

WARM-UP

- Do you like enemies-to-friends stories? What do you think makes them effective?
- Think about a friend that you have more differences than similarities with. How did you become friends?
- Have you recently finished an important yet crucial task that you were reluctant to complete? How did you initially respond and how did you accomplish it?

WORD *¹But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. **ACTS 9:1-3***

(Read also **ACTS 9:4-22.**)

Every salvation story is a miracle of God's grace, both for the one who hears the gospel and the one God uses to share it. Let us look at this story from both perspectives. Saul is one whom many would consider as impossible to reach. He consistently persecuted followers of Christ. On the other hand, we have Ananias, an ordinary disciple, who was given a monumental task to reach out to Saul, the persecutor. Today, let's look at lessons we can glean from this story on the miracle of salvation through the gospel.

1 | The gospel is for all kinds of people.

¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." **ACTS 9:13-14**

(Read also **ACTS 9:20-22.**)

This is proof of how far the grace and goodness of God goes. "Lord, even this person?" We would think that God would be loving to many, but to someone like Saul? He was described as someone who breathed *evil*. It's easy to count someone like him out. But God can move in places and nations that we feel are beyond our reach and in the hearts of people that we think are beyond transforming. If God can move in someone like Saul (later called Paul), how might He be working in the people or places you least expect?

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2 | God can use all kinds of people.

¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." . . . ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." **ACTS 9:10, 15-16**

(Read also **ACTS 9:20-22.**)

We're often tempted to think that reaching out to hard hearts is reserved for the most experienced believers. Ananias was

described as someone who loved and obeyed Jesus. He had reservations and questions, but ultimately he trusted God and obeyed. When we share about God with others, the results don't drive us. It's God's love for us that compels us to do so. But God also encouraged Ananias saying that his obedience would lead to the salvation of many, including the Gentiles, because God had graciously chosen Saul for a specific mission and purpose in His redemptive plan. Does God consider anyone insignificant or unworthy to be used by Him (1 Corinthians 1:27–28)?

Each salvation story is a miracle on both sides. Each time we share the gospel is important, whatever the result. As we preach the gospel, more people are reached and more people in turn will share the gospel to those around them. This ripple effect is what we're hoping to see until eternity. As we reach people of all kinds with the gospel, all kinds of people will reach others with the gospel and more will know Christ and be transformed by Him.

APPLICATION

- How do you think you can see God moving in people or situations around you, even where it seems unlikely?
- Like Ananias, how might God be inviting you to step into someone else's story, even if you feel unsure or unqualified? What fears or hesitations might be holding you back from preaching the gospel, and how could you respond in faith?
- Who do you believe God is leading you to share your testimony with? Commit to meet with him or her this week and have a conversation about your faith.

PRAYER

- Let us thank God for the miracle of salvation we've received through Jesus Christ. As a community, ask Him to open our eyes and soften our hearts toward people and situations we might quietly label as unreachable.
- Pray that we would have courage like Ananias—the kind that says yes even when we feel unsure, underqualified, or out of our depth. As we walk this out together, may the Holy Spirit teach us to trust that God works through ordinary people.
- Ask God to give us hearts that share His love without being obsessed with outcomes. May we learn, as a people, to recognize each moment as a sacred opportunity to reflect Christ and speak the gospel into the lives around us.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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