



## Sermon Text: Acts 9:1-19

Sermon Date: December 10, 2017

In our text we see one of the most important conversions in church history. So important is the conversion of Saul that Luke records it three different times in the book of Acts. We walked through the text in three stages and then concluded by seeing three takeaways.

### THE HATRED OF SAUL

Luke emphasizes that the man converted on the road to Damascus was not a tender-hearted, conscience-stricken seeker. He was still breathing threats and murder, escalating in his persecution of the church. Like a wild beast snorting in rage, Saul charges to Damascus in order to devour the church there. And yet, God saves him.

### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST

Luke's account in Acts 9 stresses Christ's sovereignty in saving Saul. John Stott says, "Saul did not 'decide for Christ,' as we might say. On the contrary, he was persecuting Christ. It was rather Christ who decided for him and intervened in his life." As Saul approaches Damascus, Christ appears to him in a vision brighter than the sun. Blinded and blown over, Saul falls prostrate at the feet of his conqueror. All at once, Saul's religious certainties are shattered as he discovers that Jesus is alive and reigning in heaven. One second Saul is the hunter, powerful and in charge. And the next moment, he is blinded and broken in the dust. Stott says, "Christ had interrupted his headlong career of persecution and had turned him around to face in the opposite direction."

### THE COURAGE OF ANANIAS

God commissions a Christian in Damascus to go to Saul and pray for him to receive his sight. Although it would have seemed like a death sentence, Ananias courageously obeys. He welcomes Saul as a brother in Christ and leads him into the fellowship of the church.

### THREE AWESOME TAKEAWAYS

1. **A great incentive to evangelize.** Saul's conversion shows us that God can save anybody. No one is too far gone. Therefore, we should not decide who we think is savable, but instead faithfully bear witness to Christ.
2. **A great invitation to "bad" sinners.** Saul holds himself up as an example of God's great mercy in salvation. While you may feel beyond God's reach, no sinner is. There is no sin that is bigger than the payment of the Cross and the forgiveness that can be found there.
3. **A great assurance of God's love.** Often we think that God's love for us is in some part a response to something lovely in us. As a result, our assurance of God's love rises and falls on how lovely we feel. Knowing this, God gives us Acts 9 so that we can see the greatness of God's love for wicked, hostile sinners (Romans 5:6-10). God saved Saul—and us too—even in the raging of our sin. Knowing that he has loved us at our lowest, we can be certain that we can never lose his love.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Do you dismiss some people as a "hopeless" case—too hardened against God to be saved? How does Saul's conversion challenge you to bear witness to Christ before every person?
3. Do you struggle to *really* believe the really bad things Scripture says about you (Romans 5:6-10)? Why can you only see the true picture of God's love when viewed against the dark background of our sinfulness?