



OPENING PRAYER

Father, thank You that Your grace meets us wherever we are. Open our eyes to see Jesus clearly, soften our hearts to respond, and align our lives with Your purpose. In Jesus' name, Amen.

OPENING QUESTION^(OPTIONAL)

When has something unexpected completely changed your direction in life?

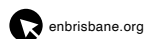


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WORD

Acts 9:3–6, 10–18

3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.

4 And falling to the ground, he 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 rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”

10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

11 And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight... look for a man of Tarsus named Saul... for behold, he is praying.”

13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man...”

15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles...”

17 So Ananias departed... “Brother Saul...”

18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized.

REFLECTION AND COMMENTARY

Saul’s conversion begins with divine interruption: “suddenly a light from heaven shone around him” (v.3). This moment is not initiated by Saul’s search for truth, but by God’s sovereign grace. As N.T. Wright observes that Saul believed he was defending God’s covenant, yet was in fact resisting God’s Messiah. This reveals a sobering reality—spiritual sincerity does not equal spiritual accuracy. Jesus’ question, “Why are you persecuting me?” (v. 4), further reveals the deep union between Christ and His Church. John Stott highlights that to harm believers is to oppose Christ Himself, underscoring the relational and covenantal nature of salvation.

The encounter is not merely informational—it is transformational. When Jesus declares, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (v.5), Saul’s entire theological framework collapses. This is not an adjustment of beliefs but a complete reorientation of identity and truth. Yet, notably, Saul is not given full clarity moving forward—only instruction: “You will be told what you are to do” (v. 6). As Darrell Bock notes, Luke-Acts consistently presents obedience as preceding understanding. Conversion, then, is not just seeing Jesus rightly, but submitting to Him fully.

God’s work in Saul is deeply personal, but not private. The role of Ananias is crucial. Despite real fear, he responds in obedience and addresses Saul as “Brother” (v.17). Craig Keener points out that Ananias represents the Church’s struggle—and calling—to embrace those whom grace has radically transformed. This moment captures the Gospel’s horizontal power: reconciliation with God produces reconciliation with others. Saul is not just healed; he is welcomed into family.

Finally, Saul’s conversion is inseparable from his commissioning: “he is a chosen instrument of mine” (v.15). Grace does not terminate on salvation—it propels mission. F.F. Bruce notes that Paul’s global calling is established from the outset, aligning with the Gospel’s expansion in Acts. Even suffering is included: “I will show him how much he must suffer” (v.16). As Wright emphasises, suffering is not incidental but integral to participation in Christ’s mission. Saul’s story shows us that when grace interrupts a life, it doesn’t just change direction—it assigns purpose.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observe

1. What stands out to you in Saul's encounter with Jesus?
2. What does Jesus' question in verse 4 reveal about His relationship with His people?

Interpret

3. How can someone be sincere about God yet spiritually blind?
4. Why is Ananias' role important in Saul's journey?

Apply

5. Where might God be interrupting your life right now?
6. Who might God be calling you to welcome or reach out to?
7. What could it look like for you to obey God before having full clarity?

Missional Activation

- **Pray:** Write down 2–3 people far from God and pray for them this week.
- **Embrace:** Be intentional in welcoming or encouraging someone.
- **Share:** Practice your story — before, encounter, after Christ.

Gospel Invitation

Jesus meets us in truth and grace:

- You're not too far gone
- You're not too right to need Him

If Jesus is confronting your life, it's not to condemn you—but to call you.

Prayer Moment

Salvation / Surrender:

Jesus, I surrender my life to You. Open my eyes, forgive my sin, and lead me forward. I choose to follow You. Amen.

Direction:

Lord, align my life with Your will. Give me courage to obey and clarity to move forward. Amen.

Closing Question

What if the person you've written off is the person God has chosen?