

## Telling Your Story pt2

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Telling Your Story / Acts 22:6–16; Acts 9:3–19

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All really good stories have a moment of decision- Frodo takes the ring, Luke leaves Dagobah, the Avengers decide to attempt the time heist...the list could go on.

All of our stories have that moment as well. What are we going to do with Jesus?

Now they are not as all as dramatic as Paul's but they all have the same elements, because though the methods may change, the Gospel never does.

So today, I want us to see Paul's moment, and see ourselves in it- without the scales of course!

Turn with me to [Acts 22:6-16](#).

I don't want you to miss this...Paul wasn't going on a nice journey for fun. He was going to fulfill the mission we talked about last week. Christians were in his sights.

Luke's account in [Acts 9](#) matches Paul's perfectly. All of a sudden, the Person who Paul hates the most is revealing Himself to Paul.

So let's look at this as it happens.

First, Jesus initiates the contact. God is the initiator of salvation. We are not going to find Jesus, He finds us.

### **Acts Christ's Appearance to Paul (9:1–9)**

Paul answered, "Who are you, Lord?" **Some note that at this point Paul did not recognize Jesus as the one speaking to him and that his reference to "Lord" need not mean more than a polite "sir,"** a meaning the Greek word *kyrie* often has. But Paul did recognize the voice of a heavenly messenger and probably intended "Lord" in that sense (cf. Exod 3:13). In any event, he quickly learned who the "Lord" was: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." It would be hard to imagine how these words must have struck Paul. They were a complete refutation of all he had been. **He had persecuted Christians for their "blasphemous lie" that Jesus was risen, that he was the Lord reigning in glory. Now Paul himself beheld that same Jesus and the undeniable proof that he both lived and reigned in glory**

Why is that? We talked about it last week- our hearts are inclined towards sin, not the Savior. Without Jesus seeking us, we would never find Him, because we would never think to look.

Look at v8: -"Who are you?" - **Paul knew ABOUT Jesus, but he didn't KNOW Jesus!**

Second, our sins are against Jesus. Period. What does Jesus say to Paul in 22:7- "Why are you persecuting ME?"

**Not my people, not my church. Me. We sin against Jesus.**

### **Acts Christ's Appearance to Paul (9:1–9)**

From this point on, Paul said nothing. He was completely broken. How could he respond? He had not persecuted a band of miscreant messianists. In persecuting the church, he had persecuted the risen Lord himself. It is unlikely that the concept of the body of Christ is behind the expression here, but surely the germ of Paul's later theology of the church is. **Christ is identified with his disciples. When they suffer, he suffers**

The good news is Jesus seeks us, the bad news He is the one who we are sinning against- and [Romans 6:23](#) tells us the wages, or payment, for sin is death. We cannot fix our sins any other way. They cost us our lives.

And Jesus gives Paul a small demonstration of this payment and His power in [Acts 9:8](#)- he is struck blind. **He now has to be FULLY dependent on the mercy of God to survive- the very God who he has sinned against.**

That is the the next piece of good news...Jesus is merciful. He looks for us, not to punish us, but to set us free.

### **Acts The Call to Be Persecuted (9:10–19a)**

So powerful was that revelation that Paul was totally blind when he rose to his feet and opened his eyes. The miracle was not a punitive one, as with Elymas the magician (Acts 13:11). Rather, the picture is of Paul in his brokenness and helplessness. The radiance of his vision had blinded him. **Reduced to total powerlessness, he had to be led by others into the city. That he neither ate nor drank for three days could be an expression of penitence on Paul's part<sup>17</sup> but is more likely the result of his shock, confusion, and utter brokenness of will. The raging persecutor had been reduced to a shambles.**

Let's go over to [Acts 9](#) for the next part...

In verse 6 Paul is told to obey and he does.

**Salvation is always an obedience issue.** Will we be obedient to the call of Jesus? Will we surrender to Him?

Surrender is easy when we are weak and we are never any weaker when we realize the depth of our sin and the high cost of that sin.

That moment we realize without a Savior we are finished.

So what happens to Saul? Someone comes and tells him the good news.

Ananias is obedient to the call to share the Gospel with Paul.

### **Acts The Call to Be Persecuted (9:10–19a)**

Jesus instructed Ananias to seek out Paul. His instructions were precise, giving the exact location Paul was to be found. He was staying with a man named Judas who lived on “Straight Street.” This street can still be seen today, though somewhat farther to the north from the ancient street, and is now known as the Darb-el-Mostakim. It runs in an east-west direction, and in Paul’s day it had colonnades on both sides and large gates at both ends. One is intrigued by Jesus’ informing Ananias of Paul’s vision—a vision within a vision! **The information was necessary for Ananias to know that Paul was prepared for him. Further, it emphasized the centrality of the divine leading in the entire episode**

Church you may not get a plan like Ananias, but God will prompt you when and what to share!

Why?

Because of what we have already said- God is in charge of salvation

AND, He wants to invite us to participate in His plan to redeem people. Could Jesus have explained the Gospel to Paul? Yep.

But God wanted to use Ananias.

And Ananias wanted to please His Savior.

God uses the willing!

One other thing...

**God saves people with a plan for them.** You are not saved to sit. You are saved to serve. Look at 9:15-16.

**Acts The Former Persecutor's Witness to Christ (9:19b–22)**

Verses 15–16 comprise the heart of Ananias's vision, as the Lord outlined Paul's future role. **He was the Lord's "chosen instrument."** The expression is an unusual one and finds its closest New Testament parallels in Paul's own writings. The emphasis on Paul's being "chosen" recalls his own strong sense of the divine call, which set him apart from birth (Gal 1:15). His call was described here in terms of his bearing Jesus' name before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel

What happens when Paul receives salvation?

**Acts The Former Persecutor's Witness to Christ (9:19b–22)**

Ananias fulfilled his commission, going to Paul and laying his hands upon him as he had been instructed. Ananias's greeting is striking: "Brother Saul." He could have said this as a fellow Jew, but it was surely as a brother in Christ that Ananias greeted Paul. Something of a "conversion" had taken place in his own heart through his vision of the Lord, so that now he could receive as a fellow disciple the one whom he so shortly before had feared and distrusted

**He is restored-** the scales fall away

**He is filled-** the Holy Spirit comes into him

God restores and fills in one motion. You are equipped from the first moment you are saved.

And Paul's response is obedience- baptism

### **Acts The Former Persecutor's Witness to Christ (9:19b–22)**

Ananias told Paul that the Lord had sent him with a dual purpose, the recovery of his sight and his receipt of the Spirit. The first occurs immediately as Ananias performed the healing gesture of laying his hands upon Paul. Something “like flakes” fell from his eyes.<sup>25</sup> Paul’s receipt of the Spirit is not narrated. It did not seem to have come with Ananias’s laying his hands on Paul. Recovery of his sight followed that. Perhaps it accompanied his baptism, since the two generally are closely connected in Acts.

To be a follower of Jesus, you need a Jesus moment. It may be simple (explain mine) or dramatic, but it happens, because you do not follow Jesus by osmosis or proximity. It is personal (call to respond)

Once you are His, you follow Him- He has a plan for you and included in that plan for all of us is sharing about what He has done with others. To share the simple truth of the Gospel in a way people in our day and time can understand.

Will you be obedient to that?