

## Acts: The Early Days of Paul

Acts 9.19-31

### The Timeline

First 3 years

- Damascus conversion
- Arabia [Galatians 1.17]
- Damascus disciples & early ministry
- \*from what we can gather, much of this time was spent studying God's Word and readjusting his view of the world around him

First Opposition(s)

- Escaped Damascus in a basket
- Jerusalem Christians doubted him (Barnabas had to vouch for him)
- Syria & Cilicia (Caesarea & Tarsus) [Early Journeys]
- 'show him much he might suffer' [9.16]

### A Time to Learn

God desires your mind as well as your heart

- First 3 years devoted to theology
- Met w/ Damascus disciples... met with Peter in Jerusalem [Discipleship on purpose]
- "Sometimes you have to seek people out in order to grow spiritually"

He used what he knew & explored what he had already rejected

- Previous education- Gamillel. Pharisee. He knew the OT
- [How often do we reject a message because we think we already know what the messenger is saying?]
- The Gospel is important to study

Everything became clear

- "Son of God" OT phrase and the only place in Acts this phrase shows up
- The building blocks were there, but he just put them together with something else in mind.

### A Time to Share

His passion was met with persecution

- He could not help it. He had to share this story. [engagement story]
- The Gospel is offensive [You are NOT good enough]
- If you are truly sharing the Gospel frequently and it is not met with persecution, you may need to see if you have diluted the Gospel [Anything less than 100% is a fraud]

He Proves & Disputes

- His beliefs were founded on Truth & Logic
- You can have discussion with people you disagree with [Listen and ask questions]
- Ultimately God has to be the one to open their eyes to His Truth

He allowed God to MOVE him

- he could be frustrated that God is moving you or he could have faith for where He is moving you to.
- When God wants to move us, HE WILL MOVE US [by force or by faith]

\*Who are you investing in? [mentoring]

\*How are you pursuing knowledge? [having a mentor]

## Small Group Discussion Questions:

Who has been someone in your life that you have looked to as a mentor?

- How did they come into your life as a mentor?
- What are some things that they taught you?

How do you pursue learning about God?

- How do you go about making sure what you are studying is Truth and not opinion?
- Where do you tend to gravitate towards? [resources]

Take a look at Paul's telling of his story in Galatians 1.11-24. What sticks out to you in light of Acts 9?

- Why do you think he makes such a big deal about not consulting with anyone in Galatians 1.16-17?
- If you could spend 15 days with Paul, what would you do with him and what would you ask him?

Saul's passion for the Gospel was met with persecution mainly because the Gospel is offensive. How have you experienced the Gospel to be offensive in your own life or the life of those close to you?

- How have you seen people experience persecution around you?
- What was their response?

We were left with a challenge: Find a mentor and Be a mentor. How are you going to do both of these this week?

- Which are you going to struggle with finding someone?