

**Share together:** After five minutes, share your reflections on the above questions and answer the following: Where are you today as you begin to reflect on this passage and look at this stained glass image? Using one of these phrases below, locate yourself on your road of faith today. Just for today. Where are you?

I will.  
I believe.  
I'm home.  
I'm ready.

**CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE** (Read the passages and review the sermon outline. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group)

- Read Acts 9:1–20.
- Read the main points from the sermon outline.
- In your life: has conversion been dramatic and immediate or slow and following a longer arc of transformation?
- Notice the interaction between Ananias and God in v. 10-17. How would you describe the relationship that Ananias has with God?
- Why do you think it took 3 days for the scales to fall from Saul's eyes?
- Two very different people experienced the Lord's call in this passage. What was different about their 'sending' encounters with the Lord?
- What can we learn about God from the conversion story of Saul?

**CONNECT WITH GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD** (select one question for discussion)

- When Jesus appeared to Saul he asked him: Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?(v.4). Saul believed he was serving God and God's people already. When have you been surprised by God through the wide scope of his mission in the world?
- What are ways we can be open to the Holy Spirit in our workplaces, with friends, and with strangers?
- Ananias did NOT want to engage with Saul (AKA: Paul), but God tells him to go anyway. Where might God be telling you to go, or who might God be telling you to go to, that you'd rather avoid?

## PRAYER

Pray for one another as you end your time this week. Pray for a growing awareness of God's story of conversion in your individual lives and your lives together. Pray for the Holy Spirit to awaken in you an openness to the unexpected way of God in the world.

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

May 1, 2022

*Empowering the Church  
Conversion*

Pastor Mike McClenahan



### Acts 9:1–20 (NIV)

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.<sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

<sup>5</sup> "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. <sup>6</sup> "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." <sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. <sup>10</sup> In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

<sup>13</sup> "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

<sup>17</sup> 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.**" <sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

### The Holy Spirit empowers our journey to

#### 1. Conversion.

*For three days he was blind...He could see again...*

(Message Outline continued on the next page)

## MESSAGE OUTLINE CONTINUED

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 1:13 (NIV)**

Ask questions. **I will.** Receive Jesus. **I believe.**  
Return back. **I'm home.** Take next step. **I'm ready.**

*Event and Process*

### 2. Transformation.

*regained his strength... spent several days with the disciples*

... being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)**

*Crisis and Community*

### 3. Service.

*Instrument to proclaim my name...he began to preach*

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**2 Corinthians 3:6 (NIV)**

Unless faith spills over into life, it is merely an intellectual game. So too conversion. It is merely an idea or experience until it reveals itself by the new way one lives. *Unless there is transformation, there is no conversion...* It involves new insight into God, new turning toward God, and a new life lived in response to God. It involves seeing oneself in the light of God's truth, embracing a new relationship to God, living this out within the community of God's people as a servant and witness to all people. **Richard V. Peace, Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve**

*Grace and Witness*

*Acts or The Acts of the Apostles* was written by Luke, the gospel writer, physician and missionary companion of Paul in AD 63 or later. It joins what Jesus "began to do and teach" (1:1) as told in the Gospels with what he continued to do and teach through the apostles' preaching and the establishment of the church... supplies an account of the life of Paul, from which we can learn the setting for his letters...spans the lands between Jerusalem, where the church began, and Rome, the political center of the empire... provides a selective account of the first 30 years of the church. It is also a bridge that ties the church in its beginning with each succeeding age. The book reveals the potential of the church when it is guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. **Adapted from NIV Study Bible (2011)**

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS—May 1, 2022 *Mosaic: Empowering the Church—Conversion*

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (choose one of these practices that best suits your group or use a practice from a previous week)

**Breath Prayer:** Breath Prayer is an ancient practice that invites us to slow down and awaken ourselves—even our breath—to the presence of God. It is an invitation to remember that God is closer to us than even our own breath! This week you are invited to use the phrase "Come, Holy Spirit." As you focus on breathing in and out, allow the words to flow out from inward breath to outward breath:

1. **Inhale:** "Come"
2. **Exhale:** "Holy Spirit"
3. Continue on for a few minutes at a slowed pace, making space for a growing awareness of God's Holy Spirit.

**Remembering:** Read the following

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following you will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust You always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and You will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen."  
— **Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude**, pg. 79

The practice of remembering invites us to be attentive to God's movement in our lives over time. During these next 5 minutes, consider a few of the ways that God has been faithful even when you had no idea where you were going. Begin this practice now, but continue it throughout the week. In your journals, your iPhone, or even on sticky notes: continue this invitation to remember by writing down the ways that God has been present in your unknowing. Let it be a gift to remember God's presence.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

**Journaling:** In our passage this week, we find Saul encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus. Look at the stained glass image of Saul/Paul meeting Jesus in an unexpected way ([solanabeach.church/050122](http://solanabeach.church/050122)). Journal for 3-5 minutes about what you notice in this piece of art. What do you connect with? What do you wonder about? Where do you feel disconnected from this image or the story in Acts 9:1-20?

(continued on the back panel)

