

LG 9: Saul's conversion Acts 9:1-22

Objectives: We want to see and experience God's overflowing grace and unlimited patience through the story of Saul's conversion. We want to act by receiving His grace and by introducing others to Jesus.

Getting to Know You (15 minutes)

Who is the most outspoken critic of Christianity that you know?

Launch

At the end of chapter 7 we have the story of the first Christian killed for proclaiming Jesus. Tonight we are going to look at an interaction between Jesus and His most outspoken critic in the book of Acts. See also 22:1-11 and 26:12-18.

Explore

Read Acts 8:1-3 and 9:1-2

Describe Saul before he meets Jesus.

(besides persecuting Christians, he was also a man who relied on his own works and activities for salvation)

If you met the Saul of Acts 9:1-2, would you have said he was a guy ready to become a Christ follower?

Have someone describe Paul at the end of his life. (this is a great chance to involve someone in your group who is not a leader. You will want to include that he was one of the great leaders of the church, he wrote 13 books of the Bible and eventually was killed for his faith in Jesus.)

We will take the rest of the time to look at what happened to help "convert" Saul from a Christian hating man to Paul--one of the great leaders of the church.

Read 9:3-22

What happened in this passage to change Saul from a hater? (he came face to face with the living untamed Christ)

Surely Saul knew of Jesus before, what was different this time? (He saw Jesus for who He truly is, he is not a small God that can be controlled... Saw and experienced His power. He saw that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead)

How did Saul respond? (He surrendered his will and followed Jesus. He quit trying to get Jesus to fit into his plan and followed Jesus for who He was)

What was the role of the other disciples?

What did Jesus tell Ananias about Saul?

Saul was made an apostle and given a major commission. Even though you may not have

such a major call on our life, do you think Jesus has a plan for your life? What do you think it is?

Paul's is an extraordinary interaction with Jesus. Since most people never have something like this happen it is easy to dismiss it as irrelevant. It is recorded 3 times in Acts, so it must be important.

What can we learn from this story?

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17

In verse 16 Paul states that he received mercy for those that were to believe in Jesus for eternal life. If you are a follower of Jesus or you will become a follower of Jesus, God records this story for you!

What do you think he wants you to learn from this story? (That no one is too far from receiving God's overflowing grace; that God has great patience with people, that God loves to give mercy to sinners)

- **How does this story teach us about God's "perfect patience"?** (Saul life of unbelief and rebellion was direct persecution of Jesus, yet Jesus gave him grace, faith and love)

Apply

- **What in your life do you think it "too far" for Jesus to forgive?**
- **Who in your life do you think "is too far from God"? Who have you written off because they do not seem ready to meet Jesus?**
- **Who would benefit from learning about God's great patience, mercy, love and grace?**
- **What role can you play in bringing your friends face to face with the real Jesus of the Bible?**
- **Pray by name for people that you want to meet the real Jesus of the Bible.**

Announcements (5 minutes)

