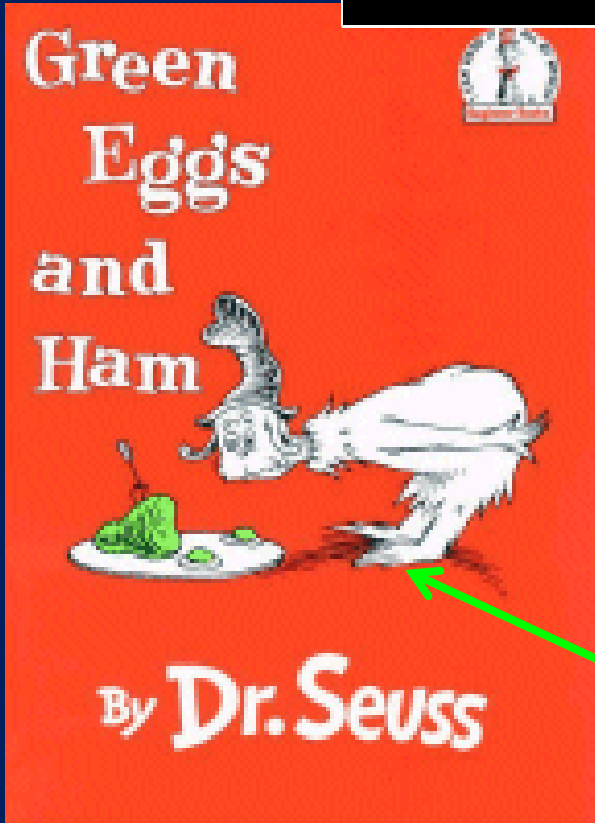


Transformation



What do each of these “people” have in common with Saul of Tarsus?

**The Truth of Christ
Transforms Those Who Believe**

Acts 9:1-31

Pastor Kelly J. Mahoney

I. Before Christ intervened, Saul persecuted . . .

Acts 9:1-3

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.



- I. Before Christ intervened, Saul persecuted . . .
 - a. Saul was passionately engaged, . . .

Acts 22:3-4

3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, **educated under Gamaliel**, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today. 4 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

a. Saul was passionately engaged, solidly convinced . . .

Acts 26:9-12

"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. 12 ¶ "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

- I. Before Christ intervened, Saul persecuted Jesus by the mistreating the disciples (v.1-5).
 - a. Saul was passionately engaged, solidly convinced but was radically wrong concerning Jesus and His disciples.

Acts 9:3-5

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,

Acts 1:1

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, . . .

*There is nowhere on earth
the Lord doesn't desire His
message to be proclaimed.*

- I. Before Christ intervened, Saul persecuted Jesus by the mistreating the disciples (v.1-5).
 - a. Saul was passionately engaged, solidly convinced but was radically wrong concerning Jesus and His disciples.
 - b. Whatever Saul did to Jesus' representatives, he did to Jesus also.

Luke 10:16

"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

Acts 1:1

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, . . .

II. The revelation of Jesus radically **transformed** Saul, and challenged the faith of Jesus' disciples.

Acts 9:6-9

... 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.

II. The revelation of Jesus radically transformed Saul, and challenged the faith of Jesus' disciples.

Acts 9:10-12

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."

II. The revelation of Jesus radically **transformed** Saul, and challenged the faith of Jesus' disciples.

Acts 9:13-14, 15-16

But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

a. God invites his servant to join in this work of transformation by **trusting and obeying** his instructions.

- II. The revelation of Jesus radically transformed Saul, and challenged the faith of Jesus' disciples.
- b. God's servants experience the power of God when they trust and obey.

Acts 9:17-18

17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;

b. God's servants **experience** the power of God when they trust and obey.

Justice
Mercy
Grace

1 Timothy 1:12-16

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; 14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. 15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. 16 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.

II. The revelation of Jesus radically transformed Saul, and challenged the faith of Jesus' disciples.

Acts 9:19-22

and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." 21 All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" 22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

- II. The revelation of Jesus radically transformed Saul, and challenged the faith of Jesus' disciples.
- c. The revelation that Jesus is “the Christ the Son of God” radically transforms Saul and all who call on Jesus' name.



Peter – “you are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:15-18).

Ethiopian Eunuch – “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

Our Response – “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name . . . (John 1:12).

III. God's transforming work brings mixed reactions ranging from death and fear to discipleship and faith.

- a. In spite of Jesus' claims, the witness of his disciples, and the testimony of transformed lives some plot murder to squelch His message.

Acts 9:23-24

When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death;

III. God's transforming work brings mixed reactions ranging from death and fear to discipleship and faith.

b. Others submit to be disciplined by Saul and serve Christ by saving Saul's life.

Acts 9:25

but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

III. God's transforming work brings mixed reactions ranging from death and fear to discipleship and faith.

c. Barnabas was filled with faith when others were filled with fear.

Acts 9:26-27

When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

III. God's transforming work brings mixed reactions ranging from death and fear to discipleship and faith.

c. Barnabas was filled with faith when others were filled with fear.

Acts 9:28-30

28 And he was with them, moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. 30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

III. God's transforming work brings mixed reactions ranging from death and fear to discipleship and faith.

d. Faith in the Lord Jesus, and a healthy fear of God brings peace, comfort, and growth.

Acts 9:31

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Applying God's Word to Life

- 1) Can you point to a time when you received Jesus into your life and believed on his name (John 1:12)?
- 2) Can you explain to others how your life was transformed by the truth regarding Jesus and His teachings?
- 3) What impossible challenges are you facing today and how are you going to gain Christ's perspective and walk by faith in this time of need?