

Bethany Church Small Groups
Empowered for Jesus' Mission
Road to Redemption – Acts 9:1-31

As we have seen in Acts 1-8, the gospel is now progressing with ever-increasing strength and diversity. Until chapter 7, the church had been mostly contained in Jerusalem. But after Stephen's martyrdom the church was forced to scatter. It is at the scene of Stephen's martyrdom that we are introduced to a new character, Saul. Saul was a law-abiding, prominent Jewish man who was present and approving at Stephen's stoning. Chapter 8 begins with the fact that "Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison." We see here that Saul had quickly become the Church's greatest enemy.

1. What did you hear in the sermon that was surprising, challenging, or useful?
2. Read again Acts 9, and share any highlights from your sermon notes.

Sermon Points

- (1) Jesus **redeems** our Past
(2) Jesus **empowers** our present and
We should (3) take a **risk** for Jesus

3. Saul's conversion is recorded for us in three places in Acts. Read 9:3-9, 22:6-11 and 26:12-18. What elements do you learn from each account?
4. Read Philippians 3:3-12. How had Paul's view of himself and of Christ changed?
5. Saul sincerely believed that he was serving God before he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. How do you respond to someone who says, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere?"
6. Have you ever found yourself thinking that you were serving God sincerely, only to discover that your sincerity was misplaced?
7. "I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." (9:16) What did this involve for Paul? (2 Corinthians 11:21-29)
8. What did you learn about Ananias from 22:12?
 - a. Read Acts 9:10-19. In what ways can you personally identify with Ananias and the decisions he faced?

- b. Have you faced a similar request of God—one that was not a seemingly easy decision? Describe.
 - c. Like Ananias, have you ever tried to help God with the facts (as if he did not already know them)?
 - d. If the Lord had given you specific instructions to go visit Saul (as in 9:11-12) would you have obeyed?
9. When Saul finally returns to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, he was at first rejected by them (9:26). Why do you think they didn't immediately accept Saul?
- a. How do you think you would have responded to Saul asking to be part of your group? Why?
10. In what way is Paul's conversion a motivation for us to come to Christ?
(1 Timothy 1:12-16)
11. How does this event give us confidence in Christ's control over the advance of the gospel, as well as courage to be witnesses for him? (See Matthew 28:20; Romans 1:16)