

ACTS 9:1-18

“Having an encounter with Jesus”.

Saul was on a mission to eradicate the people of the way; until Jesus stopped him in his tracks on the road to Damascus. Saul was a great persecutor who after Jesus becomes Jesus' great proclaimer. Jesus can change the heart of the most hardened.

Intro.

There is no one too hard for God to change.

There is no one too far away for God to touch.

There is no one too lost for God find.

There is no sin great for God to forgive.

Background

Paul comes from a devote Jewish family and was born a Roman citizen.

He was brought up by a very influential Rabi called Gamaliel in a Jewish establishment.

In addition, he also studied Greek philosophers. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, zealous for the law and the traditions of the Jewish turned to

persecute the believers, murder, and destroy the church of God.

Paul was very well educated and so occupied with law and the Jewish traditions that there was no room for the gospel. He refused to Jesus was a long-awaited Messiah.

His wrong beliefs led him to persecute the believers.

Paul was a murderer; he was a corrupt man if you like. He was responsible for Stephen's death.

He was hungry for doing harm to the church of God that was still very young. He asked for orders to arrest Christians.

Everyone both Christians and non-Christians knew who Paul was.

- A worse persecutor.
- A heartless murderer (Acts 7:58)
- A man who worked against God
- A man who didn't believe Jesus was the savior.
- He was determined to destroy the church of God completely.

The encounter with the one he was working against. Acts 9:1 – 18.

- Direct encounter with Jesus
- Jesus spoke to Paul directly.
- Paul's response.
- Jesus revealed himself.

This event (encounter) is captured and recorded in the book of Acts by Dr Luke to show us how loving, merciful, gracious, and forgiving our God is:

1. **Loving** – God is love! **1John 4:7,8** *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, **because God is love!***
2. **Gracious** – Rom 5:20, **1Cor 15:10** *But by the grace of God I'm what I'm, and his grace toward me was not in vain.*
3. **Forgiving** – Heb 8:12, Acts 26:18, **Luke 23:34** *Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.*

Message

4. *It tells us that God can change the dirtiest, craziest and the evilest person.*
5. *There is no men too hard for God to change. (Saul, Simon Peter, Matthew, John Newton, and Jeremiah) All these men were chased down by Jesus, they didn't come to Jesus, he chased them.*
6. *There is no place too hard for God to penetrate. (What good can come out from Nazareth?)*
7. *And there is not problem too complicated for God solve. (He calmed the storm **Matt 8:26**)*

When people saw Paul as a worse persecutor, God saw him as a great preacher of the gospel. When people saw Paul as a murderer, God saw him as a soul saver.

When people saw Paul as a man working against the way of God, God saw him as the greatest defender of the gospel in history.

When people saw Paul as a destroyer of the Church of God, God saw him as a church planter.

Paul was given a mandate; his mandate was to seek out and arrest the followers of Christ and bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners for questioning and possible execution. The journey was interrupted by Jesus as he neared Damascus.

He was given a new mandate: **Acts 9:15**, To proclaim Jesus to the Gentiles.

JESUS GAVE US THE SAME MANDATE: **Matt 28:18-20. OUR MANDATE IS TO ENGAGE PEOPLE WITH JESUS CHRIST.**

The Church exist for only one purpose. Because people need Jesus!