

A Damascus Road Experience

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[0 : 00] Well, with the Lord's help, let's turn back to Acts and chapter 9, a passage we read together.

Tonight, with the Lord's help, we're going to look at probably the most famous conversion story in the whole of the Bible. It's certainly, arguably, the biggest conversion in the literal sense of the word, because a conversion implies a change in life, a change in beliefs, and a change in practice.

And here is about as dramatic a change as you could possibly imagine, because this is a man here who is living in fierce opposition to the Gospel. So, he, arguably, he's the strongest and the biggest opposer of the Gospel in the whole of Jerusalem here at this time.

And yet, incredibly, this man is converted, and by the grace of God, he goes from being one of the biggest opposers of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to being one of the greatest ambassadors of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Quite an amazing change. And the experience that Saul went through here, it's a well-known and well-talked about experience.

[1 : 29] You often hear reference to this Damascus Road experience. It's even a phrase that's probably known by people who aren't Christians and don't really know much about the Bible.

You hear that phrase, a Damascus Road experience. And often, if people are actually recounting their testimony, they'll refer to this. Usually, in the negative, they'll say something along the lines of, well, I never had a Damascus Road experience.

For some reason, I'm not entirely sure why, but for some reason, people feel the need to compare their experience with the experience of Saul here.

And there are lots of people who actually struggle with this idea of assurance of faith, struggle with this concept of whether or not they're a Christian, because they've not had this kind of experience. They've not had this Damascus Road experience. But what we fail to understand is that Paul's conversion here, it's by no means normative.

[2 : 31] This is by no means normative. This is unique. And it is unique for a reason. And I'll touch on the reason for that, God willing, towards the end of the sermon.

It is unique. So we don't sit here thinking that we need to go through this specific kind of experience, that we need to have a Damascus Road experience before we come to realize that we are actually one of the Lord's people, that we have been saved.

So you don't have to have this precise type of experience. But having said that, there are still aspects of this conversion story which may well be paralleled in our experience.

Now, you're not going to have everything. And I'll explain why that is. But there are some things that you will perhaps relate to and perhaps you see it in your own conversion experience as well. And as we go through the passage, I'll try and lift out some of these things and try and make these kind of parallels with our own experience.

So first of all, let's look at Saul prior to this conversion. Now, we're introduced to Saul back in chapter 8 there.

[3 : 43] Now, if you know chapter 8 there, that's when Saul, he stood by and he watched Stephen being killed, Stephen the martyr, the first martyr.

And Saul stood by and actually watched this taking place. And we actually read that Saul was consenting to his death. And when you're reading that, you're perhaps wondering, well, in what way is Saul actually involved in this?

Is he just a bystander consenting to this? What's actually going on here? And then you come to chapter 9, the chapter that we're looking at here. And you realize that Saul was by no means just a bystander.

And you see that very clearly here. He's not just following the crowd as they engage in this kind of persecution of the Lord's people. He is a leader in it.

It's not just someone who was standing there watching on. He is very much a leader in this persecution that's going on. And we see him at the beginning of even this chapter here.

[4 : 46] And he's acting like an animal. It's like an animal. And that's how the narrator is describing him here. Look at him at the first verse there portraying Saul like this kind of a beast, like a lion.

The image of him breathing out threats and murder. That's the picture of a wild animal. It's a picture of a ferocious animal. That's the kind of image that the narrator is actually giving us here.

And back in chapter 8 and verse 3, you read there that Saul was ravaging the church. Now that word is a word like devouring. He's like an animal would devour something.

He's going around like some kind of an animal trying to devour its prey. So Saul is acting very much here like an animal. He's going around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

And in that sense, Saul is very much working on behalf of the devil himself. Here he's being a soldier of the devil. He perhaps, well, he definitely doesn't realize it.

[5 : 48] But that's exactly what he's doing. He's acting as a messenger and as a servant of the devil himself. And the scale of Saul's opposition here, it's quite remarkable.

He's not just content here with driving this so-called sect out of Jerusalem. He wants to do more than that. He wants to chase them off the very face of the earth.

He sees them leaving Jerusalem. He sees them going out and he sees them going to places like Damascus. And he's not happy just to say, well, at least they've left Jerusalem. I can forget about them now.

No, he goes out. He goes out after them. And he wants to absolutely destroy this so-called sect from the face of the earth.

And his zeal here is quite incredible, really. His boldness that you see here, remarkable. He's got an undisputed passion.

[6 : 47] When you look at him here, you're marveled by that zeal and boldness. And when you're actually reading about him here and when you read what he's like, you think to yourself, well, you know, how effective, how effective this would be if these particular characteristics that this man Saul is showing here, how effective it would be if these things were actually used for the kingdom of God?

How effective would it be if these things were used in order to further the gospel message? And, of course, that's exactly what God is about to do here. Because God is about to bring a conversion around here.

And he's going to turn this man's zeal and this man's passion and this man's boldness. And he's going to turn it so that he will use these things for the kingdom of God.

Because that's what the Lord does. That's what he does. See, we can be there with our gifts and certain characteristics. And before we're converted, we can use these things in a sinful way.

We can use these things for our own ends or for things that feed our own pride. But when the Lord comes in and when he brings about a conversion, he then uses these things, things which we used in a sinful way.

[7 : 58] And then he uses these things for the kingdom itself and for the furtherance of the gospel. And here you see a zealous and a passionate man. A man who God would use these things for good in the future.

But right here, right now, he's using this zeal in a sinful way. And he's heading out to Damascus. And as he goes out there, he takes a load of people with him. Probably temple guards or soldiers of some kind.

And they come with him and he goes out with one aim. He wants to destroy the Lord's people. He wants to destroy the followers of this man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as he's on this journey, you see him there, the Lord, the beginning of the passage, the Lord intervenes. And the Lord intervenes here in quite an extraordinary way.

It's interesting that the Lord actually takes Saul out of Jerusalem before he actually deals with him in this saving way. He takes him out of Jerusalem.

[9 : 02] And sometimes the Lord does that. Sometimes the Lord, what he does is he takes you out of your comfort zone. He takes you away from what you know. And he takes you out of there.

And then when he takes you out of there, then he deals with you. And then he enters into your life and actually brings about this conversion. And here, that's what he's doing. He's taking Saul here away.

He's taking Saul away from his usual surroundings. He's taking Saul away from his Pharisee friends. He's taking Saul away from the synagogue. He's taking Saul away from his family. He's taking Saul away from all the things that are distracting him in Jerusalem and causing a stumbling block for him. He's taking him out of there. And that's when the Lord begins to work in his life here.

And sometimes God does the same thing with ourselves. Sometimes he does the same thing with ourselves. Sometimes the Lord has to remove us in some way. Now, perhaps he might do that geographically.

[10:05] And perhaps he might actually remove us from a certain place. Maybe a place that we've been brought up in. A place that we know well. And he takes us out of there. And then he deals with us.

Or perhaps he might do that as well socially. And perhaps he might remove us from a certain group of friends. Certain people. Perhaps removing us from a certain kind of lifestyle.

And then when he takes us aside. When he removes us from that. Then he comes in. And then he breathes new life into your soul. That can very often be the experience of a lot of people.

Not everyone. But some people. That's how the Lord can work. And here, that's what happens with Saul. It's exactly what happens with Saul. He's taken out of Jerusalem. And then the Lord is going to deal with him here.

And on this journey in verse 3 there. You see that a light shone all around him from heaven. And this light here was so strong and so full of glory.

[11:03] That Saul falls to the ground. And he falls to the ground when this light shines. And a voice comes. And the voice says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

A tremendous sound. A tremendous sight. And a tremendous sound as well. Now, did Saul actually recognise who it was that was saying these words? Did Saul recognise the voice?

And who it was that was speaking? Well, when you're looking at the text here, it doesn't look as though he did, does it? It doesn't look as though he did at all. Because he asks the question there, who are you, Lord?

So, he doesn't seem to know who's actually speaking here. Now, Saul should have realised who was before him. He should have. Because this man knows his Old Testament. If anyone knows his Old Testament, it's Saul.

He knows his Old Testament. And he should have recognised this form of address here. When someone's name is repeated in this way. Saul, Saul. He should have recognised that.

[12:03] Straight away, he should have been reminded. Because when God spoke from heaven to the Old Testament saints, he often repeated their names. We read the passage in the morning, didn't we, in Genesis?

Abraham, Abraham. In another place, you read Moses, Moses. In another place, you read Samuel, Samuel. And here we read Saul, Saul.

He should have known that this was none other than the divine messenger himself. He should have recognised that. A man that knows his Old Testament very well. And as well, the voice is saying, why are you persecuting me?

And Saul knows fine well that he's persecuting the followers of Christ. He knows that. So, for a legal mind like Saul's, or like Paul's, it's for the sake of getting rid of confusion, Saul and Paul are, of course, the same person.

Apologies if I mix up the names a wee bit. For a person like Saul, with a legal mind like his, he should have worked out. He should have worked out that he was being addressed here by none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13:12] Christ was appearing to him in glorious light. But he doesn't recognise. And sometimes, when it comes to spiritual things, it doesn't matter how good our intellect is.

And it doesn't matter how clever we are. It doesn't matter how switched on we are. Sin can hide that which is absolutely, blindingly obvious. And that can happen.

And for many of the Lord's people in here, you can look back and see things that are so obvious now. But you didn't see it as obvious back then. Because sin was blinding you. And here Saul

should have known.

He should have known. But he doesn't. Certainly, he doesn't seem to. He doesn't seem to recognise it straight away. And of course, sometimes the same thing can happen with ourselves. You know, the Lord can be working right in front of you. He can be working right in front of your eyes. Right there. He can be working in your providence.

[14:07] He can be right before you in the word itself. In the things that are going on in your life. Right there. And yet you don't see it. And the reason you don't see it is because of sin.

Sin is blinding you from these things. And that's exactly what seems to be happening here. And in the Lord, he makes it absolutely crystal clear to Saul.

He opens Saul's eyes, spiritually speaking. I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now, talk about earth-shattering messages.

This is quite an earth-shattering message. Because this man here, he has devoted his life, or his life from this moment forward, he's devoted his life to persecuting the followers of Jesus.

And he's persecuting the followers of Jesus, because they're saying that Jesus is the Messiah.

They're saying that Jesus is the Son of the Living God. And Saul, of course, does not agree with that.

[15:07] And that's why he's going out. And that's why he's persecuting them. And now, here, as Jesus speaks to him, he realizes these people were right. I was wrong.

Jesus is indeed the Messiah. Jesus is indeed the Son of God. That is about as earth-shattering a message as you could ever receive.

Your whole worldview turned upside down. Here, his worldview and how he thought is completely destroyed in this one moment. Because he's aimed at destroying the so-called cult and the people of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now he's realized that they're right. It's completely changed his worldview. And that earth-shattering message is, of course, a message that we will all receive one day.

Every single one of us in here. We will all come to an understanding that Jesus is the Son of God. We will all come to an understanding that Jesus himself is the Messiah.

[16:14] But the solemn thing is that for some people, they will realize that when it's too late. Because the Word of God tells us that a day is coming.

A day is coming when every knee will bow. And when every tongue will confess, every tongue will acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ.

That Jesus is the Messiah. That Jesus is the Lord. That Jesus is the Son of God himself. But for some people, it will be too late.

Because by that point, by the point where your knee is bowed at that end of time, the day of salvation will have come to an end. And there will be no opportunity for salvation.

And my prayer is that all of us in here would come to see Jesus as our Savior today. Before it's too late. Because here, he appears before us in the Gospel account today, inviting you to turn to him.

[17:16] Inviting you to put your faith in him. Inviting you to experience a conversion of your own. Now, he doesn't promise you bright lights. He doesn't promise you that.

He doesn't promise you visions. He doesn't promise you some of these extraordinary things, perhaps, that other people have experienced. But he does offer you a conversion.

Where he calls on you to turn from your life of godlessness. To turn from your life of sin. And to come and bow the knee before him. And put your faith in him.

And acknowledge him as your Savior. You will bow. Make no mistake about that. You will bow.

There is no doubt about that. But the question is, Will you bow as a result of the Gospel call?

Or will you bow as a result of that trumpet sound? At the last day, which will signal the end of the day of salvation. The end of that opportunity.

[18:18] To come before the Lord. And ask him to save your soul. Here, Saul is bowed. He is bowed before the Lord. Because he is falling to the ground.

He is bowing. And here, he is bowing in conversion and salvation. And there you have what people call an instantaneous conversion. A Damascus Road experience.

But I want to ask the question, Is it instantaneous? We were talking about this at our fellowship on Friday night. When people have an instantaneous conversion. They say, I have a Damascus Road experience.

But is this instantaneous? Is it an instantaneous conversion? You see, our experience of conversion is often gradual. The Lord working, and perhaps steadily in someone's life. And actually bringing them to a knowledge of salvation in himself. Now, the moment of salvation and the moment of regeneration. That happens in a moment.

[19 : 19] You know, salvation from that perspective is instantaneous. There is one second where you are in darkness. And there is another second where you are in the light. That happens in a moment. But the thing is, it can be a gradual process sometimes for us to come to an awareness of that.

And that's the way in which we say sometimes our conversion is gradual. And people would point to the Damascus Road experience here. And they would say, this is an example of a sudden conversion.

A completely out of the blue conversion. As opposed to the gradual conversion perhaps that many of us in here have experienced. I know some people also have a sudden conversion.

But for the vast majority of the Lord's people, it's a gradual process. Our awareness of it is gradual. And they'll say, this is instantaneous. But is it?

Saul actually gives his testimony a number of times. And I think that's a good warrant for ourselves to actually use our testimony in order to spread the gospel.

[20 : 21] And to use it in an evangelistic way. Saul does that quite often. And he gives his testimony a number of times. And if you can turn to chapter 26. Chapter 26. In Acts.

And in verse 14 there. There's an interesting verse here. And this is him giving his conversion in another place.

And he's recounting what the Lord says to him. And he adds a wee bit. He says, that the Lord says, Saul, Saul. Saul, why are you persecuting me?

It is hard for you to kick against the goats. It's a well-known phrase as well, isn't it? Hard for you to kick against the goats. Now what's that about?

What is a goat? Well, a goat is a long stick. It's a long stick with a spiked end that was used by farmers on the animals.

[21 : 22] To move the animals. You got the animals going with the goat. You prodded them and you got them going. And the use of it here seems to be in line with a fairly well-known proverb in that day.

And the proverb really here is likening Saul to like a young bullock. He's been likened to a young bullock. And the farmer is the one with the goat. And he's trying to break the bullock in. And as he's trying to break the bullock in by prodding the bullock and pushing the bullock forward.

The bullock is kicking against. He's trying to resist. Trying to resist what the farmer is trying to get him to do. Resist the goat of the farmer. So the idea here is that Jesus is in some way pursuing Saul.

That Jesus is in some way goading him. But Saul is kicking against it. That Saul is in some way trying to resist whatever it is that's going on. To resist this prodding and pricking that is going on. So although Saul was here pursuing the Lord's people in persecution. It actually seems as though the Lord is also pursuing him. There's irony there too isn't it?

[22 : 27] He's going out after the Lord's people. But it seems as though the Lord is pursuing him as well. And pursuing him with the goat. Now we don't know how long that might have been going on for.

Certainly before the Damascus road experience. I think you can safely say that there's been a goat there present. But exactly how long? We don't know how long the Lord has perhaps been working at him.

The text doesn't make that clear. We don't know exactly what the goats were either. But something was prodding him. Something was getting to him. Something was pricking his conscience.

And he was kicking against it. Now some people think well maybe it was the death of Stephen the martyr. Maybe that when he saw that young man.

And when he saw Stephen being martyred in that way. And how he died and how he remained faithful to the Lord. Even to the point of death. Perhaps that maybe made Saul think.

[23 : 27] Wait a second. Maybe there's something in this. Maybe when he saw the glory of Christ reflected in the face of Stephen. As he died. Maybe that made him think about these things.

Rethink these things. Or perhaps it was just the fact that Saul was just starting to doubt his own belief systems in general. Maybe he was doubting what he believed.

He thought Jesus of course was an imposter. A blasphemer. But maybe at this point he's starting to go back on that. Maybe for some reason that we don't know he's starting to doubt.

And if he was beginning to doubt his own belief system. Then maybe that's the reason why he upped his level of aggression here. And he definitely does up his level of aggression here towards the Lord's people.

Perhaps he felt weak for allowing himself to even consider that this might be true. Perhaps he felt weak for allowing himself to doubt his own belief system.

[24 : 28] To allow himself to be goaded in this way. And in order to quash this he ups his aggression. He ups his persecution level. And that can sometimes happen with sinners.

And when God is working in them. Their conscience begins to get the better of them. And they're aware of the goads of the Lord at work.

And pushing them. Pushing them towards salvation perhaps. Pushing them towards the things of God. And many people who experience that they don't like it.

They don't like it. They don't like it at all. And they try and resist it. And they try and kick against it. And very often perhaps what people do is turn to an even more sinful course of action.

To try and deaden that. And that is something that happens. And perhaps there are some people in here who can relate to that. You're aware of the goads. You're aware of the Lord almost prodding you and pricking your conscience.

[25 : 26] Convicting you. Pushing you along. And you want to get rid of it. So to get rid of it you turn to an even more sinful course of action. You try and harden yourself. It's a very common thing to do.

And that may well be something that you've done yourself. But you realize that it is impossible to kick against the goads. Because when the Lord is working in your life.

And when the Lord is drawing you in with his cards of grace and love. When he's doing that. You can try and resist. But it's impossible. It's impossible.

You can try and resist for a time. But after a while you'll see that it is absolutely irresistible. Because the grace of God drawing you in cannot be resisted. When the spirit is at work in your heart like that. It cannot be resisted. And there comes a point where we stop resisting. And we fall before the Lord. And we say what Saul says in the passage in Acts 9.

[26 : 26] Lord what do you want me to do? And I wonder if you are kicking against these goads here today.

Now maybe you felt the hound. The hound of heaven itself chasing you. And maybe he has been prodding you. Maybe he has been coming with this goad and working in your life.

Maybe through the word itself. Maybe through your own reading of it. And maybe through the witness of others. Maybe through the preaching of it. Maybe through your providence. Things that are going on and things that are happening in your life.

And you're aware of these goads. And you try and resist them. But is it not time that you stopped? Is it not time that you stopped kicking against it?

Is it not time that you stopped resisting the Lord? Resisting the strivings of the spirit? Is it not time for you to fall before him?

[27 : 26] And ask him to be your Lord and your saviour. Don't keep kicking against the goads. And in verse 7.

The men who were with Saul and were standing there. They were completely speechless. Now they didn't know exactly what was going on. They didn't know exactly what was going on.

They knew something quite incredible was happening. But they didn't know exactly what was going on. Because they weren't fully aware of what was happening. This was hidden from them. See this was for Saul.

It was for Saul and for Saul alone. And that's an important point. Because that reminds us that conversion. Conversion is a very personal thing.

The Lord deals with us as individuals. We all have. The Lord's people. We all have different experiences of the Lord bringing us to faith. The Lord doesn't convert people in the same way.

[28 : 24] Or using the same testimony so to speak. The Lord deals with us individually. Conversion is individual. Conversion is something that is very personal. And something that is very intimate.

It's an intimate interaction with the Lord. And here Saul is being converted. And the others they're not aware of everything that's going on. Because this is for Saul. It's personal to him. Yes they would have been impacted.

About what was going on. And the change in Saul's life. But a lot of it was hidden. It was for Saul. And Saul himself. And sometimes when the Lord is speaking to you. It's a very personal thing. And especially when it comes to conversion. It's almost as though there can be nobody else in the room. And the word comes. And it's just for you. Others perhaps might not be aware of what's going on. But you are. You are. And you feel as though the Lord is speaking to you. And you alone. That's what the word of God can do. And that's what very often happens in conversion. That's what you see here. And Saul gets up off the ground.

[29 : 21] And he's blind. He's blind. And the Lord tells him to go to Damascus. Until he receives instruction about what he is to do next. So the men here.

They lead this blind Saul to Damascus. And when you look at that. What a massive turnaround in the events here. Because at the beginning. You saw Saul like a raging beast.

Like an animal. And he was going out angry at the Lord's people. And he was leading this army of temple police or soldiers behind him.

And as he was going out. He was fierce. And now all of a sudden. It's completely changed. And here you see him like a tame blind lamb. And he's being led.

A complete transformation. And that's the kind of transformation that the gospel brings. And that's a reminder to us. Isn't it? That the gospel can have that transforming effect in anyone's life.

[30 : 18] And as I mentioned in prayer earlier on. I mentioned the fact that sometimes. We don't go with the gospel to certain people. Because we think they're so far off. They're so far removed.

As though the depths that they're in. And the lives that they're leading. Means that they're never going to be transformed by the gospel. That's not the case. We ought never to think like that.

Because here is an example of the transforming power of the gospel.

Because if you were to say. Who is the least likely man in the whole. Or person in the whole of Jerusalem. There to be converted. You would have said this man. I imagine most of the Christians that were around.

Would have run away from witnessing to Saul. But this man. He's transformed by the gospel. The power of the gospel. And the Lord sends Ananias then.

To heal him. Of his blindness. Once he gets to Damascus. And Ananias is understandably scared. He says. I know about Saul.

[31 : 17] I know what he does. I know what he does to people like me. And he's quite resistant. But the Lord said. No Ananias. Behold. He is praying. Behold.

He is praying. Now. On one level. That's nothing new. For Saul. Saul is a Pharisee. The Pharisees loved to pray. They would pray for a long time.

They would repeat things. Prayer was. Of course. A big part. Of their lives. But. Here it's as though. When the Lord says. Behold. He is praying. It's as though he's praying for the first time.

It's as though the Lord is saying. Now. Saul is praying. As a broken sinner. Before. His Lord. And. His Savior. So.

Ananias goes. And that's exactly what. Happens to. To any. New convert. You know. Maybe. Maybe. Maybe. You've always prayed. I'm speaking to those who are.

[32 : 12] Who aren't saved just now. Maybe you've always prayed. Or maybe you've always. Maybe you learned a prayer. For example. When you were young. And it's something that's maybe stayed with you. And maybe if you're in emergency situations.

Health issues. Finance. Family issues. Maybe then you send emergency prayers. Perhaps you've always prayed. In that sense. But when you're converted. When you fall before the Lord Jesus Christ.

As your Savior. It's different. It's as though you're praying. For the very first time. And it's no longer. Empty. Meaningless words. It's no longer.

Like you're speaking to yourself. That's how it felt like before. When you prayed. But when you're converted. That's not what it's like. All of a sudden. You're in communication. With a living Savior. And you're aware of that.

Behold. He is praying. That's the mark. Of the fact that he's saved. In a way. It doesn't have to say. He's been converted. Because it says. Behold. He is praying. That's a mark of the Lord's people.

[33 : 09] Behold. He is praying. Behold. She is praying. But as Ananias goes to Saul here. He's not. He's not only going to heal. Saul of his blindness.

He's going to pass on a message of commissioning. That's what's going on here. He's going to pass on a message of commissioning. As you see Saul here. Entering into the role of a gospel missionary.

As you see him entering into the role of an apostle. That's why Ananias is going. Not just to open his eyes. But to pass on this message of commissioning. You see that in verse 15 of the passage. But the Lord said to him. Go. For he is a chosen instrument of mine. To carry my name before the Gentiles. And kings. And the children of Israel. Israel.

So it's a commissioning. He's been. He's. This is part of his commissioning as an apostle. Now. As we've gone through this. This narrative. I've tried to pull out some of the parallels.

[34 : 05] That we can experience. In our conversions. And everyone has different experiences. But. I've tried to make the point that. None of us are going to have a Damascus road experience.

None of us. None of us are going to have a Damascus road experience. And the reason for that is this. We are not apostles. And we're not going to be an apostle. See one of the criteria for becoming an apostle.

Was that. You had to have witnessed. The resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. You had to be a witness to the resurrection. And the other apostles. They had already witnessed that.

They had witnessed that. With the initial resurrection of. Of Christ. But Paul hasn't. Saul. Hasn't. He hasn't. At this stage. Witnessed. The resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

And what Saul. Saw here on the Damascus road. Was none other than the risen Lord himself. In this. Glorious. Appearing. And that is.

[35 : 03] No doubt. What left. This man blind here. He glimpsed the glory. Of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. He glimpsed it. Because to be an apostle. He had to. He had to. See that. So this.

Conversion experience here. It's a unique experience. It's no way. Meant to be. An example. Of something. That every one of us. Have to experience. In our own lives.

In order. That we. Might be converted. You are not going to be an apostle. None of you here are. None of us. Are going to be an apostle. So we cannot expect this. Kind of experience.

But yet. As. I've also mentioned. You can still draw these parallels. Of. The things that go on. In Saul's experience here. That we can relate to. We might not have the visions.

We might not see the bright light. Of Christ. Appearing to us. But there are. Much of these other things. That I've touched on. That we can. Experience. And we do experience. And this.

[35 : 58] Powerful. Conversion. Story. Here. It shows us that. As I mentioned earlier. No one. Absolutely. No one. Is beyond the reach. Of.

The grace. Of God. No matter how. No matter how evil. You are. No matter how. Violent. Your past is. No matter how.

How dark. Your sin is. No matter what damage. You've done. To the cause of Christ. Because this man. He tried to do great damage. To the cause of Christ. No matter. What.

You have. Done. The Lord. Can save you. The Lord. Can take the hardest. Of heart. The hardest. Of heart. Like this man here. And he can. Penetrate it. With the gospel.

And he can bring forth. New life. A new world view. New direction. New purpose. The Lord. Can do that. And he does that. With.

[36 : 51] The gospel. Message itself. So today. If you are. Like Saul. Kicking against the goals. The Lord. Is. Working there. If you're aware of him.

Stop kicking. Stop kicking. And bow down. And take him. As your Lord. And saviour. Ask him to save you. Tonight. If you do that. He promises. He'll save you.

And I pray it is. That we. Through. Each one of us. In here. Let's. Bow heads. Lord. I pray. Heavenly Father.

We give you thanks. That your grace. Is powerful. That your grace. Is able to transform. In miraculous ways. And there is not one heart.

In here tonight. That is not able to be broken. By the grace. Of God. And we pray that. As your word is read. And sung. And proclaimed this evening.

[37 : 53] That. That word would indeed go out. Like a double edged sword. A double edged dagger. And that it would penetrate. Into the hearts of every single one of us. But. Especially. Into the hearts.

That are closed off. To the gospel. Hearts that are hard. To the gospel. May the gospel. May the gospel. Penetrate in. And may it bring that. New life. We give you thanks. For. The experience. Of Saul there. And the ways. In which. Perhaps we can relate. To certain aspects. Yes. We will not see. Necessarily the risen Lord. Jesus Christ. Before us. In his glory. But yet. We can experience. A conversion. We can experience. A turning. And we do. And our prayer is. That every one of us. Would experience that. Even this evening. So go before us. Cleanse us. From our sin. We ask it all. For Jesus sake. Amen. We are going to.

[38 : 49] Sing. Now. In. Psalm. 126. Psalm. 126.

Page. 419. We'll sing the whole psalm. When Zion's bondage. God turned back. As men that dreamed. Were we. Then filled with laughter. Was our mouth. Our tongue with melody. Among the heathen said. The Lord. Great things for them. A throne. The Lord. Have done great things for us. When joy to us. Is brought. As streams of water. In the south. Our bondage. Lord. We call. Who sow in tears. A reaping time. Of joy. In joy. They shall. Of course. It's all himself. After his conversion. He was. As we read. Going to have to suffer. Many things. As he went out.

[39 : 49] Scattering. In the seed of the gospel. That man. Who bearing precious seed. In going forth. Doth mourn. He doubtless. Bringing back his sheaves. Rejoicing. Shall return.

So we'll sing the whole psalm. There we'll stand. To sing to God's glory. When's I born. In the seed of the gospel. As men that dream. Were we. As men that dream. As men that dream. Were we.

Then filled with laughter. Was our mouth. Our tongue with melody. Our tongue with melody. Our tongue with melody. Our tongue with melody. Our tongue with melody. The heathens said the Lord.

[40 : 51] Great things for them hath brought. Great things for them hath brought. The Lord hath done.

Great things for us. Whence joy to us is brought. Whence joy to us is brought. Whence joy to us is brought.

Whence joy to us is brought. As dreams of water in the south.

Our bondage Lord recall. Our bondage Lord recall. Whose soul and tears are reaping time.

Of joy and joy they shall. Of joy and joy they shall. Of joy and joy they shall. Of joy and joy they shall.

[41 : 58] That man who bidding precious seed. And going forth doth mourn.

And going forth doth mourn. It art less bringing back his sheaves.

Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return.

God for a long away. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. The Lord you have time our life ever. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return ■ good part. Rejoicing shall return.

Rejoicing shall return. Exhus Tools to return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return ouse return.

Rejoicing shall return. Rejonant of 7 Paul... Rejoicing shall return.

[42 : 59] Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return. Rejoicing shall return.