

The Conversion of Paul Acts 9:1-19

Introduction:

The conversion of Paul is one of the greatest stories that we have recorded for us in the pages of the New Testament. Most of us know what happens to Paul, but for the purposes of this lesson, we will look at his conversion in detail. As we notice his conversion, we will also notice

I. Paul thought that he was doing something great for God.

- A. When Paul persecuted Christians, he thought it was pleasing God.
 - 1. Notice some occasions in Acts when we read of Paul's persecutions of the church (9:1-2).
 - a. Acts 7:58; 8:1-3
 - b. Acts 22:3-5
 - c. Acts 26:4-5, 9-12
 - 2. Paul even makes mention of his persecutions of the church later in his life.
 - a. Phil. 3:6 - concerning zeal, persecuting the church;
 - b. I Tim. 1:12-13 - And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, {13} although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.
 - 3. The persecutions of Paul are talked about in two other places in this chapter.
 - a. Ananias hesitated before he came to Paul (9:13-14).
 - b. The disciples did not immediately accept him (9:26-27).
 - 4. However, in all things, Paul thought that he was pleasing God.
 - a. Acts 23:1 - Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
 - 5. It is an interesting side note that just as Paul persecuted Christians, he is soon to be persecuted in the same manner.
- B. Paul trusted in his own feelings to discover whether he was doing something right or not.
 - 1. We cannot trust our feelings.
 - 2. Even though Paul thought he was right, he was actually wrong.

II. When Paul is taught what God truly wants him to do, he obeys Him (9:3-9).

- A. In the immediate context, Paul is told to go into the city.
 - 1. Ananias is told to come to Paul.
 - 2. Notice what Jesus tells Ananias about Paul (9:15-16).
 - 3. While it is not told to us what Ananias said in this passage, it is mentioned when Paul recounts his conversion (22:12-16).

4. Even in our text of Acts 9, Paul immediately preaches that Jesus is the Son of God (9:20).
- B. As we know from the rest of the life of Paul, he was faithful to the end.
1. Paul wrote 13 books in the New Testament.
 2. He constantly encouraged others to remain faithful to God.
 3. According to tradition, he was killed by Nero simply because he was a Christian.
- C. Paul prided himself on being an example of how to live the Christian life.
1. I Cor. 11:1 - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.
 2. Phil. 3:17 - Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.
 3. Phil. 4:9 - The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.
 4. I Tim. 1:16 - However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.
 5. In fact, Paul conducted himself in such a way that he knew that he had a home in heaven when he died.
 - a. II Tim. 4:6-8 - For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. {7} I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. {8} Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Practical Application:

III. We need to learn from the example of Paul.

- A. There may be things that we are doing in our lives that are not what God wants us to do.
1. We may be doing these things in all good conscience.
 2. We may not realize that we are contradicting God.
 - a. For example:
 - b. Gossip, backbiting, not putting God first in our lives, etc.
 3. It may not be that we are openly going against God, but we also may not be pleasing to Him.
- B. The key is simply this.
1. When we realize what we are doing, we turn to God and become faithful to Him.
 2. When Paul learned the truth, he turned his life around.
 3. If necessary, we need to do the same today.