul, He will save you and change you too. He came into the world to save and rescue sinners from a wasted life of sin. He will give your life new meaning and new joy like you have never known before.
4. If you have never trusted Christ and believed on Him, today is the day.