

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of January 26, 2014

This Week's Focus: Saul, the persecutor of the church is converted and commissioned.

This Week's Text: Acts 9:1-19

The Lord had a special work for Saul to do. The Hebrew of the Hebrews would become the apostle to the Gentiles; the persecutor would become a preacher; and the legalistic Pharisee would become the great proclaimer of the grace of God. Up to now, Saul had been like a wild animal, fighting against the gods; but now he would become a vessel of honor, the Lord's "tool," to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond. What a transformation! —Warren Wiersbe

*I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. **1 Timothy 1:12-17***

Related Texts: Proverbs 14:12; 1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:8; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Acts 22:10, 26:14

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- How has God spoken to you regarding the sermon and/or text?
- Who was the unlikeliest person you knew who became a Christian? How did it happen?
- What is your conversion story?
- Re-read Acts 7:54-8:3. Discuss how that incident might have been the impetus of Saul's actions.

- Why do you think Saul is so fervent in his persecution of the church?

- Why does he view the church as a threat? Why are Christians called “The Way”?
- What was Paul’s understanding of God before his conversion?
- What was your understanding of God before your conversion? How did that understanding change after your conversion?
- Read John 6:44 and John 15:16. Discuss how these verses shed light on the story of Saul’s conversion.
 - How is this an encouragement to us as we live on mission?
- Put yourself in Saul’s shoes as you discuss what happens as Saul travels to Damascus?
- Discuss some of the marks that we see in our text of what it means to be converted/to become a Christian.
 - Examples: confrontation, conviction, calling, etc.
 - What changes do we see?
- What is the significance of Jesus’ statement that Saul is persecuting Him?
- In Saul’s account of his conversion experience in Acts 26:14, he mentions that Jesus said to him, “It is hard for you to kick against the goads”.
 - What could these goads have been?
 - What were the goads Jesus used on you?
- What does his neither eating nor drinking indicate? How do you think this incident changed Saul’s prayer life? What kinds of thoughts and feeling do you think Saul was experiencing during the three days mentioned in verse 9?
- What can we say about Ananias? What does Ananias calling Saul brother indicate?
- What does the Lord say about Saul? What will be Saul’s task? How costly will it be?
- How does the laying of hands and the receiving of the Spirit connect Saul’s conversion to the Day of Pentecost? What does that imply?

Gospel Celebration:

- Jesus pursues sinners like us!
- Jesus is the author, initiator and finisher of our salvation!
- The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for even the chief of sinners!

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for opportunities to witness to others concerning the person and work of Jesus with boldness and compassion.

Next Week’s Text: Acts 9:19-31