

OBEY THE LORD, BEGIN YOUR MISSION

JULY 23, 2023

WORSHIP

Sing, Sing, Sing, Cover the Earth, Unbroken Praise, Lord of the Nations, Worthy is the Lamb

WELCOME

When you were a child, did you learn how to obey your parents/guardians right away, or you tended to procrastinate in your obedience?

WORD

ACTS 9:10-18

(READ ACTS 9:1-31 FOR CONTEXT)

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." ¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶ for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." ¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened.

We begin our message with a man named Saul who was on a mission of murder, to put believers in prison, with the hope that they will be killed. On his way to fulfilling this mission, Jesus appears to him, and that encounter turned Saul's life around (who became the Apostle Paul). Jesus tells him to go into the city where he will be told what to do. This Damascus Road experience also left Saul blind (**Acts 9:1-9**)! His eyes were open, but he was blind. We can see two reasons why Saul was blind: 1-Paul was physically blind because God wanted to stop Paul from harming others (**Genesis 19:11**). 2- Paul was spiritually blind because of his hardened heart was still softening (**Isaiah 42:7;16**). This tells us something important; Christ's vision does not CONVERT Paul but rather CONFRONT Paul to draw Paul to Himself. This is what Jesus is doing with ALL people (**John 12:32-33, 2 Peter 3:9**). This is why Paul's story is written the way it is (**Acts 9:10-13**). God was drawing Ananias to Himself, to send Ananias to Paul. In fact, Paul didn't just get a vision of Jesus—he got a vision from

Jesus of Ananias (**v.12**)! Ananias knows the danger (**v. 13**), yet he obeys anyway (**v. 17**). This is the exact reason why Christ's vision

does not convert Saul. God had another plan the whole time—to not have the believer sit on the sidelines. But rather to work through our obedience to bring others to Christ. God's plan was always to use Ananias to lead Paul to Christ!

Paul's hardened heart was softened by Jesus. His rebellion and mission of murder was over. All because God worked through the obedience of Ananias. One of the many indicators of Paul's conversion here was that he was baptized (**v.18, Acts 8:35-38**). God used a man we hardly know, Ananias, to lead Paul, the greatest evangelist of all time, to Christ. This is what we see all over Acts (**Acts 10:5, 22**). The obedience of Ananias was necessary for Paul to come to Christ, though God could have converted Paul directly. God's sovereign plan was always to use Ananias to lead Paul to Christ.

Even today, millions of people all over the world see visions of Jesus. But often in those visions, Jesus does not convert them directly. In fact, He tells them to go to a specific location where they will find a missionary who will share the gospel to them. Jesus is appearing to the non-Christian, and He is also appearing to the Christian, sending the believer to the unbeliever!

Acts 9:1-25 show us that:

1. God draws Paul to Himself (**vv. 3-9**).
2. God sends Ananias to lead Paul to Christ and disciple Paul (**vv. 10-19**).
3. God uses Paul to immediately begin leading others to Christ and making disciples (**vv. 20-25**) A key component of Ananias' discipling Paul was sharing your faith immediately after you come to Jesus is part of the Christian life (**v.20-22**). Paul didn't wait until he mastered everything about the Christian faith. What's more, Ananias didn't just disciple Paul to be just a disciple, but to be a disciple-maker (**v.23-25**).

So how is this about MISSIONS? **Acts 9:15** shows how Paul was chosen to take, or "carry" (**Exodus 20:7**) God's name, because as

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Dr. Carmen Imes wrote, “belonging to Christ is expected to result in behavior consistent with a profession of faith (**2 Timothy 2:19**)”. Paul was to be called to carry Jesus’ name to the Gentiles (non-Jews), kings (upper class) and the Israelites --- this is “all nations”! Does this sound familiar to you? God’s mission became Paul’s mission which is just the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:18-20**). So, what’s our mission? It is the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. The world needs Jesus, and God expects you to bring people to Him and lead them to Jesus. Just like with Ananias, Jesus will not make disciples for us; Jesus makes disciples through us. We are His chosen instruments to make disciples for Him. The Great Commission has four key components:

- The **TASK** – What am I supposed to do?
- The **SCOPE** – Where am I supposed to do it?
- The **PROCESS** – How am I supposed to do it?
- The **PROMISE** – Why would I choose to do it?

Our task is to “go and make disciples”. The scope is “all nations”. My mission is to disciple the nations! If each one of us will disciple just one person, who will in turn disciple one person, who will then do the same, then the last person on earth who needs to be disciplined will be disciplined. This is God’s global perspective in making disciples but it’s easy to get stuck on our own comfortable Christian circles and miss this perspective. God does not just want us to make disciples; He wants us to make disciple-makers. He wants us to do this so that the whole world will have the opportunity to receive Jesus and to follow Him.

You obeying His mission here to make ‘disciple-makers’ will set in motion a chain of reaction of disciples making disciple-makers which will result in the Gospel going from you to all the nations. You can literally “save the world” if we’re all obedient to what Jesus calls us to. But we need to actually do it; we need to teach them to obey all God has commanded, starting with “go and make disciples”. We don’t have to do it alone because Jesus is with us. Our mission is not just to make disciples, but to make disciple-makers; this is the normal Christian life. Begin your M.I.S.S.I.O.N:

- M-ake disciple-makers
- I-ntentionally befriend non-Christians
- S-tay focused on Christ
- S-hare the gospel always
- I-ntercede for non-Christians
- O-bey all that Christ commanded
- N-ever forget God’s Global Perspective

Start helping others **EXPLORE** the faith, **GROW** in Jesus, **SERVE** others and **BEAR FRUIT** of transformed lives. Remember, the problem is not the harvest, it’s the lack of workers (**Matthew 9**):

Obey the Lord, begin your mission and see how that changes the world today!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

Read Acts 9:1-25. What encouraged you from this passage? What challenged you?

2. Setting It Right.

What do you learn from following Jesus?

3. Living It Out.

What practical steps can you take this week to begin your mission and make disciple-makers who will reach the nations?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for God’s mission to be fulfilled in all the nations in our generation. With God’s global perspective, begin your mission by either making disciples, or teaching your disciples to be disciple-makers. Start by sharing the gospel to those closest to you---your family, friends and co-workers this week.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s help and comfort for the Sudanese people caught in violence and conflict.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; tension in East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, leaders, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 9:20

²⁰ ...and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”