

240602am Sermon Transcript

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Acts 9:1-10

(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.

44:05

If you have one of the church Bibles against page 1102, we're turning to Acts Chapter 9. Good to have the text open in front of us if you can.

44:22

Acts Chapter 9 that Helen that read for us earlier

44:31

just with God's word open before us. Pray for a moment, shall we?

44:39

My Father opened our eyes that we may see

44:43

wonderful truths in your law

44:46

and thereby find Christ and in Him everything that we need,

44:50

and we pray this in His name.

44:53

Ohh man, ohh man. I wonder who is the person that you could think of that would be the least likely person to become a Christian?

45:05

Someone that you know, someone that you rub shoulders with, someone that you can think of in your street and your work in the college that you attend. Someone that you think is really unlikely that they would ever become a Christian. Let's put a name to them. Let's put a face in your head to the name and think about them for just a moment with me.

45:25

I quite often visit with a man who doesn't keep very well physically, but he usually has a story to tell me when I visit him of someone most unlikely that has come to Christian faith that that he tells me about someone living near him who's been involved in in sin of a very public and notorious variety, someone embedded in criminal activity, someone in deep and yet not too deep for God to reach him. And so when I'm there with them, we get to rejoice together in the in the power of God and and and and changing lives

46:01

around once again. For he he can and he still does,

46:07

think of someone with me. Maybe like a, a Stephen Fry,

46:11

he's gonna come up on the screen someone he, he's Jewish by heritage, but he's fully convinced as, as a homosexual, he's, he's foul mouthed and most importantly in his, in his critique of all things Christian, he's really vehement against Christians.

46:25

When he was interviewed in 2015 by an Irish broadcaster called Gay Byrne, Fry was asked what he would say if he came face to face with God.

46:37

To which you replied, I would ask him, how dare you create a world where there is such misery? That's not our fault. It's utterly, utterly evil.

46:50

He's a Christ rejector, isn't he? Of notorious variety? Could he? Could Stephen Fry become a Christian?

46:58

What would that take? Is that possible

47:01

today at join with me as we consider here in Acts Chapter 9 this passage and and learn firstly that God can save anyone he wishes. God can save anyone he wishes. We're in the early days of the church here. That's where we find ourselves in the Bible at Pentecost has brought a a new era as the gospel goes out

47:24

in chapter #8 at Phillip has just been preaching through the towns all the way up north to to Cesaria north of Israel. As we would understand it. He's been in part by the Spirit of God, the breath of God. He he's been sharing the good news and people are believing the life giving message and they're coming to faith in Jesus.

47:45

Meanwhile, that's the first word of of Chapter 9, isn't it? Meanwhile, Saul, well, he's been doing something different. He's been travelling up north to up on further north to Damascus in in Syria, as it still is today, but he's been doing quite the opposite there. There's breath, but but he's breathing out. We read murderous threats. He he's a real get up and go type Saul. He isn't he, he's a he's a go getter. We might call him where I'm from. He's very self motivated. That's all. He's fully determined to do what he set his mind to do. No stone unturned,

48:22

that kind of idea.

48:24

No, he's not just threatening the disciples of Jesus. He's verse one, breathing out murderous threats against the disciples of Jesus. It's all he can think about. It's all he wants to do. It's part of every few seconds of every waking day, just like breathing. As to all of us,

48:44

he's self motivated and indeed Satan motivated, we can also say in his pursuit of Christian believers, although of course he wouldn't see it like that.

48:54

Soul is a really fearsome character if you're a Christian and Acts chapter 8:00 and 9:00 if you're a Christian and these early church days, he's a great opponent. He's a he's a Christ rejector of the notorious variety.

49:09

Determination is sort of coming out of him.

49:13

He knows what they're saying about Jesus of Nazareth. He knows how these pesky Christians like Peter and John and Philip are, are sort of turning his world upside down with this message, this message that that Jesus is the Messiah, that Jesus has risen from the dead, that Jesus is God and saves people. He's fed up hearing about Jesus,

49:35

and he's fed up with how much the message has spread already.

49:39

He's thoroughly against what he would see as such heretical teaching. He stood by, minding the clutches, fully approving of the stoning of of young Stephen.

49:51

He's now wanting to kill for himself

49:54

and he's willing to travel to do it.

49:57

Saul is from Tarsus that that's a place in Sicilia near the the South East coast of of of southeast corner of Turkey, as we would know it today.

50:08

He's been trained well as a, a Jew of Jews, a Pharisee of Pharisees under famous teacher Gamaliel and and he's been, according to verse two, meeting with the high priest down in Jerusalem

50:20

at Jewish

50:21

headquarters. There's only one temple, it's in Jerusalem, but there are lots of local synagogues wherever you find Jews across the region. And the reason he's there speaking with the high priest is to get letters for the synagogues in Damascus

50:38

to have tea and the kind of official authority for his actions, allowing him to seize any followers of Jesus he found there and to bring them back to Jerusalem as captives to face further punishment there. Men, women, he doesn't care. Makes no difference.

50:57

This confirms Paul really as determined and aggressive and as pursuit of Christians.

51:04

But it also confirms, doesn't it, that the Christian message has burst through the northern border. The persecution after Stephen died has spread out the Christians and they've now breached the northern border.

51:17

Not only do they exist quietly in Damascus, but they're known publicly in the public square to be there.

51:24

Divine activity of God has spread the people. They've been gloriously saved and they're showing it,

51:31

but Saul's not happy about it. Not one little bit.

51:35

We can see that phrase mentioned there in verse 2. The way it's in capital letters. The way in is a capital in your NIV Bible because it's, it's an important phrase. It's been used here for the first time. If he found any, we read who belong any there who belonged to the way he intended to capture them and bring them back to Jerusalem. That word way, of course, is it means a road or, or a path or a, or a direction. I, I travelled the way to North Leamington school this morning and, and so did you.

52:09

But it's also, it's also more of a summary word. It, it has something to do with, it has to do with, with believing, with, with being instructed in something that you then accept and, and, and embrace the way. That's the way it's used in Acts chapter 18. He that that is Apollus we read had been instructed in the way of the Lord, though he only knew that baptism of John, not Christian baptism. And then Priscilla and Aquila invited him to their home to explain to him the way of God more adequately.

52:43

It's something you

52:45

can embrace and and believe. It's also something you can belong to. Verse two says that Saul was seeking those men and women who belong to the Way.

52:56

I belong to the way. It was something you could say in those days and, and people would have known what you meant by that.

53:02

You know, Sarah, you know, I heard Sarah. She, she now belongs to the way. That's the kind of way it would have been put.

53:08

This of course, refers to the way of Christ. You don't need to know your Bible very well to know John chapter 14, verse six. I am the way and the truth and the life Jesus said believing in Him, belonging to him.

53:24

But it's not just the way to salvation. It's, it's more than that, that word way. It's it's a way to live. It's a it's a whole Christian manner of, of life. It's, it's how you live now. It's it's, it's believing in Jesus, it's belonging to Jesus and it's becoming like Jesus. You could put it like that the way.

53:44

How are things for you this morning on the way

53:48

the way of Jesus living

53:52

for Jesus you're you're not marked by Christ on the inside only and and hidden from the eyes of others. No, no, it's something that shapes all of you. The way you live is impacted. It shows

54:04

you have different priorities, different goals, different desires to everyone else that you know

54:10

you know, to put this off the Bible talks about and put on that way of living

54:16

the way as a phrase used five more times later in Acts. Paul, incidentally, is in in Ephesus speaking in a in a synagogue himself for for three months back Later on in Acts chapter 19 and and he says this, but some of them became obstinate. They refused to believe and publicly maligned the way

54:38

Sue Paul left them, and he took his disciples with him and had discussions dearly and the lecture hall of Tyrannus. What? What were they speaking evil of?

54:47

Someone having a quiet personal saviour called Jesus and keeping it nice and quiet.

54:53

No, they were speaking evil of the whole package. Aren't weren't they the the life changing message, yes, the whole manner of living, yes, But that sort of that reaching out and seeking to win others with it as well. They they, they were speaking evil of that

55:09

like we read in the chapter later on verse 23. About that time, there arose a great disturbance about the Way.

55:17

You see, the way is something that causes a stir in acts and it's still DOS

55:22

because there are some who will reject

55:25

and some who will believe,

55:27

but we don't know who or who.

55:31

We have league tables of those people that we think are unlikely in our heads. I think

55:36

that Falmouth boss of yours, that woman you live near that's had more partners than Elizabeth Taylor, although lesser Elizabeth at least married them. I guess your schoolmate who who's been on recreational drugs for years? Not very likely.

55:51

The political leader who's been known for his shady past and has several High Court injunctions out? Not very likely,

55:59

but the truth is,

56:01

The truth is

56:03

that God is in charge of the Lambs book of life, not us,

56:08
and he sometimes confines our expectations completely.

56:13
Saul, you'll agree with me. It's not an obvious candidate for Christian faith as he makes his way along the road to Damascus

56:21
to imprison those people following the Christian faith is he?

56:28
But there's a great light in the sky.

56:32
There's a great light in the sky.

56:34
God is about to reveal himself in all his glory.

56:38
I wonder

56:40
you you might be too far South, I don't know. Did you catch any of the the Northern Lights that were unsure a few Friday nights ago last month that it reached this far? I was outside my house taking pictures, sharing them on the family WhatsApp group.

56:54
Plenty of people across the USA and and Canada and Mexico stood and watched in awe as the sun passed over them that Monday afternoon in April and the solar eclipse that that pathway of totality swept across the continent.

57:10
But this is a light better than the Aurora borealis and brighter even than the noonday sun. That's what Paul says when he talks about it later in Acts chapter 22. And Saul, he hits the ground, he falls to the ground and he and he hears this voice and verse four, the voice says, ask the question, Saul, Saul,

57:32
why do you persecute me?

57:35
No, Saul isn't persecuting him.

57:39
Not unless the one speaking as a Christian living in Jerusalem or even someone living in Damascus that he's about to get to.

57:47

But Jesus of course told his disciples in John 15 verse 20 that if they persecute me, they will also persecute you.

57:56

But here Jesus says that when they persecute you, they also at the same time

58:03

persecute Him. It's not a different event. It's the same event

58:08

because Jesus identifies with his followers in such a way that when they are persecuted, then he is persecuted.

58:17

Jesus said it was suing in Matthew chapter 26, although the other way around. Just just stay with me for a moment because because they say to him, you know, how did we welcome you Lord and and clothe you and give you food and water? How how did we do that? The faithful say to Jesus and and this is what Jesus answered him. Matthew 25 verse 40. The King will answer them truly. I tell you, whatever you did for for one of the least of these, my brothers and sisters of mine,

58:46

you dead for me.

58:48

In other words, if you give of your goods to your church family, when you treat them well, it's it's giving to him.

58:56

It's treating Jesus well,

58:59

but of course the opposite is true. If you treat them badly, you treat the Lord Jesus badly too. Those things go together to put it the way Saul will later in the visions. 4 those who belong to to the way to the church are the body of Christ. That idea that the kids were learning about the the body in their in their bite sides truth, weren't they? The body is actually the body of Christ. They're they're Christ's body, the church. And so when you do violence to them, you do violence to him. He feels they're peeing.

59:36

He's acquainted with their grief and sorrow and loss,

59:40

and he can add anyone to his church.

59:43

We knew what to start. God can see of anyone. Secondly, we notice now that God leads everyone he serves to encounter Jesus.

59:52

Take note,

59:54

take note with me that Saul is not trying to find a meeting place where he can hear the gospel.

1:00:01

Is not right.

1:00:02

He he's he's actually trying to find a meeting place where he can do anti gospel to capture and and kill Christians.

1:00:09

Take note that Saul is not just sort of wandering along the road and hearing a bit of a of singing on a Sunday morning and wondering if there's anything interesting going on in there that he might hear about stumbling in and hearing the gospel preached from from the pulpit. That's not what's happening.

1:00:26

Notice here that Saul is not seeking Christ,

1:00:29

each seeking the opposite. He's seeking Antichrist, that damage to Christ. No, no, he he wouldn't see it that way, of course.

1:00:41

But here

1:00:43

he is stopped in his tracks by Almighty God. The light shines down and they're on the main road outside Damascus. He meets God face to face

1:00:54

without any warnings. His plans are in disarray

1:00:58

and he meets the one by whom God reveals himself to man and always does. He meets the Son of God.

1:01:05

You could call it a theophany. That's a fancy word for when God appears in our world. There are a number of them in the Bible, Old Testament. We think about, you know, Abraham by the likes of Mamare. We think about Hagar or Jacob's ladder or Moses at the burning Bush. And God appears. In

fact it happens to Moses as many times after that when he's in that tent of meeting and he speaks to God face to face as a man speaks to his friend.

1:01:29

Happened to Gideon's parents, Manuel and his wife. But this is a little bit different because this is the New Testament. So when the Son of God appears after the cross work and resurrection, it's the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ that appears,

1:01:45

Saul says to himself in First Corinthians 15, speaking about the appearance of Jesus. He says Then he that's the risen Christ appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also

1:01:59

as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles, and do not even deserve to be called an apostle because I persecuted the Church of God. Indeed, you dead soul,

1:02:10

but by the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than anything, yet not I but the grace of God that was with me.

1:02:22

How did this happen?

1:02:26

How did this happen?

1:02:28

Well, God did. This

1:02:30

soul was trying to do the opposite, but God moved, God acted in his grace and when God moves, it's never in vain. To use the phrase that Paul talks about there, it was not without a fact.

1:02:42

This is all clearly an action of God. You're gonna have great difficulty explaining it any other way.

1:02:47

The light shines. Dying soul hits the floor. Soul comes face to face with God in the person of Jesus, who is currently in heaven at the the Father's right hand.

1:02:57

And so as a result, there's only one Lord and only one way for Him. Now

1:03:02

he answers Jesus verse 15 with

1:03:04

that question, Who are you? Lord?

1:03:09

There's a there's a negative here and and a positive

1:03:13

who are you? Lord is is a is a recognition of of deity of that that he knew it was the Lord God's all dead.

1:03:23

It's not hard to believe that he already knew the answer to the question as he answered the question as he asked the question, if not by faith yet, but certainly by fear. Who are you Lord?

1:03:35

The whole Christian gospel has filled his mind negatively for many many days all the time as he poured out his anti gospel passion to persecute believers. He

1:03:48

But Can you imagine his worst imaginable nightmare as he begins to discover that the Jesus was that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, that Christianity was in fact true, and that the gospel was God's truth and that he had been indeed fighting God?

1:04:04

He knew he was wrong. He knew he was a Sinner and it was his fault. It was nobody else's and saw, heard the words, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. And at that moment the light of truth is confirmed in his soul, and the gospel goes from from bad news to good news, and it becomes positive,

1:04:23

wonderfully positive.

1:04:27

Jesus, whom he believed to be, who whom he believed to be, to have died, was obviously alive and obviously who he claimed to be. And the Lord reminded him at that very moment how pointless his efforts were, and also how painful

1:04:43

to fight for the other side.

1:04:46

In Acts chapter 26, we find out that the Lord Jesus actually said a little bit more to Saul. He said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads. A goat as a kind of pointed stick you might use to steer an animal.

1:05:02

Solves clear reticence. Was crushed instantly

1:05:07

and his heart broken by repentance, was healed by faith and he knew Jesus by faith now. Alright,

1:05:15

Philippians 3 describes the mental and heart change that occurred in him and that moment and that crossroads and that dramatic switch when he writes the I myself have reason for confidence if someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh. I have more circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews in regard to the law of Farasi. As for zeal persecuting the church As for righteousness based on the law faultless and here's the switch. But whatever were gains to me, now I consider loss for the sake

1:05:52

of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God. On the basis of faith. I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like Him in His death and so somehow attaining to the resurrection

1:06:29

from the dad. That's how Paul puts it.

1:06:32

Saul becomes Paul, and this is what Paul says happened that night.

1:06:37

The work of God that day, the work of God by grace through faith is always that dramatic. Did you know that

1:06:45

it's always that much of a miracle? The work of God and salvation?

1:06:49

Not much of A turn around.

1:06:51

Ephesians one talks about dead to alive. Spiritually speaking. Kingdom of darkness to Kingdom of light is the way the Bible puts it.

1:07:02

Now we we can think about big turnarounds,

1:07:05

big bad people coming to Christ, and testimonies that are wonderful. And then we also think about small matters, small affairs, small conversions. No big deal.

1:07:15

But that is not true.

1:07:19

We know Saul was bad,

1:07:21

murderous in his intentions,

1:07:23

but we don't think of ourselves or our friends or family. Is that bad?

1:07:28

But bad we be, as he breaks the rules of English grammar. Maybe not by outward action, but by. But rebels be rebels. Hearts darkened by sin be darkened by sin, remember?

1:07:43

Yeah, by God's action, Saul is given a clean slate to sins that are many,

1:07:49

but his mercy is more

1:07:53

something that's true for all of us who have met with Jesus Christ. The way begins for him at soul can say in Galatians 220, I've been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me the life I now live in the body. I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. And of course that means that God can save anyone, doesn't it?

1:08:20

Because if you can see of an outspoken critic and blatant God hater with murderous intentions.

1:08:28

Although of course you won't leave him in that state.

1:08:31

He will belong to the new and living way.

1:08:35

Well, then you can see if anyone, then he can see if you. If you don't know him this morning, he can bring anyone to an encounter with the risen Christ and to his or her knees and to his or her biblical senses. You can do that.

1:08:49

So that means you and I need to reject our expectations

1:08:53
of those we think are beyond gospel reach,

1:08:57
for they're not.

1:09:00
Even people that seem very opposed can soon be softened.

1:09:05
Even the foul mouth, the the cheater, the womaniser, the addict, the closet full of skeletons type whatever.

1:09:12
Maybe your husband, maybe your wife, maybe your waiver daughter, maybe your roommate, maybe your friend and work, maybe your next door neighbour, maybe the the guy that sits beside you in the lecture theatre. I don't know.

1:09:24
George Miller prayed for 60 years for two friends. One was converted just before he died and the other just after.

1:09:33
Of course

1:09:34
you must encounter Jesus Christ to be born again.

1:09:39
To become a Christian. You must encounter Jesus because of course he is the way. He says I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

1:09:49
It's not visual like it was with Saul, but it's certainly just as real and just as miraculous

1:09:57
because we meet Jesus

1:09:59
the risen Christ and his Word in the Bible, and God works through his Word and his Spirit. They kind of go together like that and makes miracles happen,

1:10:09
bring bringing light into our dark hearts and we, we, we, we, we see him with the eyes of faith turning us right around, breaking our ***** to sin. You cannot become a Christian without an encounter with Jesus Christ.

1:10:24

Have you had an encounter

1:10:26

with Jesus Christ?

1:10:28

It's not something we we make happen. It's about an action of God himself. It's received by faith. It's it's darkness to light for every one of us where he opens our eyes, spiritually speaking, our spiritually blinded eyes, and offers us his forgiveness.

1:10:45

And so today

1:10:47

loffer you Christ.

1:10:50

Perhaps you're still in darkness.

1:10:53

Perhaps everyone knows it, or no one knows it.

1:10:58

Perhaps you're still relying on the faith of your parents to cover you. It's not enough.

1:11:05

It's not anything. Actually. Never mind enough,

1:11:10

John Newton was brought up by his mother on the Westminster Catechism.

1:11:16

He learned it all like the kids were learning. The catechism, the New City Catechism is the new version in in some ways, the Westminster Catechism, the Presbyterian Catechism. He was brought up on that. He was taught to pray. But of course he went on to be a ruthless slave trader before God saved him one day and made him, amongst other things, a pastor and a hymn writer. And he wrote Amazing Grace, as you probably know. And he said this. It is certain that I am not what I ought to be,

1:11:43

but blessed be God, I am not what I once was.

1:11:47

God has mercifully bought, brought me up out of the deep Marie Claire, and set my feet upon the Rock. Christ Jesus. He has saved my soul, and now it is my heart's desire to extol and honour His

matchless, free, sovereign and distinguishing grace. Because by the grace of God, I am what I am. It is my heart's great joy to ascribe my salvation entirely to the grace

1:12:13

of God. I wonder, are you weary and worn out from the troubles of a broken world?

1:12:21

offer you Christ.

1:12:24

I wonder are you lacking friendship

1:12:27

in the in the day-to-day life that you live in? offer you Christ,

1:12:33

the sea of you. I wonder, are you lacking direction as you go about and seek to sort of find your way in the darkness? offer you Christ.

1:12:44

I wonder if you tried everything for satisfaction and found nothing but dissatisfaction? offer you Christ,

1:12:52

He can see if anyone He can lead every one to a saving encounter with Jesus.

1:13:02

You can see of Christians too for a wasted life. offer you Christ.

1:13:09

Finally, he recruits everyone who has encountered Jesus

1:13:14

to serve Jesus this morning. God recruits everyone who is in current or Jesus to serve Jesus. You see on the evidence of of Acts Chapter 9, when face to face with God,

1:13:25

you will not call him evil or unfair or give God a piece of your mind.

1:13:31

You will not.

1:13:32

You will definitely speaking by the knee

1:13:36

for that close to him. You will realise that He is the Lord God and you are not

1:13:41

if you can see rightly.

1:13:43

If you can see rightly, you will bow the knee and accept the mercy on offer if it's still on offer, because of course when when the time is over, you will buy the knee anyway. That's what the Bible teaches.

1:13:53

Only the stupid would point their pathetic finger at an all powerful awesome God and berate him.

1:14:02

But if by God's grace you can see spirits, he's speaking. What you would and should do is call him Lord,

1:14:10

call him Master,

1:14:12

declare him to be God's own up, repent from your sins, accept that gracious offer of a relationship and then await further instructions. Which is what? It's all of us.

1:14:24

Verse six is his first instruction as a follower of Jesus. What is it?

1:14:29

It's now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.

1:14:35

Soul has been raised with Christ. It's no longer he that lives, but Christ that lives in him. He's been giving a new life. He's been given new purpose and new priorities.

1:14:46

Soul is not his own boss. Soul is not in control of his life. He's handed it over, and he's handed it over to Jesus, the most trustworthy, Better hands than any of our own to hand it over to.

1:14:59

And Jesus has got work for us all to do,

1:15:02

and plenty of it.

1:15:04

He's going to be the apostle to the Gentiles. He's travelled, of course, for the devil's work, but now he's gonna travel for the work of Christ.

1:15:13

Jesus has made that deep and profound impact on Saul's life. It's kind of like an earthquake. It's going on in there.

1:15:20

Version. At least temporarily blind. He can't eat, he can't drink.

1:15:25

He's had a serious shock to the system.

1:15:28

He's had his life taken and turned right upside down.

1:15:31

What he counted as loss and he now counts. What he counted as gain in his own religious pedigree is now lost. What he kind of does loss is now gain. What he counted as heresy is now doctrine. What he counted as doctrine is now heresy. What he counted as worthy of great violence. He's now embraced as great truth,

1:15:50

and so Jesus, whom

1:15:52

he once rejected as now his Lord.

1:15:56

And you can say my Lord and my God,

1:15:59

like Thomas wants dead

1:16:02

and Jesus has worked for him to do

1:16:05

as he has for all of his people on earth. That's the reason why you're still breathing. That's why the reason why your heart still ticking away in there because you got work to do for the Lord as a Christian.

1:16:17

Jesus has saved him and brought him into the work team.

1:16:20

The first task for soul is to go into the city, into Damascus, where they'll be given further instructions. So he rises to his feet. We're told

1:16:28

the other man there, they heard a noise they didn't see or hear from. Hear from our C Jesus for Act 22 confirms that they saw a light

1:16:38

but didn't understand the voice who was speaking.

1:16:41

But Saul understands, of course

1:16:45

he understands. His friends have,

1:16:48

Well, they're probably gonna be shortly not his friends any longer, but they lead him by the hand into Damascus.

1:16:54

And such as the impact on soul, such as the intensity of his encounter with Christ, that he doesn't eat or drink for three days and he's blind for that time too. He's got a time of reflection, a time without distraction. He's not, he's not on the smartphone as he, he's blinded. He's, he's sitting there and he's praying, isn't he? He's not distracted at all. He's got, he's got time to to quietly reflect. Verse 11 tells us he's praying

1:17:18

because an encounter with Christ who can see if anyone has caused a great shake up in Saul's life

1:17:24

and he's now going to shoot for the other side

1:17:29

just like all of us.

1:17:32

Pole trip says this work follows and all of my people all of the time model. No one has been chosen by God just to be a recipient of the redemptive work of his Kingdom. No everyone has been chosen to be a recipient has also been commissioned to be an instrument. Both of those things of the work of God of the Kingdom as well. God chooses to use ordinary messy people to accomplish his extraordinary divine work. You see you can't just be a recipient and not an instrument those that's not that's not an option. You're both

1:18:04

a recipient of the gospel of grace and an instrument of God's work in others. And we'll see more about that tonight.

1:18:12

But with me, brothers and sisters, this morning,

1:18:16

I want you to

1:18:18

think again about that person

1:18:21

that you were considering at the start and, and, and realise with me that if Saul is not out of reach, then they are not out of reach.

1:18:34

You're not out of reach. Tell them about Jesus

1:18:37

gently, winsomely, in a in a way that

1:18:42

that is appropriate for them. Whatever age they are.

1:18:48

Tell them about Jesus. He's the one they need to know.

1:18:51

And remember that God has more than likely recruited you to tell them.

1:19:00

Let's pray together, shall we?

1:19:02

Let's pray, Father,

1:19:04

we recognise your work in the Gospel of grace.

1:19:09

You can see how

1:19:10

unlikely Saul was as a candidate for Christian faith, and yet that is new obstacle to an awesome and all powerful God.

1:19:20
Give us a faith

1:19:22
that believes

1:19:25
not just in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but in the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes,
and our expectation will then shift. Father,

1:19:36
so that there are new league tables of the impossible,

1:19:41
but only those that we are to share

1:19:44
the message

1:19:46
and seek

1:19:49
to win for Christ.

1:19:51
Guide us and help us in Jesus name we ask. Amen.