



Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 16 and begin with an opening prayer

I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good thing apart from you. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:2,11)

Open up your time with the Lord today considering the goodness of God - he does not hide from us the means of grace. Ask God that he would use the simple regular pathways of word, prayer, and solitude today to experience the presence of God and the pleasures of fellowship with him.

Acts 9:1-19

Passage Introduction: Saul's Encounter with Jesus

If the death and resurrection of Jesus is the hinge on which the great door of history swung open at last, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus was the moment when all the ancient promises of God gathered themselves up, rolled themselves into a ball, and came hurtling out into the wide world and beyond. The story was so important to Luke that he tells it no fewer than three times (Acts 9, 22, and 26) Everything that Saul said and did from that moment on, and particularly everything that he wrote, flowed from that sudden, shocking meeting with Jesus.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

Acts 9:1-19 - **1** Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest **2** and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. **3** As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. **4** He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" **5** "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. **6** "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." **7** The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. **8** Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. **9** For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. **10** In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. **11** The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus

My notes:

named Saul, for he is praying. **12** In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” **13** “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. **14** And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.” **15** But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. **16** I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” **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.” **18** Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, **19** and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about God in this passage?
- Try putting yourself in Saul’s shoes. What are your emotions? What shocking things do you see and hear (vs. 3-6) vs. 8-9 reveal Saul’s physical condition. What would be going through your mind?
- Saul had been persecuting Christians. What is the significance of Jesus saying to Saul “you are persecuting *me*?” What’s the connection for us here?

Key Takeaway:

As you read today’s passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down in the margins? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

Pray for those who, like Saul, would not be considered likely candidates to become followers of Christ, let alone leaders who would proclaim the gospel. Who comes to mind for you today?