

# ONE message. people. mission.



## Grace Illustrated

Acts 9:1-31

### Main Idea

The extent of Gods' grace is unfathomable!

### Overview

- **God is a God of Grace & He wants that to be know in the Spread of the Gospel**
  - Hatfulness of Saul
    - Approved of Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7.58, 8.1)
    - Going and persecuting church (Acts 8.3)
    - Breathing threats & murder against disciples (9.1-2)
      - Not satisfied wants to go and hunt them down (vs. 2)
    - Later testimony: Acts 26.9-11: Says would cast final vote to have Christians killed & he would try and get them to blaspheme
  - Why does Saul hate the Church so much?
    - Acts 26.4-7: He had a passion for the Law & his hope had changed to Christ, so previously his hope in the Messiah was clearly NOT the one that was cursed (Deut. 21.23)
    - Saul hated the idea that the hope of Israel was cursed (Gal. 3.13)
    - He neglected that at the root of Israel was not self righteousness, but was the Grace of God (Deut. 7.6-7)
    - Saul likely the Hope (The Messiah) as one that be a sort of earthly king that would rally everyone to the Law, instead of seeing Him as a God who would fulfill the Law for them by His being a suffering servant
  - Why Saul?
    - Because God wanted to make crystal clear as the Gospel advanced to the Gentiles (Acts 9.15) that God was a God of Grace! (parallel with Israel would be Deut. 7.6-7)
    - God chose the chief hater of Christ into the chief herald of Christ that the world may know what kind of God He is
    - Saul/Paul tells us this himself: 1 Tim. 1.12-17
- **Centrality of Christ**
  - Saul is immediately proclaiming Christ (9.20, 22, 28)
    - Also find the passage constantly talking about "the name" of Christ
    - Paul never gets over the Gospel, Acts always keeps in front of us, the Gospel of Christ
    - Our lives as Christians, and our Churches must be central on Christ both in what we teach and what we say and do...never assuming it, but always talking about it, etc.

- **Centrality of the Church**

- Christ came that He might “build his church” (Matt. 16.18) and His church is His Body (Eph. 5.23)
- Christ so intimately identifies himself with the church he sees persecution of the persons of Christ as a direct assault on the person of Christ (Acts 9.4, 5) – there is no division between the person and Christ and the persons of Christ
  - The visible expression of that Body is the local church
  - The church cannot be a peripheral part of the Christians life
- The grace of God centered on the person of Christ and seen clearly in the herald to the Gentiles (Saul) is preached, taught, and celebrated in the church as it moves forward to the lost

Overview

*Discussion Starter: Discuss some stories in your life where you have seen the beauty of grace?*

1. Based off of this sermon...why is it we love grace so much?
2. Why did God choose Saul to carry his name to the Gentiles and not someone else?
3. How does this inform your life? How do you display grace at work, marriage, class?
4. How can you learn to cultivate grace both with your fellow church members and with the lost?
5. How does this story serve as “one of the clearest pictures of the character of God in the Bible?”
6. How does this encourage you in your salvation? How can this relieve the burden of those far from Christ?
7. Given the centrality of Christ in Saul and the church at large through Acts (note all the uses of the names of Christ or the reference to “the name”)...how do we “assume” the Gospel in our lives with our fellow Church members?
8. When we talk about “Gospel centrality” what does that mean? Would you say Restoration Church was “Gospel Central” if so how? If not, what is missing?
9. Read Acts 9.4-5 and discuss how Jesus sees himself in relation to the church. Discuss.
10. Why is the local church so uniquely outfitted to bring the Gospel to the lost and display the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3.10) vs. another parachurch ministry?
11. How can you serve the Body of Christ better that she might more properly display Christ?
12. What should you look for when looking for a church?

*Accountability Question: What are you negligent or abusive of God’s grace in your life?*