

The Ministry of Apostle Paul Series2

May 12, 2019

“From Saul the Devout Jew to Paul the Devout Apostle” Continued

Scripture Text: Acts 9:12-19 NKJV *12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” 13 Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children^{pl} of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” 17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord^{al} Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. 19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.*

VERSE 12 *And in a vision, he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”*

God speaks to us in many different ways such as signs, wonders, nature (Moses at the Burning Bush), animals (Donkey to Balaam), dreams, visions and through people. Visions can occur when you are praying as Saul prayed during the three days of his blindness. His blindness allowed him to experience the super natural gift of healing by the laying on of hands. God was showing him that he had no power or authority to rectify his condition. He was extended the hand of mercy by the very people whom he had received authority to punish. The mercy of God is from generation to generation. Psalms 145:8-9 NKJV "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are all over His works."

VERSE 13 *Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.*

The word about Saul spread across the land; Ananias's fears and concerns were raised about the reputation of Saul of Tarsus. He had legitimate reasons to be concerned. Saul's history and recent authority to squash believers who were members of the WAY was his apprehension. We may be reluctant to walk by faith with a person who has a notorious reputation. The natural inclination is to get as far away from that individual because you don't want other people judging you, especially from the household of faith.

But God spoke and when God speaks, we should stop the PRESSES and give the Lord the right of way in our hearts. Ananias' concern was Saul's reputation but it wasn't God's concern. Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV 8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.* 9 *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

We must resist the temptation to think that we can determine how God is going to react because of our understanding to a situation.

VERSE 14 *And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."*

I can hear the grumbling in Ananias' spirit {Do you know what you are asking me do to? This doesn't make sense!} We wonder why God does such things that don't make sense to us. He is not bound to our human reasoning and He should not be because He is SOVEREIGN. God may orchestrate events in our lives and that we don't understand. So we ask, WHY! The bottom line is every child of God walks by faith in God's wisdom and ability not human reasoning. Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV 5 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;* 6 *In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

VERSE 15 *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children^{pl} of Israel.*

God had preordained Saul from his birth to be an apostle and to build His church throughout the world. Christ had commissioned the disciples to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature through the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 NKJV *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the*

end of the earth.” Without the Holy Spirit’s presence within, there is no witness to an unbelieving world.

God chose Saul because he was a relentless warrior for the truth. He would not be deterred from his singular mission to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saul was Jewish, a Roman Citizen, very intelligent and an articulate communicator. He was educated by Rabbi Gamaliel a Jewish Scholar and as a student Saul was fluent in the Greek language and Greek culture. Upon his conversion, **He would willingly sacrifice himself and endured great suffering and persecution for the cause of his Savior.** God saw him as the perfect candidate while others saw him as a murderer of God’s people and His church.

Many people and nations would come into the faith because of his love and passion for the **Truth**. Others may not think that you are God’s choice. Everything that has happened and will happen in your life is to lead you to discover and operate in God’s purpose for your life!

VERSE 16 *For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”*

The Lord reminded Ananias that He would show Saul how much he would have to suffer for his obedience to the Gospel. Sometimes people want to put their point of view in your mind which usually causes a person not to be willing to follow the Lord all the way.

Saul would later write as Apostle Paul in II Timothy 3:12 NKJV *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.* I would rather suffer for doing the right thing and pleasing the Lord than to suffer because I refuse to accept God’s provision for my life.

VERSE 17 *And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

Ananias’ obedience to God, caused Saul’s transformation from persecutor to be called a Christian Brother was miraculous. Ananias’ apprehension of Saul was turned to love and support because of the Lord’s directive. The Holy Spirit came upon Saul by the laying on of hands. The healing that followed was not merely physical but spiritual by changing his heart toward believing Jews and Gentiles. Four

days earlier was an enemy filled with hatred and retribution. On that day he became a man filled with the Holy Spirit of God's wisdom and grace. II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*

VERSE 18 *Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.*

Through Ananias' obedience Saul's healing and vision became his reality. Scales like those of a fish fell from his eyes and he could see again. Who could resist the will of God after such a demonstration of the power of God in recovering his sight! Saul believed and was gladly baptized in spirit and water.

VERSE 19 *So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.*

After his three days of consecration in prayer and fasting, He eat and fellowshiped with the disciples and fellow believers. Only one can imagine the testimonies others shared about the things that they had witnessed concerning the Lord. Three days of blindness, three days of fasting and finally three days of hearing the words of Jesus mad a great impact on Saul. **God was glorified and the church edified!**

APPLICATIONS:

With the gifts that you have been given, God will take you to places where you've never been, to a people you never knew.

Never forget that God is ultimately in charge and His will is to be done.