



CONVERSATIONS
WITH JESUS

The Blind Rabbi

Pastor Caleb Bryant

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Acts 7:55-58

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While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 7:59-60



And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

Acts 8:1-3



A Man Named Saul:

➔ A Jewish Prodigy

- A “clean” lineage from the tribe of Benjamin
- A student of one of the better known Rabbis’
- A staunch Pharisee
- On his way to be a leading Rabbi himself



A Man Named Saul:

➔ He would later describe himself with these words:

“...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee: as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” **Philippians 3:5-6**



Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Acts 9:1-4



"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

Acts 9:5-9



In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."



Acts 9:10-14

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

**Saul was on a mission to imprison
and execute any Christians that
he could.**

On his way... Jesus interrupts him.

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”



A Disciple Named Ananias:

- ➔ The Lord calls to him in a vision
- ➔ The Lord tells Ananias where to find Saul

“This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name... I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” Acts 9:15-16



Saul is baptized into the Christian faith

“At once he began to preach... that Jesus is the Son of God.” Acts 9:20



This stands as one of the most incredible conversions in Scripture

“The conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone... was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation.”

- George Lyttelton



**Saul, the Jewish Pharisee, Rabbi,
and Christian killer would later be
known as Paul, the apostle
to the Gentiles.**



➔ Paul went on to win more converts and establish more churches than any other Christian in his day

➔ Paul contributed to the New Testament more than any other writer, and thus contributed more to Christian doctrine than any writer in history



What was it that produced such massive change in Saul's life?

- ➔ Saul was a man who knew God's Word
- ➔ Saul was a man who was passionate for *the things of God*
- ➔ But Saul was too blind to see God right in front of him



Saul was no stranger to Jesus, but he was **too blind** to recognize him as the God he was so determined to follow...

... Until Jesus met him face to face.



**This is a powerful story of a man
surrendering his life to the call of
Christ...**

***...and we are all called to that same
beautiful surrender.***



**There is a difference between knowing
all about God, and knowing God
face-to-face in intimate friendship.**



**We can slip into the same trap that
God's people succumbed to
that day:**

*They forgot who God is and replaced
him with a system of godliness*



Jesus promised that Saul would suffer in the process of following His call, and yet Saul found something so valuable that He never looked back, never hesitating to obey.



When Saul's eyes were opened to the reality of Jesus, the Almighty God, who is also the Humble Savior, His life changed radically!



1. Unashamed Humility

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. - Romans 1:16

I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience. - 1 Timothy 1:16



Paul gave up his haughty life of religious superiority for the unashamed humility of a sinner now saved!

Are we living as if we've "got it in the bag", done the minimum requirements, or have all the answers?



2. Unending Pursuit

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 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ.

- Romans 1:16



2. Unending Pursuit

Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it a slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

- 1 Corinthians 9:26-27



3. Unrestrained Obedience

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God... - Romans 1:1

Do you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought for a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20



Paul surrendered himself as a slave to a loving Master, trusting God's will over his own.

How often do we choose our way without even asking God what He wants?



**These are the marks of a life in
intimate friendship with the Living
God, Jesus Christ.**



It's easy to live a life that acknowledges God, even claims to glorify God, but does not fully surrender to God... but God desires something deeper...



**He desires total and complete
surrender...**

***...so that He can make your life
everything He created it to be!***

