

Marks

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources
Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

of Discipleship

May 17, 2020

Day 1: Acts 9:10-11

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.

Ananias responds to God's call with the traditional words "Here am I" Lord. He is responding the way Abraham, Samuel (Genesis 22:1-2, 1 Samuel 3:4,10) and all those in Israel's past who were called by God. Without knowing what God is asking we need to simply respond by saying "yes." This is true obedience and faith. For in order to simply follow, we must trust that God will never leave us alone (John 14:1-6).

Question: What activity are you afraid of? For example: sky diving or bungee jumping or going into a dark building. Why?

Challenge: If God asked you to go on a mission trip for three months what would stop you from going?

Scripture: Matthew 11:25-30

Day 2: Acts 9:12

In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

It was believed in the ancient world that healing was done by touch. The healer would touch the part of the person that was injured. Today we still find that touch can heal in ways that go beyond a medication. A parent's kiss can stop the pain for a child's hurt knee. A warm embrace can heal the pain of a loss. An extended hand in peace can stop the hurt of war.

Question: Why do you think Ananias had to lay hands on the person to restore his sight?

Challenge: How could you "lay hands" on someone to help heal them?

Scripture: Luke 18:15-17

Day 3: Acts 9:13-14

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

The challenge for Ananias was to be able to actually touch Saul, who had brought grief to many Christians. In addition, Ananias had to fear for his life because he did not know if Saul would turn around and arrest him. I recall a man who was an EMT talk about how he was giving mouth to mouth to someone and in the middle of the procedure that person vomited in his mouth. He said he just spit the vomit out, wiped his face and started again. I asked, "How can you do that?" He replied, "Because the person would die if I didn't."

Question: Who in our world today has caused the most harm and to whom?

Challenge: What would you do to save someone's life?

Scripture: Proverbs 29:1-16 especially 2 and 16

Day 4: Acts 9:15-16

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

God does not mind us asking real questions. God did not mind that Ananias was nervous or afraid. God wanted him to perform the task and knew that even as Ananias was worried, he was the right person with the right skills. I think what helped Ananias perform the task was that God told him that Saul prayed. He prayed for the first time from the heart - he asked Jesus to forgive him and Saul called Jesus Lord.

Question: Be honest - would you help someone who has persecuted and perhaps killed your friends?

Challenge: What would it take for you to help someone who has hurt and maybe killed people you care for?

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Day 5: Acts 9:17

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Saul is healed in the name of Jesus. He regained his sight and from now on would be able to see that would help us see God through his writings. The persons who were converted under his ministry saw because Saul was blind for a while. It is believed that in later life Saul - Paul suffered from an eye disorder (glaucoma?). He not only received his sight but the Holy Spirit had come upon him to be the constant presence of Jesus. This is still true today. The Holy Spirit is the constant presence of Jesus in our lives. We do not always feel the Spirit but we can feel it often enough to assure us that Jesus is with us. It is in worship and especially at communion that we sense the Spirit.

Question: What is the first thing you do when you enter someone's home?

Challenge: Can you find someone you might help "see" again?

Scripture: Acts 2:37-41

Day 6: Acts 9:18

Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again.

God gives us new life and immediately we can see more clearly. The scales that need to fall from our eyes are: fear of death, envy, fear that bad things may happen to us and fear that we may not get "enough" (food, clothes, shelter or love).

Question: How long can you stay in total darkness?

Challenge: Wear a blind fold and walk around your house. Take it off and walk around your house and see the difference.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-34