

## 240602pm Sermon Transcript

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Acts 9:10-25

*(This sermon transcript is an extract of a video recording of the full service. The numbering is auto-applied and reflects the number of minutes into recording that the transcript relates to.)*

*This transcript seems to contain some unexpected inaccuracies.*

39:00

Turn with me please to Acts Chapter 9 in Page 1102 in our in our Bibles.

39:20

I don't know about you, but some people, they think that the Christian Church is the preserve of the, I don't know either, the simple, the very elderly, the boring.

39:30

But when I read Acts Chapter 9, particularly the second part that that we're looking at this evening, to me it seems awfully exciting.

39:38

There was lots of things going on there that clearly it's like some sort of action film, isn't it?

39:44

Nothing a bit boring about it.

39:45

And we're back.

39:46

We're back.

39:46

By the way, in case you're wondering.

39:48

That was exciting, wasn't it?

39:50

Yeah.

39:50

Let's pray together, shall we?

39:51

For a moment, Father, what we do not know.

39:55

Teach us what we have not give us and who we are not.

39:59

Make us by your Spirit through Jesus Christ our Lord.

40:04

Amen.

40:06

Amen.

40:06

I wonder if any of you have ever visited a really dangerous city?

40:10

I remember being in Mexico in 2004 on a missions team and visiting Mexico City and also Acapulco on the coast.

40:22

Dozens of people were kidnapped back then and still in Mexico City every single day and held for ransom.

40:30

I don't think my mother knew how dangerous it was when I was 21.

40:34

That's what parents do.

40:35

They worry.

40:37

Acapulco in, in the present day, today is a very dangerous place indeed.

40:42

Statistically, it's the second most dangerous city on the planet, The most dangerous cities in in Mexico as well.

40:49

But the murder rate in Acapulco, we have a slide.

40:53

It is 111 people per 100,000 per year.

40:59

You say you're gonna need to get me some help with that.

41:00

But 111 people per 100,000 per year in Acapulco.

41:05

Well, let me compare that.

41:06

Belfast, of course, where I live, used to be one of the most dangerous cities in the world.

41:10

But the equivalent figure for Belfast this year is 1.25, 111 in Acapulco, Belfast 1.25 I looked up for, for London it's 1.3.

41:22

They didn't have Leamington Spa, but I'm pretty sure it's nowhere near that dangerous.

41:28

Cities, Cities are dangerous.

41:30

They're more dangerous than towns or villages because of course where there are more people, there are more sinners.

41:37

Isn't that what the Bible would, would, would teach us?

41:40

Bring them all together, then you you can create more opportunities to sin together where where the majority are are sinners of the vilest form that there's going to be serious vile sin happening.

41:54

It's a bit like the Internet, isn't it?

41:57

You bring together all the sinners of a particular form into one place and they chat together and they can scheme and they can.

42:03

Which of course is why we need to protect our next generation, our children from the wild, Wild West of the Internet these days.

42:10

Isn't that right, Saul?

42:13

We're thinking about Saul.

42:14

He, he used to be in the majority and he's travelled to the city of Damascus to take on the minority of Christians there.

42:23

It's a dangerous place to be a Christian, Damascus.

42:26

But because of him, but now, by God's grace, he's become a recipient of God's grace.

42:33

Well, he's now switched sides and he's now in danger himself and decide that he's joined and wishes to see grow and increase.

42:43

Well, they're understandably very nervous about him switching teams, but he has one friend in the city.

42:52

So we're going to talk about encouraging Ananias.

42:55

First of all, encouraging Ananias.

42:57

We've never met Ananias before.

42:59

The first thing we're told about him is that he is a disciple.

43:02

He's a disciple.

43:04

Verse 10.

43:05

He's an apprentice of Jesus.

43:07

I like that word disciple.

43:09

He's he's an apprentice.

43:10

He's a, he's a follower of Christ and he lives in Damascus.

43:14

But the first thing that happens to him is that he receives a vision, a vision from God.

43:19

It's not just visual like with Saul, it's also audible.

43:23

And with Saul, like with Saul, God says his name, Ananias, just like with Isaiah back in chapter 4, when he receives a vision, he says what a good disciple ought to say.

43:37

He says, here I am, Lord.

43:40

God is calling Ananias because he's a special rule for him, hasn't he?

43:43

He wants him to go and find Saul.

43:45

He wants Ananias to rise to his feet, to go to straight St.

43:49

in the city, to find a House of a man called Judas, who he seems to know, and to look for Saul, who he doesn't seem to know.

43:56

Saul can't look for himself, for Ananias because he's still blind.

44:01

He has to go looking for Saul, and he's going to lay hands on him and he's going to restore his sight, Ananias is told.

44:09

But Ananias isn't sure.

44:11

It's not the part about laying on his hands and restoring his sight that he's got any trouble with, surprisingly.

44:16

Maybe it's it's not the what that that gives Ananias too much bother.

44:20

It's The Who, isn't it?

44:22

It's The Who for.

44:23

He doesn't know Saul, but he knows about him.

44:27

He does Saul of Tarsus.

44:28

He knows the enemy of Christians like him living in Damascus.

44:32

Know your enemy.

44:33

It's not what people sometimes say.

44:35

This is like, this is like a criminal giving himself up to the police.

44:39

In fact, this is worse.

44:40

This is like, this is like suicidal because Paul, sorry, Saul can and will get you killed.

44:49

Are you sure?

44:49

God, he kind of says to him.

44:52

Ananias knows Damascus is a dangerous place to be a Christian.

44:56

For Saul, a very dangerous man, has just arrived.

44:59

Ananias has heard the stories coming out of Jerusalem, the real life accounts of the havoc that Saul has caused, the trouble down there, the beatings, the imprisonments, the death even of young Stephen.

45:11

He's also heard of the threat now up here in his own backyard that Saul has travelled with the authority, the blessing of the high priest to to take captive all who call on your name.

45:23

We read this name of course is none other than than Jesus.

45:28

Of course.

45:29

This is the one by whom God reveals himself to people.

45:32

This is this is a vision of Jesus that Ananias receives.

45:35

Are you really sure about this Jesus?

45:38

Yes, Jesus has said rise and go in verse 10, and now he says go in verse 15.

45:48

Go, this man is my chosen instrument.

45:53

He's been a recipient of the gospel.

45:55

Now he's going to be an instrument of the gospel and somebody else go for he is chosen.

46:03

He is one of the elect.

46:04

He's one of those called of God that the sovereign will of God has chosen.

46:08

Saul.

46:09

You can say all of those things.

46:11

Saul is a believer because God says so.

46:14

We can't be in any doubt about that from this morning, can we?

46:18

That's why he could write about himself later in Galatians 1, Paul, an apostle, sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.

46:29

And not just chosen, but chosen as an instrument.

46:33

We read that word instrument is is utensil or even probably even better vessel like, like something with a, with a purpose, with a, with a use.

46:44

You know that kitchens your kitchen is, is full of utensils and and vessels, isn't it?

46:50

He, he's someone that God is going to use because each of those utensils and vessels are, are useful because if they weren't useful, you would throw them out because they wouldn't be there.

46:59

And that's why they're in your kitchen.

47:02

He's someone that God's going to use as an instrument of his grace.

47:07

Then we have a a prophecy.

47:10

Then we have some further predictions here, don't we?

47:13

Because he's he's a vessel with with something to carry.

47:16

We're told he's going to carry my name.



47:21

He's going to carry my name.

47:22

The name of Jesus is important in this passage.

47:24

That's the second mention of it already.

47:27

He's going to carry the name of Christ before.

47:29

Well, we give get some specifics before Gentiles and and kings and the children of Israel.

47:36

He he's going to be an evangelist where analysis told Gentiles and kings in high places and Jews in that order.

47:45

He's called to the Jews, yes, but he says in as he says in Romans 15, he saw himself firstly as the apostle to the Gentiles.

47:54

He would share the gospel with kings like Herod Agrippa and probably Caesar himself in Rome when he ends up there.

48:02

But of course it's not all sermons and conversions and roses in the garden, is it?

48:06

Verse 16 is very and of sobering.

48:10

I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.

48:16

Again, third mention of Jesus name.

48:19

Notice Saul being saved to be an instrument in the lives of others, Gentiles and kings and and God's people of Israel.

48:27

It's God at work of course, but it's God at work through his servant Saul.

48:32

But don't miss Ananias.

48:34

Don't miss him.

48:35

He's saved to be an instrument too, isn't he?

48:38

An instrument in the life of of Saul?

48:41

Saul is an evangelist.

48:43

Ananias, well, he's, he's more like a disciple developer.

48:48

Both are both are important.

48:51

This is a disciples test of faith here, isn't it for Ananias, who knows better?

48:56

Who knows better, Jesus or Ananias?

49:00

The plain words of Jesus revealed to him, or the collective wisdom he's gained from his, I don't know, 40-50, possibly 60 years on the planet.

49:10

Often those come up with the same answer, don't they?

49:14

But not here.

49:16

Here they come up with different answers.

49:19

But the answer to who knows best is Jesus.

49:23

He knows better.

49:23

He, he always knows best.

49:24

He's trustworthy.

49:26

And when we're conflicted, it can be hard, can't it?

49:29

But the Lord knows best and so with the enabling grace from the Father, the Son and the Spirit, Ananias is given the ability to do the difficult but God honouring thing because Jesus can't be any more clear.

49:44

Rise up and go.

49:47

So for any good disciple, of course it's not my will, but yours be done.

49:51

It's that I will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

49:54

Verse 17 plain simple.

49:56

Then Ananias went to the house.

50:00

Of course there are things that you and I know to be God's way clearly taught on the pages of of this book.

50:09

And sometimes, of course, we think we know better.

50:12

Well, it happens to me as well.

50:14

But none of us do.

50:15

None of us do the 10 commandments, the plain teaching of Scripture on things like stealing and lying and obeying our parents and letting our hearts wander to other lovers or loves, or committing adultery or coveting other New Testament instruction about things like marrying unbelievers or being

slothful or gossiping or Downing tools when the boss isn't around, or being at work when as little as you can get away with.

50:40

Or, or being at church, as little as you can get away with.

50:43

Or, I don't know, lots of things.

50:46

There are things that well, we need what I often call in our church sanctified reasoning for like non moral things, options, Gray areas, choices, forks in the road that could be this way or or could be that.

51:03

Should I, should I take the new job that had been offered?

51:05

Should I, should I pursue that Christian girl or not?

51:08

But but but of course the things that are clear are clear and you and I, it's our job as Christians to obey the plain teaching of Scripture.

51:21

And so Ananias dos, he obeys the plain teaching of Jesus, encouraging Ananias.

51:27

Secondly, tonight strengthening Saul, strengthening Saul.

51:32

Sorry, Jesus says to to Ananias to get up and go.

51:35

His information is limited.

51:37

He, he just knows that that in the House of Judas he'll find a blind Saul praying.

51:43

Verse 17 tells us that Jesus has also told him about the events on the Damascus road from this morning.

51:49

So he knows about that too.

51:52

Ananias has told that Saul will be expecting him, that he he's also been in receipt of another vision prediction of a man called Ananias.

52:02

I wonder who he is arriving and laying hands on him and enabling him to receive his sight.

52:09

So off Ananias goes.

52:10

Straight street is still, I'm told, the main kind of East West thoroughfare in Damascus.

52:17

I'm sure it was a nervous journey, wasn't it?

52:20

Ananias is a bit of a forgotten man in the story of the New Testament.

52:25

It's not the same one that's married to Sapphira, of course, that's a different Ananias.

52:28

He's been buried along with his wife back in the early part of Acts.

52:32

But this Ananias is a bit more of a forgotten man because of course his his his natural reticence is certainly understandable, but his step of faith is real important.

52:44

And a bit like Abraham, he gets up and goes at the command of God.

52:50

And his role really has a vital 1 because he, he's the man that brings Saul kind of into the fold.

52:58

He brings him God's word.

52:59

He also heals him by God's power.

53:00

He equips him, he encourage him, encourages him, he baptizes him.

53:05

And when he we find him in Judas house, he calls him what he calls him brother Saul.

53:13

Powerful isn't it, Brother Saul.

53:17

This is the guy that's got murderous intent.

53:20

14 verses before brother Saul, 16 verses before I better get the mas right, brother Saul.

53:31

And he's the first one to do that.

53:34

He's his only friend in Damascus.

53:38

Those who are Saul's friend are probably about to disown him.

53:43

Ananias goes in faith, he shows that he believes God on this and he accepts Saul as a fellow believer, as a fellow part of the family of God.

53:52

Of course, that's what the word brother means.

53:53

You're part of the family.

53:57

I'm sure his palms were sweaty as he placed them on the face of Saul.

54:00

I'm sure they were shaking.

54:03

Verse 18 tells us what happened.

54:05

Then immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could see again.

54:10

He got up and and was baptized Luke, who writes Acts of the Apostles as well as Luke's gospel.

54:17

He's using this medical terminology here, isn't he, to tell us that scales fell from his eyes?

54:22

He's a medical doctor.

54:25

But this is also a picture of what's gone on spiritually because Saul was recently, of course, in darkness and part of the realm of darkness and fighting for the side of darkness.

54:35

And now he's in light and part of the Kingdom of light and starting to fight for the Kingdom of light too.

54:41

Something like skills fell from his eyes.

54:44

He, he, he regains his sight, he rises to his feet and he's and he's baptized presumably by Ananias.

54:52

And that's of course, another physical picture of what's going on spiritually.

54:56

And you had that last Sunday night, didn't you?

54:58

Five times over.

54:58

Wonderful, because he's buried with Christ in baptism and raised in newness of life.

55:05

It's a spirit.

55:06

It's a physical picture of what's going on spiritually already.

55:10

And this baptism, of course, is this public declaration of Saul's new found faith, this big change in his life's direction.

55:17

And three, three days since his last meal, he takes some food and is strengthened.

55:22

The physical changes are are clear, but don't miss the spiritual work.

55:29

He was to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

55:32

Verse 17 says that Ananias came with that rule as well.

55:35

Laying on his hands will do that with God's power for Saul.

55:40

The Spirit, of course, was already active in Saul's life.

55:44

He convicted him of his sins.

55:47

He convinced him of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

55:50

He converted him on the on the Damascus Rd.

55:52

the other day, placing him into Christ's body, the church indwelling him permanently, the Holy Spirit.

55:59

But beyond that, Saul was now to be filled with the Spirit we're told Felt verse 18.

56:07

He was to be what every believer should desire and ask to be, to be filled with the presence and power of God for whatever service God has for us, not just in dwell, but filled for Saul.

56:25

It was a ministry to the Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel.

56:29

What has he for you?

56:31

What has he for you?

56:34

He's something for you people to pour into, to be an instrument in the lives of maybe your father, maybe your wife, maybe your children, maybe somebody else's children, maybe the guy across the office, the girl in the next ward, the guy in your CU, the man that works in the shop in the street corner.



56:59

And the Spirit of God takes Saul as he is with remember, with his with his forthrightness, his, his get up and go, his self motivated determination with his gifts and, and thinking and reasoning.

57:10

And and he takes all those good bits and he and he uses them for gospel good.

57:17

He also takes those bad bits and he transforms them into good the things like heat for Christians and to love for Christians.

57:24

It is his rough treatment of people into that care and gentleness that Christians have his his pride becomes humility and so he does with us because the get up and goes by nature are get up and goers for God.

57:40

The good with engaging with teenagers are good with engaging with teenagers for God.

57:44

The chatty or chatty for God the book smart or book smart for God the caring are good at caring for others that the sport you're able to to use sport to reach people for God the the winsome or gospel winsome for God and you you see what I mean.

57:58

I wonder, do you see yourself as having a part to play in the lives of other Christians in your church?

58:08

Ananias wasn't a Bible teacher, as far as we know.

58:12

He was merely referred to as a disciple of Jesus.

58:16

But he's pouring into Saul, isn't he?

58:21

People getting saved is wonderful.

58:24

The recipients of God's grace.

58:26

It's a wonderful miracle.

58:27

But what about those people getting disciplined, being added to the church in in baptism, being shown the pathway to maturity that we may present everyone mature in Christ?

58:39

Colossians Matthew 28 at the very end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said go and make converts.

58:49

No, he doesn't.

58:50

No, he doesn't.

58:51

He says go and make disciples, followers, apprentices, husbands tonight I, I speak as a husband too.

59:01

It's, it's, it's our life's work to by God's grace, seek to encourage and speak into this woman that God has given us to see her by God's grace get to heaven.

59:11

But but but to to pour into her that that's our life's work.

59:16

Fathers, I, I speak as a father.

59:18

It's also our life's work by God's grace to to pour into the lives of these children that he's given us.

59:24

If he has that to point them in the direction of the only Saviour in the world to protect them from the Wild West of the secular agenda being dripped, drip fed into them.

59:37

And in the church we're all family.

59:39

So that brings in all the children of the church for each of us, all the women of the church and all the men of the church see as your sisters and your brothers and all the sisters as your sisters and all the brothers as your brothers.

59:51

And of course, we want to encourage them all in the right direction.

59:56

You know that you have an influence over someone every time you meet them.

59:59

No matter how little you say or what you do, you know that it's impossible to not have an influence on someone.

1:00:06

But the question is, of course, says is it positive or is it negative?

1:00:12

It's actually impossible to not influence someone.

1:00:13

So the issue is what direction are you influencing them in?

1:00:17

Because we influence them one way or the other.

1:00:20

So we want to encourage them in the right direction, don't we?

1:00:25

We want to build them up and not tear them down.

1:00:27

We don't want to provoke them in the wrong way.

1:00:30

We do.

1:00:30

We don't want to to crush them.

1:00:33

We want to influence them in a Christ like direction.

1:00:41

He's the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

1:00:47

Colossians one verse 28 and of course Jesus tells us to do this and it's plain and it's clear in Scripture and all of us can understand this.

1:00:58

Let me show you Ephesians chapter 4 verse 32.

1:01:01

Be kind and compassionate to one another.

1:01:03

Hebrews 10:25 encouraging one another.

1:01:07

James 5:16 Pray for each other first.

1:01:09

Peter 3 verse eight, Love one another deeply from the heart and the same book in chapter 4 verse 10.

1:01:16

Each one should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.

1:01:22

You see, Ananias is no apostle.

1:01:25

He's no elder, as far as we know.

1:01:26

He's no pastor, as far as we can tell.

1:01:28

But he has another brother to minister to.

1:01:30

He has another member of the Church of Jesus Christ to build up to, to pour into, to disciple, to strengthen.

1:01:37

And so he does, by God's grace.

1:01:40

He's an instrument, isn't he?

1:01:41

He's already been a recipient, but now he's an instrument who are yours to pour into people as God brought across your way to pour into.

1:01:57

We get some sense in these verses, don't we that that God's at work in this pouring into because I don't know if you noticed that but but there's a kind of sense of the progress of the apostle.

1:02:08

Sorry of the of Saul that that Ananias has been used of God in that he was an instrument and he he's baptized.

1:02:16

We see that he he's now joined verse 19 to the other disciples.

1:02:21

He joins the community of believers.

1:02:24

Saul spent several days we read at the end of 19 with the disciples in Damascus.

1:02:30

Some interesting introductions there.

1:02:32

I'm sure now who's this you've brought with you today, Ananias Saul of Tarsus you what Saul of Tarsus, right baptized and and joined up with the other believers.

1:02:47

But then notice verse 20 at once.

1:02:50

He began that Saul to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the son of God's Saul, of course, being Saul, but now on God's side and equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells him.

1:03:04

He's not wasting any time.

1:03:05

He's a get up and go, isn't he?

1:03:07

And he's straight away going to find where the people are that he needs to get to straight to the synagogue for that's where the people are gathered.

1:03:16

He knew this already, but he's not going this time to capture Christians, is he?

1:03:21

He's going this time to be an instrument to make them look at what he's preaching.

1:03:26

Look at his words that he's saying.

1:03:27

And the verse 20 that Jesus is the Son of God.

1:03:31

That's of course blasphemy to the Jews.

1:03:33

And Jesus himself refers to him as the Son of God in John 10:36.

1:03:37

They they called it that and he tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands and he said I and the father are one A few verses earlier they picked up stones to throw at him.

1:03:49

Saul gets his sight back.

1:03:51

The spirit fills him and he strengthens.

1:03:53

That's important here.

1:03:54

He's growing.

1:03:56

He's he's strengthening.

1:03:58

The first thing he does is to preach, to say publicly that Jesus is the Son of God and and the people are shocked.

1:04:04

Verse 21.

1:04:06

Well, we know what they're saying, don't we?

1:04:09

It's incidentally the same word in the street that Ananias has heard.

1:04:13

The same two things are being said about Saul on the street.

1:04:17

That Saul was causing havoc among the believers in Jerusalem, all who called on Jesus name.

1:04:23

And also that Saul was now present in Jerusalem with the sole purpose of bringing Christians back as prisoners to the chief priests.

1:04:32

It's funny how the same rumor has kind of made it to Ananias and also to all these people that are surprised that Saul is one of them.

1:04:42

Saul says Jesus is the Son of God.

1:04:44

Then verse 22 he he grows some more, yet Saul grew more and more powerful.

1:04:49

He grows in the things of God, not so much physical, it's spiritual.

1:04:54

And then he's proving by verse in verse 22, the he's proving that Jesus is, is, is the Christ verse 22 there at the end that Jesus is the Messiah.

1:05:07

He's he's confounding the, the, the, the word is that the Jews in Damascus by by kind of contending and disputing and, and arguing as as an apologist.

1:05:17

Even you could say confounding in fact, shows that that he's kind of winning the arguments.

1:05:24

If it's a boxing match, he's clearly landing the bigger punches.

1:05:29

He's not just saying that Jesus is the son of God and preaching it.

1:05:32

He's now showing, proving it from their scriptures, pushing back their arguments against which of course he often used himself before, with arguments now for being persuasive, encouraging Ananias, strengthening Saul.

1:05:48

Finally, tonight we see threatening Jews.

1:05:52

Saul's in Damascus.

1:05:53

His reason for being there, of course, is to bring trouble for the Christians.

1:05:56

And now there's trouble for him in Damascus because he's a Christian.

1:06:00

Saul has gone from causing havoc in the synagogues to causing havoc in the synagogues here.

1:06:06

He's causing havoc for the sake of the gospel, saying what lots of people don't want to hear, entering into debate with really quite smart people with theological know how, and being annoyingly good at it and persuasive in his arguments.

1:06:21

And the way these things are put in the tenses here, it's happening over and over, day after day, confounding, debating, showing.

1:06:29

Saul has here begun.

1:06:31

What will be a pattern for his ministry.

1:06:34

Find a town or city, find a synagogue, preach.

1:06:40

That's what he does over and over.

1:06:42

And we can see Saul strengthening and developing before our very eyes.

1:06:46

And these verses, he's growing as a Christian.

1:06:49

He's saying, he's preaching, he's proving.

1:06:52

And now he's going to live out his belief that Jesus is the Savior in another way, because just like Jesus said in general to his apprentices with him, those who share the gospel will suffer for the gospel, just like Jesus said to Ananias.



1:07:11

Specifically in the case of Saul in verse 16, Saul must suffer for the gospel.

1:07:16

I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.

1:07:20

So he's progressed further, hasn't he?

1:07:23

He's went from preaching to proving, and now he's going to suffer for the name of Christ.

1:07:29

So after many days, enough time that verse 25 tells us he's got followers of his own, he's got his own disciples.

1:07:36

He's pouring into others here, isn't he, those he's teaching.

1:07:43

After many days, his former allies get the grasp of what's really going on, and they turn on him and they plot to kill him.

1:07:48

There's a conspiracy.

1:07:49

He's a wanted man.

1:07:50

He's Public Enemy #1 they're watching the gates of the city night and day to get him.

1:07:56

Nothing easy, of course, about being a wanted man.

1:07:59

Don't romanticize it.

1:08:00

This is difficult.

1:08:01

Something easy about publicly siding with the gospel in Jesus Christ.

1:08:04

And what Jesus Christ plainly says in the Bible brings difficulty, doesn't it?

1:08:12

Putting your head above the parapet to be shot at, as it were.

1:08:16

But like Moses, he gets the basket treatment and is lowered down by night by the disciples and escapes through a hole in the city wall.

1:08:26

Not a very dignified way for the friend of the high priest to leave town, but he escapes with his life because God has more for him to do.

1:08:36

This of course not the case that every everyone of God's people loses their life for their faith when it when it seems difficult or there's a real threat that that depends on God, he decides.

1:08:49

Stephen, of course, lost his life, but in the case of Saul, he, he lives to witness another day.

1:08:54

Here he grows into someone who identifies himself with the gospel of Jesus and can, with the empowerment of God, suffer for the message of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour, the one way, the only way.

1:09:10

Do you know him tonight?

1:09:14

He's the only way, the truth and the life.

1:09:17

He's Jesus, he's offered to you.

1:09:22

It's it's wrong of me to sit down and not offer Christ to you tonight.

1:09:27

You need him.

1:09:29

You need to to turn from your sin and trust in him.

1:09:33

Otherwise there really is danger for you had it really is the pattern of course, is not actually find a town or city, find a synagogue and preach for for Saul.

1:09:45

It's it's find a town or city, find a synagogue, preach and then suffer that that's that's really the pattern.

1:09:52

But as we conclude, I want to bring some words of application from God's word tonight.

1:10:00

No matter how hostile your city or town is to Jesus, live as his chosen instrument here and now.

1:10:09

Seek to obey Christ, Seek to to obey the Lord.

1:10:12

Seek to disciple others, to to, to build them, to pour into them.

1:10:20

You want to grow yourself in the things of God, But but then you want to love your brothers and sisters in church to, to seek the good of them, to seek to see them grow to to be rooted and grounded in the faith, to grow in their knowledge of Christ, their love of Christ.

1:10:33

Seek people you know to be saved, but also to be disciplined.

1:10:36

That's important.

1:10:38

That's how the gospel spreads.

1:10:40

That's how we have more of God's people in our Dark World.

1:10:44

That's how we seek the good of this city, this town, isn't it?

1:10:50

Think of ways you can influence them towards Christ and not away from him.

1:10:56

Act like a friend, sister.

1:10:58

You're not a competitor, you're not an enemy.

1:11:02

Show no hostility to each other.

1:11:03

We're we're on the same side.

1:11:05

Bless them and seek to be an instrument for good in them.

1:11:13

Let's pray together, shall we?

1:11:20

Our Father God, we, we do thank you for your work of grace that we have received.

1:11:26

If we know the Saviour tonight.

1:11:28

And also, Father, as we've been thinking in the second part of Acts 9, your work of using us as an instrument of your grace in the lives of others, Give us help, opportunities, wisdom and courage this week as we seek this Father.

1:11:47

For we know this is the plain teaching of Scripture and we as Christians will we obey Scripture.

1:11:53

Give us the grace to do that and the help by your Spirit in Jesus name we ask, Amen.