**SALVATION IN JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

**Acts 9:19b-31**

**THE BIG IDEA: A person who has truly experienced salvation in Jesus will be changed in ways that demonstrate their rebirth in Christ.**

**SALVATION IN JESUS SHOULD LEAD TO SHARING THE MESSAGE OF JESUS BOLDLY**

* *“Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some time. 20 Immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: ‘He is the Son of God.’ 21 All who heard him were astounded and said, ‘Isn’t this the man in Jerusalem who was causing havoc for those who called on this name and came here for the purpose of taking them as prisoners to the chief priests?’”* (Acts 9:19-21)
* **God can take the boldest sinners and transform them into the boldest spokespersons for the Gospel of Jesus.**
* *“Barnabas, however, took him and brought him to the apostles and explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that the Lord had talked to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 Saul was coming and going with them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He conversed and debated with the Hellenistic Jews…”* (Acts 9:27-29a)
* **God is looking for followers who will be just as passionate about proclaiming Jesus as they were about their earthly ideologies before they were saved.**

**SALVATION IN JESUS SHOULD LEAD TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

* *“But Saul grew stronger and kept confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.”* (Acts 9:22)
* **Our commitment to Jesus should eclipse the commitment we had to our former way of life.**
* *“Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation.”* (1 Peter 2:2)
* See also Hebrews 5:11-12
* **Our spiritual condition with the Lord is either growing stronger or weaker, but it is never stagnant.**

**SALVATION IN JESUS WILL LEAD TO SUFFERING FOR THE NAME OF JESUS**

* *“After many days had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him, 24 but Saul learned of their plot. So they were watching the gates day and night intending to kill him.”* (Acts 9:23-24)
* *“He conversed and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him.”* (Acts 9:29)
* **Although persecution and suffering are a part of following Jesus faithfully, we can rest in the fact that the God in us is greater than enemies we face.**
* *“…everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith.”* (1 John 5:4)
* *“I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”* (John 16:33)

**SALVATION IN JESUS PROVIDES STRENGTH AND PEACE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING**

* *“So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.”* (Acts 9:31)
* **God will not allow the suffering and persecution you endure to be in vain.**
* *“Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6-7)
* **We can find strength and peace in the midst of suffering because we know that God is working through us to accomplish His plans and purposes.**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**ICE-BREAKER:** What was you favorite attire as a teen? Show Google images if possible of those outfits to the group. (This is meant to be fun)

**START THINKING (Observation):**

* What does Acts 9:19b-31 teach us about God?
* What does Acts 9:19b-31 teach us about salvation in Christ?
* How did Saul respond to his new life in Christ?
* Why were others trying to kill Saul?

**DIGGING DEEPER (Understanding and Application):**

* What can we learn and apply from Saul’s conversion?
* What can we learn and apply from Barnabus?
* What can you do to be more committed to spiritual growth?
* How can Christians have peace even in times of crisis?

**OUTWARD**

* Who in your life needs to hear the truth of the Gospel? How has this message/text affected and/or inspired you to reach them?
* Who are you inviting to Church next Sunday?