



The Conversion / Call of (S)Paul

Introduction

Reminder about the Lent Course that is starting on Tuesday 24th Feb for five weeks during Lent. We will be looking at Romans. On the first week bring a notepad and a bible! NIV is the version we will be using.

This study on the Conversion of Paul will help you to begin to think about who Paul was and teach/remind you about where he started from.

Starter

1. How would you describe the most intimidating person you know?
2. What was the most unusual experience that ever happened to you when you were growing up?

Reading

[Acts 9:1-19](#) NIVUK84

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 6 "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

7 The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

11 The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

13 “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

15 But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptised, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

Discussion Questions

3. What happened to Saul as he approached Damascus? ([9:3–6](#))

4. Whom did Saul meet? ([9:3–6](#))

5. Is Paul CONVERTED or CALLED?

Think about the experience that Paul has, and who he was before this event happened - i.e.. Paul was a Pharisee and trained scholar. Is this a conversion or a calling? And does it make any difference? The idea of this question is simply to get them thinking that Paul did not disregard the teaching and learning of the Torah and Jewish writings. Rather this became foundational to the theologian he was to become

later. Was he called or converted? The answer to this question is probably both. This might be useful when thinking about their own experiences in questions 9 & 10.

6. Who was Ananias? ([9:10](#))

7. Why was Ananias reluctant to do as the Lord asked? ([9:13-14](#))

8. What else stands out about this passage? Or what questions does it raise for you?

Take a moment to allow them to explore other aspects of this passage. What have they noticed that they have not before? If there are questions, then it may be worth coming back to them in future weeks.

Practical Application

The next two questions are similar so pick the one that would enable the group to speak about their experiences.

9. As you look back on your spiritual life, what one or two events seem the most significant? Why do they stand out?

10. What was your conversion experience like?

Share this with others in your group.

11. To what ministry has God called you?

12. In what ways do we sometimes hold back from doing what God wants?

13. What happens when we resist doing what God wants?

14. How can you challenge a friend or neighbour with the message of salvation this week?

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer to finish your session.

Lord, our life is not meaningless.

You have shown us what we are in the world for:

not for ourselves but for others;

not to get what we can but to give what we can;

not to make a name for ourselves but to glorify your name;

not just to live and die but to die to sin and live for Christ.

Help us to acknowledge these things, and may our lives not miss the purpose for which you made them.

Frank Colquhoun, ed., Prayers for Today (London: Triangle; SPCK, 1989), 3.

*Produced using Logos Bible Software Bible
Study resources, with added questions from A.
Walmsley.*

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