



"Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners"

Acts 9:1-19
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The Big Idea: In the **conversion** of Saul, God had you and I in mind. Saul's conversion shows us that no one is outside the sovereign reach of God's saving grace. God saves us not because we are **worthy** of salvation, but because He is rich in **mercy**.

Acts 9:1-9(NASB95)

¹ Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; ⁴ and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵ And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, ⁶ but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." ⁷ The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Saul's Conversion

- Saul wanted to see the Christian movement **destroyed**.
- Saul is about as **resistant** to the Gospel message as a person can possibly be.
- Saul is not on a journey to be **saved**; he is on a journey to **destroy**.
- On the road to Damascus, Saul recognizes the **deity** of the One speaking.
- Saul recognized that he had been shown amazing grace that he did not deserve.

How Saul Viewed His Conversion (1 Tim. 1:12-16)

- Paul didn't get what he **deserved**. Instead, everything he deserved was taken by Christ on the cross.
- Paul's zeal was nothing more than a mask for his **hatred** of God.
- Saul shows us that you can look very good on the **outside** but be a pit of despair on the **inside**.
- Every Christian at one point in their life was a lot like Saul.
- Have the scales of your eyes fallen off to see the goodness and glory of Jesus Christ?

How Saul's Conversion is Helpful for Us

- "Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an **example** for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." - 1 Timothy 1:16
- If God's grace is big enough for someone like Paul, it is certainly big enough for someone like you.
- Saul is evidence that salvation does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on the God who shows **mercy**.
- God can convert the most unlikely of converts.

"Not every convert enters the kingdom of God with blinding light and the visible, audible presence of the risen Christ. Not every testimony is identical to Paul's, nor should it be. But his conversion experience on the Damascus Road gives hope to everyone because it shows the full extent of God's patience. God is slow to judgment, giving sinners time to repent. In his grace God is willing to put up with a lot from people, as he did from Paul."

-Philip Graham Ryken