Saul meets Jesus

Acts 9:1-22

Introduction: This story is a major element in understanding what is truly different between Judaism and Christianity. Jews follow Moses and the law; Jesus came to fulfill that law and calls us to follow Him instead. Paul tells us later that there is no salvation in obeying the law; rather, there is salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This is what took place in the heart of Saul on the road to Damascus and it is what must take place in the heart of all who come of follow Jesus.

Confrontation – Acts 9:1-9 – Paul in Acts 26:9-11 describes his state of mind; but God had a different plan which is narrated in verses 3-9 and Paul explains this moment in Titus 3:3-5. Saul had an encounter with the living God—the essence of salvation.

Affirmation – Acts 9:10-19a – When we have an encounter with the living God it is generally an encounter with his holiness (Isaiah 6:1-7). Sometimes the encounter is focused on the deep love of God.

> **Concept**: We must ask, "Does God authorize suffering?" and we must answer 'Yes' (Job 1:12; 2:6).

Summary: When an unbeliever is saved the fingerprints of God are all over that moment of salvation—He has chosen us and we respond in repentance and faith.

Proclamation – Acts 9:19b-22 – Salvation is the great change; we once served the program of Satan and now we serve the mission of God—Saul is an excellent example.

Conclusion: John Stott states this question: "Does Luke intend us to regard Saul's conversion as typical of Christian conversion today, or as exceptional?" (165) First, we must in some way experience an encounter with the living God, with Jesus Christ, surrender to Him by faith in repentance and hear his voice, 'come serve me'. Second, there is a meaningful change in the new believer's life. Third, there is a supernatural element to every conversion as there was in Saul's story.

The book of Acts records a number of unique conversions; Pentecost, Samaritans, Saul, Cornelius, Timothy, Lydia, Philippian jailor, and even a close call with Agrippa (Acts 26), but they all have one thing in common, each person changes their mind about Jesus and follows him alone. It is all about Jesus!

The fact that Saul's conversion seems so sudden should tell us that God was working in the background. Truth never misses its mark and what Saul heard must have had an affect on him. For those that we know and love who are walking in the wrong direction, don't give up on them, keep telling them the truth, keep praying for them because God is working and you are being used in a coming change.