

## **Acts: God Pursues EVERYONE**

Acts 9.1-19

### **2 Perspectives on Saul** [Philippians 3.5-6 & Acts 22.3-5]

Religious(ness)

- Pharisee, educated by Gamaliel-most respected rabbi [Harvard ed. Top of my class]
- Blameless according to the Law [if there was a rule, he followed it]

Passion

- Persecutor of The Way
- "Just because you feel strongly about something doesn't mean you are RIGHT."

God & Bad

- In the eyes of the Pharisee- He is one of the greats!!! In the eyes of the Christian- He is EVIL
- Same life- 2 perspectives

[Get rid of this guy. He is a bounty hunter out for blood]

### **An Untimely Encounter**

Confronted by Jesus

- "why are you persecuting me?" "I am Jesus"
- When anyone comes face to face with Jesus, their lives are never the same
- "In the presence of God your sins are both revealed and healed at the same time."

Forever changed by this encounter

- Saul is blind & the others are speechless
- Saul's eyes would never be the same again.

[Ananias is a little nervous]

### **A Chosen Instrument**

God had a different plan

- Not death, but NEW LIFE

God makes broken things beautiful

- He sees our brokenness and not our badness
- You may have made a mess of your life, but there is not anything that you could do to escape the Pursuing Love of God.
- "God is not after the "religious" he came for the REBELLIOUS"

*There is no SIN too Great, no PLACE too Far, and no HEART too Hard for the overwhelming Grace of God.*

## Discussion Questions:

What are some things that you are passionate about? What do you do to interact with the things you are passionate about?

Saul was a passionate man, but ultimately was passionate about the wrong thing. How have you seen someone (maybe even yourself) become passionate about something to the point that they were unable to have a civil conversation with someone that they disagreed with?

- How does one go about having a conversation with someone who has an opposite viewpoint?
- Why is it important for followers of Christ to engage their faith with their mind, and even be willing to question what they know about God?

On the road to Damascus, Saul was confronted by Jesus. How do you understand his experience of his sins being both revealed and healed at the same time?

- Why is it important for someone's sins to be revealed in order to bring about healing?
- How have you seen someone unable to be truly healed because they have held on to something?

God had a plan for Saul's life even though, in the eyes of many, he was pure evil. How does seeing a story like this give you hope for your own relationship with God?

- As you think about what you have been through in your life, what do you think God is preparing you for? (Sometimes it is easier to see that in someone else's life. So if you see that in someone in your group, don't hesitate to share.)

Read Matthew 9.12-13. How does remembering that God is after the rebellious and not the religious change how you interact with God?