



Week 6

Acts 9: Transformation

Text: Acts 9

OPEN

This is our sixth week of our series in Acts called **“Unstoppable”** based on Acts 5:42 which says, “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, **they never stopped** teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.” Spreading the Jesus story happened when called and dedicated individuals accepted the responsibility of proclaiming good news to people and places where it hadn’t come before despite serious opposition. This week we will see how Jesus captured the life of an unlikely individual to lead the charge in bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth in fulfillment of Acts 1:8: **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

READ

Read Acts 13:1-3. Saul was commissioned to bring the good news of Jesus to the Gentile world—its people and leaders. The church sent him off on his first missionary journey with Barnabas. Talk about transformation! Paul changes from persecutor to preacher of the gospel.

- What is one change in your life that you have experienced because of Jesus? Could be a decision, life direction, or a heart attitude.
- What is one area you have struggled to change in following Jesus?

Read Acts 20:22-24. Saul was also informed that he would have to suffer for Jesus’ name. How does Saul’s understanding of his call despite suffering challenge your faith?

Read Acts 9:1-5. Jesus connects the persecution against the Church with persecution against himself. (1) What does this teach you about how Jesus feels towards the persecuted Church? (2) How should this increase our care, concern and prayer for the suffering Church today?

REFLECT

- Saul was profoundly opposed to accepting Jesus as the Messiah.
 - What are the issues that keep people from accepting or believing Jesus today?
 - Where or how might Jesus show up unexpectedly to shake someone out of their unbelief?
- Trouble and persecution are part and parcel of the Christian life. Check out Open Doors’ information on the persecuted church in the world today. (<https://www.opendoorscanada.org/worldwatchlist/>). At the link choose one of the top persecuted countries, read the description, and pause to pray for these believers.

2 Corinthians is the most personal letter Paul wrote. At the outset he states one of his main topics—comfort in our troubles.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 and 8-11. Read the passage below that describe Saul’s trials and discuss the questions.

- **2 Cor. 6:3-10** - What do you make of the combination of positive and negative items here?
- **2 Cor. 7:5-7** - What were the ingredients that brought comfort to Paul in this instance?
- **2 Cor. 11:22-28** - Try to categorize the source of Paul’s troubles and ask how he endured so much.
- **2 Cor. 12:7b-10** - Have you experienced a ‘thorn in the flesh?’ How can God’s words to Paul in his weakness be an encouragement to you?
- What lessons can we learn from Paul’s examples above?

APPLY/PRAY

- What aspects of Saul/Paul’s background, personality, and training served him well in witnessing for Christ and sharing the good news? How could your background and life experience help you share Jesus with others?
- Is there an individual that you have been praying for who, to this point, doesn’t seem to be softening towards Jesus? How does Saul’s transformation by Jesus encourage you to persevere in prayer for that person? Conclude by praying for these people as a group.

