

Midweek Study



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The Making of a Missionary

Acts 9:20-31

I. IMMEDIATE PROCLAMATION (*Acts 9:20-22*)

"Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed and said, 'Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?' But Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ."

- Saul didn't wait - he **immediately** started preaching
- People were amazed: "Isn't this the guy who destroyed Christians?"
- He was taking up Stephen's cause - the very ministry Stephen died for.
- He "increased all the more in strength" - this is spiritual strength
- He was "confounding the Jews" - proving Jesus is the Messiah

Principle: Even though Saul began sharing Jesus immediately, he needed more preparation. Sometimes we thrust people into service too quickly.

II. INTENSIVE PREPARATION (*Acts 9:23; Galatians 1:15-18*)

Galatians 1:15-18: *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days."*

- **Acts 9:23** says "after many days were passed"
- Galatians reveals this was **THREE YEARS** in Arabia.
- Paul had to unlearn some things and relearn others.
- Paul needed to see Jesus throughout the Old Testament.
- **Jesus:** Didn't start ministry until age 30
- **Moses:** 40 years in the wilderness (age 40-80) before God used him

Key Truth: A call to ministry is a call to prepare for ministry. Abraham Lincoln: "If I had 10 minutes to chop down a tree, I would spend 8 minutes sharpening my ax". **Don't look down on days of preparation!** Are you in a moment of preparation right now? God is sharpening your ax.

III. INEVITABLE PERSECUTION (Acts 9:23-25)

"Now after many days were passed, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket."

- The very people he used to fight for now wanted him dead
- He had become a "traitor" in their eyes
- Their plot became known to Saul
- The disciples helped him escape

The Pattern: Persecution is inevitable when you stand for Jesus. But God provides protection and escape routes in His sovereignty.

IV. INSTRUMENTAL PARTNERSHIP (Acts 9:26-27)

"And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he **tried** to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus."

- Saul "**tried**" (Greek: kept on trying) to join the Jerusalem disciples, but they were all afraid of him - didn't believe he was really converted.
- **Barnabas** (name means "Son of Encouragement") "**took him and brought him to the apostles**" [From Galatians 1, we know this was Peter and James].
- **Acts 9:28:** "**So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.**" Doors that were once closed now opened because someone believed in him.

Key Principle: EVERYBODY NEEDS SOMEBODY TO BELIEVE IN THEM

APPLICATION POINTS

1. Share Jesus with the opportunities God gives you now, even while you're still growing. Don't wait until you feel completely ready - God uses us in our weakness.
2. If you're in a season of preparation, don't despise it - God is sharpening your ax for greater ministry. These quiet seasons are essential for effective service.
3. When facing opposition for your faith, remember that God provides escape routes in His sovereignty. Trust His protection and provision.
4. Look for someone who needs you to be their Barnabas - someone who needs you to believe in them and open doors of opportunity.