



Sermon, Sunday May 22, 2022

## “Saul’s Conversion and Transformation”

**SCRIPTURE: Acts 9:10-22** <sup>10</sup> Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” <sup>11</sup> The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment 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 in Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; <sup>16</sup> I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” <sup>17</sup> So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, 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 his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, <sup>20</sup> and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” <sup>21</sup> All who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup> Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

### Introduction: Aldersgate Day

Today is Aldersgate Day Sunday. John Wesley went through Oxford University as a missionary to Georgia, United States, and returned to England. Wesley's experience is an important historical event that is interpreted to be the same as Paul's experience with St. Augustine's conversion on the Damascus Road. So, Methodist or Wesleyan churches set May 24 as Aldersgate Day and keep the Sunday before and after this conversion anniversary as Aldersgate Sunday.

‘Conversion’ can first be seen as the transformational work that God works in us through the Holy Spirit, and literally, ‘converting us.’ **Wesley wrote in his diary; "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."**

My dear brothers and sisters!

What is the most difficult thing in life? There are many things, but it will probably be a 'change.' Others don't change well, but neither do we. This does not mean that change is impossible. The Lord transforms us. Today's text is about change. Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. Then he changed. What would have changed?

### Body: The Conversion of Saul

Saul's conversion, one of the great events in Christian history, began with an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. When a light stronger than sunlight shone on Saul, Saul fell on the spot, and Saul experienced a supernatural phenomenon where he heard the voice of the Lord from heaven. That experience



fundamentally changed Saul's life. It was the moment when all that he had held on to as valuable and meaningful was blown away. But after awhile, Saul was converted in just a few days and went on the path of a great Apostle. Through today's text, I hope that we will look at Saul's changes, look back at our relationship with the Lord, and use it as an opportunity to fulfill the mission the Lord has given us. So, what changes came to Saul who met Jesus?

### **1. After meeting with Jesus, Saul gave up criticism and condemnation.**

Saul was a man who spoke words of criticism and condemnation before meeting Jesus. In Saul's heart, he thought that he was a righteous man who kept the Jewish law and that those who did not follow it deserved criticism and condemnation. However, as we can see in Acts 9:20, after his conversion, Saul immediately preached in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God.

Saul was a man who, until a few days ago, tried to arrest and kill those who believed in Jesus. But now he says that Jesus is the Son of God. He says that Jesus is the Messiah. He says that we must believe in Jesus to be saved. This is such an amazing change.

In fact, a person's words are an outward expression of our inner concern. However, in Saul's converted heart and mind, there was only Jesus.

Like Saul, those who personally met Jesus, those who received the grace of Jesus, and those who were filled with the Holy Spirit have something in common. It means that their heart and mind are filled with Jesus.

So, if we still frequently use words of criticism and condemnation in our lives, we should pray that our hearts will be filled with thoughts of Jesus. Then our hearts will be filled with words that build up and encourage our neighbors rather than words of criticism and condemnation. So, what other changes happened to Saul after meeting Jesus?

### **2. After meeting Jesus, Saul's values of life change completely.**

Let's look at the words of Acts 9:21. **“Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?”**

When people saw what Saul was telling the world about Jesus they said, **‘This is the man who destroyed those who called on the name of Jesus in Jerusalem. He came here to Damascus to bind those who call on the name of Jesus.’** What does this verse mean? This shows us the complete change in Saul's values.

Values are viewpoints or standards by which things are valued as right or wrong, good or bad. Before Saul met Jesus, they were important to him. The following are found in **Book of Philippians chapter 3**: To be a member of the house of Israel, to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth, to become a Hebrew, to become a Pharisee, to be blameless against the law, and to persecute the church.

But after meeting Jesus, **Saul confessed this; ‘But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ’ (Philippians 3:7-8).**

What this verse means is that before Saul met Jesus, he used a self-centered standard for judging good and bad. But after he used the standard of Jesus Christ to make this judgement. This shows us the complete change of Saul's values in his life.

Those who are transformed through Christ have the fruit of life. For Saul, his interests and standards for judging the good and the bad of the world have changed. And the change led Saul to use his life entirely for the work of the Gospel of Jesus.

In the process of commanding Ananias, who is afraid of Saul, to pray for Saul, the Lord tells Ananias about Saul as follows. **Let's look at Acts 9:16. “I myself will show him how much he (Saul) must suffer for the sake of my name.”**



Saul accepts the suffering he must endure in order to preach the Gospel of Jesus with joy and thanksgiving. This was possible because he was convinced that the size of Jesus' love was more precious and valuable than anything in the world. So, Saul is not afraid of his suffering for the sake of the Gospel, and he endures it well. He does a wonderful job as an instrument to communicate the love of Jesus to the world.

If we are frustrated and troubled because of the slow change in our lives, we hope that we can expect changes in ourselves, our families, and our community by looking at the amazing fruits achieved through Saul. The Lord must grant us abundant fruit through the changes in our lives.

**Conclusion: Longing for change through the grace of Christ.**

Dear brothers and sisters!

Now let's summarize today's sermon. How often do we say we believe in the Lord, but live our lives apart from the Lord? How many people make this world suit their own purpose in life and strive to pursue only what is visible in this world? And because they do not feel the presence of the Lord, they act recklessly. Please remember. Our godliness begins by experiencing the presence of the Lord. When we see the eternal God rightly, we can give our lives to the Lord as freely as Saul did for eternal things. I hope everyone is like that. Then the Lord, who is always faithful, will save us from any situation and grant us peace.

