

“Outrunning One’s Notorious Past”

Acts 9:20-31, ESV

Introduction: Immediately upon his conversion, Saul began to proclaim Christ. The Sovereign Savior had so dramatically changed Saul’s life, that those who observed his new life and heard his message could not believe their own eyes and ears. Saul’s past kept getting in the way of his present mission! How do we outrun our past? While it is true that the Christian’s past is in the rearview mirror, sometimes our history chases after and catches up with us. This text gives us clues to some of the early struggles Saul’s past created for him.

Following the Text:

1). Saul Proclaimed Jesus (v. 20-22, 27).

The **location** of his preaching- the synagogues of Damascus (v. 20).

The **content** of his preaching- Jesus- “He is the Son of God” (v. 20).

The **response** of his preaching- amazement, disbelief, dismay, confusion, suspicion (v. 21-22).

Application:

2). Jews Plotted to Kill Saul (v. 23-30).

After a number of days, the Jews **plotted** to kill Saul (v. 23).

Saul’s disciples helped him **escape** by night (v. 25). How? (v. 25)

Saul heads to **Jerusalem** (after about three years being away)- to join the disciples there (v. 26).

His notorious past presents yet another **roadblock**; they were afraid of him and rejected him (v. 26).

Barnabas vouches for Saul before the apostles (v. 27).

Saul finds **acceptance** and moves about **preaching boldly** in the name of the Lord (v. 28).

Saul spoke and disputed against the Hellenists, and they sought to kill him (v. 29).

The brothers helped him to escape and sent him off to Tarsus (v. 30).

Application:

3). The Church Progressed (v. 31).

They experienced **peace** and **strength**.

They walked in the **fear** of God.

They walked in the **comfort** of the Holy Spirit.

The church **multiplied**.

Application: Oh, dear people, all around us are people with a past...some may be notorious to be sure. But, their future could be full of and directed by the saving hand of Christ. We must tell them...with words and actions.