

Summary

This sermon explores the dramatic conversion of Saul (later Paul) on the road to Damascus from Acts 9. The message emphasizes how God transformed Saul from a violent persecutor of Christians into the greatest missionary to the Gentiles. Pastor Jason highlights three key principles: sometimes God wounds us to wake us up from our pride and sin, faithfulness doesn't mean fearlessness but acting in faith despite fear, and God takes our mess and makes it our message. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that salvation is not earned through good works but is a gift from God, and that every person's conversion story - whether dramatic like Saul's or quiet in a church pew - is fundamentally the same: a dead person becoming alive through God's grace.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today to study Your Word and learn from the incredible story of Saul's conversion, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be humble and receptive to Your truth, even when it challenges us or makes us uncomfortable. We pray that You would speak to each person here according to their specific needs and circumstances. Give us ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts that are willing to respond to Your calling in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one thing about yourself that has changed dramatically since you were younger - maybe a hobby you used to love, a fear you overcame, or even just a food you used to hate but now enjoy?

Key Verses

1. Acts 9:3-6
2. Acts 9:15
3. James 4:6
4. 2 Corinthians 5:17
5. Ephesians 2:1-5

Questions

1. Saul was highly educated and religiously zealous, yet he was spiritually blind. How can religious knowledge or good intentions sometimes actually keep us from truly knowing God?
2. The sermon mentions that 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Can you think of a time when pride got in the way of your relationship with God or others?
3. Ananias was afraid to meet with Saul, yet he obeyed God anyway. How do you distinguish between wise caution and fear that prevents obedience to God?

4. Pastor Jason said 'faithfulness doesn't mean fearlessness.' Share about a time when you had to act in faith despite being afraid. What was the outcome?
5. God used Ananias to minister to Saul rather than healing him directly. Why do you think God often chooses to work through other people rather than acting alone?
6. The message emphasizes that 'God takes our mess and makes it our message.' How have you seen God use difficult experiences or past mistakes for good in your life or others' lives?
7. Saul's background as a Pharisee who despised Gentiles was transformed when God called him to be a missionary to the Gentiles. How might God want to use your background or experiences in unexpected ways?
8. The sermon concludes that all conversion stories are fundamentally the same - 'a dead person becoming alive.' How does this perspective change the way you view your own salvation or that of others?

Life Application

This week, identify one area of your life where pride or the need for control might be hindering your relationship with God. Spend time in prayer asking God to help you surrender this area to Him. Additionally, consider reaching out to someone you've been afraid to share your faith with or serve, trusting that God will give you the courage to be faithful even if you feel fearful.

Key Takeaways

1. Sometimes God will wound us in order to wake us up from our pride and spiritual blindness
2. Faithfulness doesn't mean being fearless - it means choosing to act in faith despite our fears
3. God takes our mess and transforms it into our message and eventually our ministry
4. Salvation is not something we earn through good works but a gift we receive from God
5. Every conversion story is fundamentally the same - a dead person becoming alive through God's grace

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the powerful example of Saul's conversion and the reminder that no one is beyond Your reach. We pray that You would help us surrender our pride and our need for control, trusting in Your perfect plan for our lives. Give us courage to be faithful even when we're afraid, and help us to see how You want to use our past experiences - both good and difficult - for Your glory. We ask that You would continue to transform us from the inside out, making us more like You each day. Help us to remember that our salvation is entirely Your gift to us, not something we've earned. Use us to reach others who need to hear about Your amazing grace. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.