

Grace Received & Grace Given - Acts 9:1-19

Remember, that it is this Saul of Tarsus who becomes the Apostle Paul!

It was this great persecutor of the Church, & of Christ, who would become the greatest influence for Christ and the Church throughout history!

Who would've thought that the conversion of this man was even possible, let alone that he would be God's chosen instrument to proclaim Christ **"to the gentiles, to kings and to the children of Israel"**? – Vs. 15

Have you ever thought that a person was beyond saving?

Have you ever thought that God could never use a person like... for His glory and for the good purpose of redemption in this world?

Who are the Saul's in your life that God could make into Paul's?

We must also remember Ananias & the purpose/role that God had for him!

Someone had to be God's instrument in the flesh, to reach out to Saul with the grace & love of Christ & respond to him as a brother, not an enemy!

Vs. 17 - So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

This encounter between God & Ananias, & between Ananias and Saul is the only mention of this man in all of Scripture, yet it was through Ananias that Saul's sight was restored, that God's message to Saul was communicated & that Saul received his baptism and commissioning.

What made Ananias deserving of such an honor?

- He was a disciple, a follower, of Jesus! – Vs. 10
- He recognized the voice of the Lord & responded to Him when He called his name! – **"Here I am Lord!"** - Vs. 10
- He was willing to obey, even at great risk to himself. – Vs. 17

Have you ever thought that you weren't _____ enough for God to use you?

The testimony of Ananias reminds us that God will use anyone who makes themselves available to Him!

Have you ever been afraid to obey God because of the risk? If so, you are in good with Ananias, but Ananias still obeyed God despite the risk!

The result of his obedience was that he was the man that got to experience first-hand God transforming the greatest persecutor of the faith into the greatest promoter of the faith! What a privilege! What an honor!

What might happen if we were to make ourselves available to God just as Ananias did, to say "Here I am Lord" & obey whatever He calls us to do?

What Saul's are out there that God intends to make into Paul's, and how might He use us as His Ananias to bring that transformation to bear?

"Grace Received & Grace Given" – How might we live this out in our lives?

- Acknowledge the fact that there will always be those who reject Christ & the gospel in this world! **There will always be Saul's!**
- Admit that if we are followers of Jesus, it is only by the grace of God!
We are no better, or more deserving of God's grace than Saul was!

• Believe that no one is beyond the reach of God's transforming grace!

If there was hope for Saul, and for us, then there is hope for everyone!

- Give grace to those around us, for it is the proper response to receiving such grace from God! **Grace is unmerited favor!**

Ananias received from God what he then gave to Saul in Damascus - grace!

- Trust that God's ways are beyond our own & that we could be the next Paul or Ananias in the grand redemptive story of God in history.

No one would have pegged Saul to become the Apostle Paul! Ananias would have never pegged himself to be the one used by God to heal & baptize Saul, but God's ways are beyond our ways!

Who are the Saul's that you have counted out, & how might you be an Ananias to them?

God is in the business of using the most unexpected people to do the most unexpected things for His Kingdom! Will we be numbered among them?

Let me close with Eph. 3:20! Be a testimony of grace received & grace given

8-12-18 Grace Received & Grace Given - Acts 9:1-19

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