

Acts: Jesus at Work through the Church - Part 5
Signposts of the Spiritual Journey
Acts 9:1-19
May 22, 2022

I. Two DIFFERENT people, two SIMILAR stories. (v.1-19)

- A. Both SEEKING to live COMMITTED to the truth. (v.1-2,13-14)**
- B. Saul - A DIFFICULT yet TRANSFORMATIVE moment. (v.1-9)**
- C. Ananias - The CALL to a risky RELATIONSHIP. (v. 10-19)**

At first glance the difference between Saul/Paul and Ananias can't seem more stark. Saul is the one heading to Damascus to make life for Ananias harder. Ananias is seeking to follow Jesus while Saul is seeking to to destroy any memory of Jesus. But believe it or not, they are traveling the same journey...at different places.

1. Kid's question: Have you ever been mad at someone for what you thought was a good reason? What was that like?
2. What aspects of Saul and Ananias' life do you identify with personally?

II. There are SIGNPOSTS on the spiritual JOURNEY. (v.1-19)

- A. An ENCOUNTER with JESUS. (v.4-5,10)**
- B. The HUMBLING reorientation of the TRUTH. (v.5-9,15)**
- C. The STEPS of OBEDIENCE. (v.8-9,17)**
- D. The IMPORTANCE of RELATIONSHIP. (v.17-19)**

As we learned in our Journey of the Soul series last fall, there are some clear stages and steps on the spiritual journey, and being aware of what those are and what they look like can help us. In the example of both Saul and Ananias we see signposts that are marking the way.

3. How would you describe what an "encounter with Jesus" might look like in your life? Is it always the same?
4. When has difficulty or challenge (in retrospect) served as a gift to you spiritually? What was that like?
5. Who are one or two people whose relationship with you has been a gift and support in your spiritual life? How can you pass that on to others?

III. RECOGNIZING the signposts TODAY. (Rom. 15:4)

- A. PASSION and CONVICTION do not equal TRUTH. (v.1-2,13-14; Phil. 3:4-7)**
- B. The journey is FUELLED by ENCOUNTER. (v.4-5,10; Ps. 46:10; Mk. 3:14; Acts 4:13)**

- C. We must see OTHERS as God SEES them. (v.13-15; Jn. 3:16; Lk. 23:34)**
- D. RELATIONSHIPS are not OPTIONAL. (v.15-18; I Cor. 20-21,27; Rom. 12:5)**
- E. The PROCESS is ONGOING. (v.1-19; Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:29-30)**

So what do these kinds of stories contribute to our own journey? They help us to realize where we are and to reorient ourselves toward a journey of more closely following the call of Jesus.

6. When have you been “passionately” wrong? How can you seek to live with passion and yet avoid making the same mistake again?
7. Take stock of the people that you struggle with in your life. How might seeing them as God sees them begin to shape your interactions with them in the future?
8. Do you have one or two people that you are open with about your spiritual life? (And them with you?) If not, what are some steps you can take to start seeking that out?