It’s Not the Christian Life if You Don’t BELIEVE January 7, 2024

*Acts 9:1-19 Series: The Christian Life Is a 3-Legged Stool*

If you believe, the evidence is all around you. If you don’t believe, no evidence can be enough. – Andrew Klavan

Intro: Why did he throw away the Bar Mitzvah gifts?

1. Conversion is only possible if the scales fall from your eyes
2. Is conversion possible?

vv. 1-2 *Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus …*

v. 2 *that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem*

Acts 22:4 *I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women …*

1. Why would Jesus blind a man?

v. 3 *suddenly a light from heaven shone around him*

v. 8 *although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing*

v. 8 *they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus*

1. You won’t see Jesus until you deal with your blindness

2 Corinthians 4:4 *the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God*

Matthew 15:14 *Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.*

* Why would God go to so much trouble to save someone like Saul?
* What purposes did blinding Saul serve?
* When have you felt that your eyes were opened by God?

1. Conversion is only possible if you bow before the resurrected Jesus
2. Saul thought he knew it all, but he didn’t know Jesus

v. 4 *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*

v. 5 *And he said, “Who are you, Lord?”*

v. 5 *And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”*

1. Do you know the resurrected Jesus?

1 Corinthians 15:6-8 *Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.*

1. Have you bowed before the one who shines in glory?

v. 3 *a light from heaven shone around him*

Acts 26:13 *I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me.*

v. 4 *falling to the ground, he heard a voice*

John 20:27-28 *Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”*

* Why couldn’t Saul recognize Jesus?
* How can we avoid being blind to the reality of who God is and what He wants from us?
* Why did Jesus appear with light “brighter than the sun”?
* To what extent does all lasting change start with a clearer vision of who Jesus is? Why is that?

1. Conversion is only possible if you respond to Jesus with take-action faith
2. What if Saul had never gone?

v. 6 *But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.*

1. He couldn’t see, but why didn’t he eat?

v. 9 *And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

v. 11 *look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying*

Jeremiah 29:13 *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*

1. The Bible scholar starts over

vv. 18-19 *And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened.*

1 Timothy 1:16 *But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.*

* When you came to faith, was it immediately obvious that you needed to do what Jesus said?
* Why didn’t Saul eat or drink during the three days?
* What are some occasions when you’ve taken time out to seek the Lord? What has that looked like for you?
* What would it have felt like for a scholar and leader like Saul to be baptized?
* What kept you from being baptized as soon as you believed?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Acts 9:26-31.

Notes