# The 'Way' of Grace

Acts 9:23-43

**Introduction**: I'll divide these verses in two sections: Saul and his Past (Acts 9:23-31); Peter and his Future (Acts 9:32-43).

Saul and his Past – Acts 9:23-31

**Precept**: How I think informs my actions and how Saul thought about Jesus informed his actions; first as an unbeliever (Acts 9:1-9) and now as a believer "*proving that Jesus was the Christ*" (9:22b).

In Paul's first letter, Galatians 1:15-2:2, he tells us about a timeline in his early life as a follower of Jesus. We learn about four 'periods' in Saul's early Christian life.

**Conclusion**: When God moves to reach people his grace leads the way and his servants know that grace as they bring the good news to unreached people. If you don't know that gentle grace you limit the possibilities for being used by God. Saul needed to experience and learn that grace.

Peter and his Future – Acts 9:32-43

*Peter & Aeneas* – Acts 9:32-35 – Lydda

*Peter & Dorcas* – Acts 9:36-43 - Joppa

Peter's internal issues are being challenged; he was called to Samaria to welcome half-Jews in recognition of Philip's ministry. He will be called to the house of a Roman Centurion (Acts 10) and then have to defend his actions before the leadership in Jerusalem (Acts 11). Both of these stories highlight the importance of personal ministry.

**Conclusion**: This is the first instance of the Spirit coming in a place outside of the land of Israel and points us to Saul's coming service to the emerging Church. But there is no record of the Holy Spirit coming on Saul; yet, he did receive his sight immediately (Acts 9:17-19). I think Luke wants us to see that the call of God on Saul is the point of this narrative and that the execution of that call was solely dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit, who happily works in the spiritual background.

It says in Acts 9:35, "*they turned to the Lord*" and the Greek word translated "turned" means to "turn around" from a certain kind of action to an opposite kind of action and is used in at least 6 other places in Acts. Salvation is more than changing your mind, it's also changing your actions; I change my beliefs and I change my behavior; this is evidence of conversion.

We might discern from these stories that successful ministry is always about how we interact with people, one on one. Jesus was a master of this and Peter is learning as he goes. The hardest work of ministry is reaching people one on one and bringing the love and compassion that Jesus has for all who come across our path. (Matthew 10:42; 11:28-30) Not all believers are gentle and lowly in heart, but that is what many unbelievers need to see and sense before they come to Jesus.

Both of these men were hard in their own right; Saul in his mind and Peter in his attitude; but grace has a way of confronting these hard places and God has a way of breaking them down and turning them into assets for the advance of his kingdom. This is the way of God's grace.