



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

**Acts 9:10-19 ESV**

**The Conversion of Saul (Pt. 2)**

<sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, <sup>12</sup> 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." <sup>13</sup> But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup> For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." <sup>17</sup> So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." <sup>18</sup> And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; <sup>19</sup> and taking food, he was strengthened.

---

**[INTRODUCTION]**

**Resurrection.** Even though our **calendars** are based on **Jesus' life**, even though there were **multiple witnesses** (over 500) having seen Jesus after he died and rose, even though there were **miracles** in Jesus' name after His death to show it was His power doing the miracles (see Acts), even though the **tomb** was, is, and has always been **empty** (see the Gospels), the vast majority of people have a **hard time accepting** the Truth of the Resurrection and the implications of it.

What is it that keeps people from believing in Jesus and the resurrection? Yes, it is a lack of Faith (Rom. 1:17). Yes, it is because God has not graced them with it as a gift yet (Eph. 2:8-9). And yes, it is because people are depraved (Rom. 1:26-32). Because of these things, the inability for man to get to God apart from God's good grace, the church has a special calling on her



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

that is **to be a witness** to the world that: **God changes the lives** of sinners because the story of the **resurrection is real**. It is God's will to change people's minds about the resurrection by **displaying the CONVERSION of sinners**. There is a **song I use to sing** all the time in church... You are going to see that in today's passage.

Last week we started studying what does conversion look like in the God initiated act of **dying to self**. Dying to self is the sign of God changing the inner being; when a person surrenders all that they were, their dreams, their passion, their identity, and in exchange God gives them a new purpose, a new identity. This week we will continue with the story of Saul, his conversion experience, and look at the similarities in our lives. To either become **better witnesses** or to get closer to our **own conversions**.

**[READING OF THE TEXT ACTS 9:10-18 then PRAYER]**

**[PROBLEM]** You ever pray for someone half-heartedly? Perhaps it's not that you don't think God can't change a person, it's just that you have witnessed over time that **the older a person is the less likely they are to change** for the better.<sup>1</sup> That's a process of learning, you didn't have to try and pay attention to it. You have been taking that in since childhood in all the interactions you have ever had, and that is the fact, that most the population doesn't go through a personality change, especially the older they get.

Psychologists (Costa and McCrae's work) has found that from about age 18 to 30, people tend to become more neurotic, more introverted, and **less open to new experiences**; they also tend to become more agreeable and more conscientious. After age 30, these same trends are seen, but the **rate of change dips**. "It's not that personality is fixed and can't change," Costa said. "But it's relatively stable and consistent. **What you see at 35, 40 is what you're going to see at 85, 90.**"<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2003/05/personality> - When psychologists talk about personality, they are usually referring to what are called the Big Five traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thecut.com/2014/11/how-much-can-you-really-change-after-30.html>



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

Now as someone who works to see people change, to see the Gospel come in and radically mess people up, this can affect me one of two ways. I either get discouraged and I start to drift away from working with older individuals OR I go looking for that change because **I want to see God do things with my own eyes**. I can either spend all my time with people in their teens and early twenties OR **I choose to believe that the power of the resurrection**, the power of a living Savior, the power of the Messiah; King and High Priest, that is actively at work in every one of His people.

What I read in Hebrews is that He (Jesus) is mediating for His people (Hebrews 9:15), He is sending the Holy Spirit (John 14 promised and delivered Acts 2), He is manipulating the life of His people to effect change because the Bible also tells me He is constantly making a Royal Priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9) that must reflect Him (2 Cor. 3:18)<sup>3</sup>. He is changing all of His people at **all ages**, because for a timeless God He is not bound by our biological clocks: **He makes all things new when He wants, to do what He wants, the way He wants it!**

That right there is the testimony of the power of the resurrection: **A CHANGED LIFE**, no matter how old, is what tells the world that right now Jesus lives, He reigns, and He is God in flesh!!!

**Let's put this in a more compact main point for the morning:**

**The Power of the Resurrection is seen in the power of the Converted man or woman that has been changed by a Living Savior.**

Saul, up to this point in our story today, has spent three days in blindness (v.9), three days with nothing to do, he didn't even eat or drink, it is as close as you can get to death without actually dying. Make no mistake that is what this is to represent, **Saul has died to himself**. He has gone from a murderous rage, intending to destroy the church, desiring to prove himself in his quest, and was stopped dead in his tracks. The Lord literally knocked him off his high horse with a simple question: <sup>4</sup>... "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-mediator.html>



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

me?” And by Grace He rescued Saul from his dead spirit, he blinded him so he couldn’t do anything, and put him in t.o. to think about what just happened.

Then upon being given faith by grace and turning from his old life Saul embraces the Lord and is baptized in His name, as he recounts the significance of that from Romans.

**Romans 6:1-5 ESV**

<sup>4</sup>**We** were buried therefore with him by baptism into **death**, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in **newness of life**.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Paul, who was formerly Saul, states we die to ourselves because **He lives!** The resurrected Jesus when He saves calls on us to be baptized with him into the sign of dying to self. He then goes onto say that the reward of this is that we too will be raised as Jesus was raised with a new imperishable body. The Power of the resurrection is seen in the converted person because **they live** with the **hope** that even DEATH cannot keep them down, they too will rise again!

Today to strengthen the faith of the believer, today to perhaps open the eyes of the unbeliever let me show you what happens to the converted person, let us witness together the power of the resurrection in the life of Saul. We will look at **three different aspects of his conversion today** and I pray that God show you how that too applies to your life.

**1. Conversion happens by Grace Alone.**

<sup>10</sup> 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.” <sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, <sup>12</sup> 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.”



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

Jesus catches up with our second Ananias in Acts, this one is more obedient than the first one, and Jesus knows he will be obedient for he has had Saul have dreams of him already. He made him blind and put images of a man he never met in his head and gave his name, that would heal him, that would lay his hands on him to receive the Spirit. *Ananias, I am going to send you to have Mercy on Saul, he deserves the blindness, for he has been refusing to see me his whole life, but I am going to show him mercy. This mercy will be a sign that the Lord is forgiving, gracious and steadfast, as he learned in the OT BUT that he would also come to know that these things are NOT based on his behavior but based on my on my proclivities. In other words, Ananias show him I am not swayed by him, I chose him first.*

Saul totally believed this and recounts it in his letter to Timothy.

**1 Timothy 1:16 ESV**

<sup>16</sup> But I received **mercy** for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his **perfect patience** as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

**Jesus chooses**, without input, without being manipulated, without possibility of bribery, He chose to save Saul, by withholding God's wrath and instead **gave Saul grace**. He does it so that Saul would become the example for all Christians for all time, that Jesus is **perfectly patient with us**. In saving us from our sins Jesus is patiently overlooking what we deserve and in turn removes guilt, shame, and condemnation, and sometimes even the fruit of our sin in this life.

Many of us have often wondered, "Why Jesus waited so long to save me?" It is because we like Saul love kicking against the goads (Acts 26) we love to resist, we love struggle, we love rebellion, and that's ok He's perfectly patient. Being **able to love someone perfectly** is not about giving someone **what they want** when they want it, it is giving them **what they need when they need it THE MOST**, that is perfect love that is done through perfect patience – **WEDDING PROPOSALS**.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

What Jesus loves more than you loving to please yourself is to see GOD GLORIFIED and he won't act until it is time because He loves PERFECTLY. When he moves it always the perfect time for you to respond, that's why it **seems like your choice**. Saul in his quest to trap believers fell into the trap set by Christ.

This morning perhaps you have no idea how you ended up here, oh you may have thought you planned this out but Jesus has patiently been waiting on you to get you to the moment will you are a captive audience so you can hear that he loves you and desires to show you mercy. Are you ready to die to self yet? Are you ready for the power of the Resurrection, to face a living God?

## **2. Conversion comes by encounters and obedience to Jesus.**

<sup>13</sup> But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And here he has authority from the chief priests to **bind all who call on your name.**"

Don't be too rough on Ananias here, he doesn't know what happened already on the road, it may seem he's a little hesitant, but it may just be a lack of underdeveloped theology. He points out that Saul binds the one who calls on your name, he arrests Christians.

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a **chosen instrument of mine** to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup> For I will show him how much he must **suffer for the sake of my name.**"

Jesus is like, *it's all ok Ananias he has already encountered me, trust me this is based on me*, and Ananias of course relents.

There is also a play on words here by Luke, Saul goes from being the one who **binds people who are calling on His name** to the person who will now **suffer for His name**. He is now bound by Jesus' will to do His bidding which is he will be the one who now suffers. And suffer he does! What's more in all of Saul's life he finds joy in it.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

**Colossians 1:24 ESV**

Now I **rejoice** in my **sufferings** for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,

Paul is like well since Jesus is not here in the flesh I will have to do, and I will suffer in his sake and that brings me joy! Paul, you see here later in Acts, will fulfill his calling, he will suffer and in his joy in it, he demonstrates he is serving a risen Lord. Nobody embraces a religion because of the offering to suffer even for personal gain, but a **converted person** will **embrace suffering** because it demonstrates their faith in a Risen Lord! What's more, as crazy as it seems, you will see **Christians excel in it!**

**[ILLUSTRATION]** If you read the biographies of Martyrs, the stories of missionaries, you will see a repeating theme and it's not that they move away from suffering **they push into it.** **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, a famous German theologian, answered the call to come and suffer for the name of Christ. The Germans after WWI had become poor a destitute due to political sanctions. The rallying cry of Germany pre-WWII was from the pulpit of those lands that God had provided a way of salvation through the efforts of the Führer Adolph Hitler. In other words, due to political pressure the church looked for comfort and peace through a physical Messiah, even with the implementation of Aryan Doctrine, hating foreign ethnicities.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer started a resistance through his students, and fled Berlin at one point in 1938 in fear of life. Under conviction of the Spirit he returned to Germany, continued a secret life of resistance, was arrested, and sent to a Gestapo concentration camp and then hanged for treason in 1945. During his days in the war Dietrich worked to help the cause to stop the genocide of the Jews and to take down the false Messiah Hitler. Suffering for him was not a choice it was a call, a **COMMAND and one he did gladly.** That is what **conversion looks like**, it is a **call to die**, but it is also a **call to live in Supreme Joy**, and that speaks volumes to the world that the **Savior Reigns.** The power of the Resurrection is shown in the lives of those of the converted as they suffer well for Christ.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

Church while we may not have to surrender and commit ourselves to concentration camps what public act of obedience are you forgoing today? Is there something you are fearing more than not being able to represent Christ? Suffering well, through a job, a tiring illness, an unforgiving spouse, is a call to live out loud for Jesus, how are we doing at taking up our cross?

### **3. Conversion changes the worst of sinners.**

<sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “**Brother Saul**, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he **regained his sight**. Then he rose and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and taking food, he was strengthened.

### **Conversion makes enemies into family.**

Notice from last week, Jesus didn’t wait to hear Saul cry out for forgiveness, he knew what Saul would undergo in his three days of blindness. Jesus took him in and gave Him purpose and started treating him as he did everyone else. But then it doesn’t stop there Ananias, after being assured, walks in and immediately obeys what he was told to do. Then his first words out of his mouth are **BROTHER SAUL**. ἀδελφός (*adelphos*), οὐ (ou), ὁ (ho): n.masc.; ≡ DBLHebr 278; Str 80; TDNT 1.144—**1.** LN 10.49 **brother**, male sibling (Mt 4:18); **2.** LN 11.23 **fellow believer**, a male and/or female, **believer in the believing community** (Ro 8:29);<sup>4</sup>

Ananias, he accepts Saul without question, for Jesus is the one who stands for him now, and Saul who was an enemy, is now family. That is something you can’t find outside of Christianity as well, it goes too deep, it is more than religious affiliation. The blood of Christ **makes even enemies brothers**, because it is the blood of a living Christ that says *you accept them now, I now live in them so **you love them like you love me***. The power of the resurrection is shown in how the converted love each other.

---

<sup>4</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.





**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

**Conversion creates 4D vision out of 3D sight.**

Paul's physical sight is restored and what a blessing that is. He now can take in all he sees, and it is like a double portion of the Grace of God. When you talk to converted people, you will many times get the same stories. You will often hear about people that use to view the world in a certain way and now they **see things differently**. Looking at the world through changed eyes goes from seeing things in 3D to 4D.

We go from seeing things measured in height, width, and depth (3D) and experiencing them only at that level. We become people upon conversion that now see the world in time progression, that is we see that all things have been shaped by the creator, that all things are made to glorify the creator, and in the end all things will unite in the creator. The world is no longer about transient things it is about a timeless being and the world points to His existence. That is seeing the kingdom.

**John 3:3 ESV**

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Converted person is the reality that the resurrection is real for the converted person is responding to and living for a person that cannot be seen in this reality, but that doesn't make Him less real.

**John 20:29 ESV**

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Blessed, happy, fulfilled, SAVED are those who believe in Jesus' resurrection. Blessed are those who believe the world is more than what you see and that it is ALL about Him.

Blessed are those that experience the grace of Christ and know it was all by His will alone that you are saved.

Blessed are those that learn to suffer Christ and call it all joy.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 28 Raised to Walk in New Life – Easter 2023**  
**By Pastor Jody May 04/09/2023**

---

Blessed are those that have died to self for they have gained the kingdom.  
Blessed are those that obey Christ and can see family where there was once only enemies.

And you too can be blessed, will you be obedient to Jesus today, will you die to yourself, will you take up your cross, will you follow Him? There is so much joy waiting for you today, come and walk in new life.

**[PRAYER]**

**[COMMUNION]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that has resurrected His Son so that we may believe that there is a way back home to Him.

Go in the name of the Son, that practices perfect patience and loves us when we need it the most.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that opens our eyes to the realities of living for God, now go and share the good news with others.