Acts Series Lesson 17

Acts 9:1-9

“This Light Means You Are Going The Wrong Way”

Introduction: What if you saw a friend driving down the wrong side of the road? Such a scenario seems outlandish, but unfortunately it has happened even here in El Paso. What if you saw a friend driving on to the freeway the wrong way? I think most of us would do everything we could to try to correct that; yell, call, text, email, etc. This task would be much more difficult if the person going the wrong way thought they were doing right. The danger of the situation would be much worse. But that would not stop us from trying to help our friend. The truth is that this is exactly what is happening in the lives of many people on a spiritual plane.

Transition: Most people do not want to hurt others while driving, in a similar way that most people do not want to offend God by the way they live their lives.

1. The majority of people are living their lives trying to do right.
2. If you went and knocked on the doors in our community you would find that most individuals believe they are “good people”, based on many things;
   1. I have not killed anyone
   2. I only lie when necessary
   3. I have a good heart
   4. I have made bad choices, but I am not a bad person
   5. I help others when I can
3. Saul was a man who was trying his hardest to please God.
   1. He was greatly feared by Christians because of his position of authority and his zeal to squelch this new group of believers.
   2. He was greatly respected by the Hebrews (Philippians 3:4-6)
   3. He had devoted his life to try to please the God of the Bible, he saw Christianity as opposing his beliefs because he rejected the testimony of Christ.

Transition: There are so many well intentioned people today who are living their lives in disobedience to God. It does not have to be so, God has revealed clear and specific instructions for those who want to please Him.

1. The solution to a wrong direction is a confrontation with Christ.
2. Saul had many other things in mind when he saw that great blinding light shine about him. Christ Himself came to appear specifically to Saul.
   1. This was in spite of Saul, up to this point he had done nothing but oppose Christ.
   2. By God’s grace and for God’s purpose in this world He appeared to Saul that day.
   3. The power that God showed that day was totally overwhelming, leaving little doubt if any that this was the work of God.
3. What people need is to be confronted with the reality of Christ.
   1. Too many religious groups today proclaim that everything is ok, and that it doesn’t matter what you believe. There is much room for encouragement and love in Christianity, but these ought never to replace the honest and real truth that we are sinners in need of a savior.
   2. What made the difference in my life is when someone told me that I was a sinner on my way to hell. I had to see that my sins were a real offence to a Holy God. Only through the dark realization of sin can men learn of eternal life through Christ.
   3. We must remember as we deal with people that it is good to be helpful and loving as much as we can, but if we fail to ever confront people with their standing in Christ, it is in vain.
4. The power of the gospel is contained in the Word of God.
   1. The way that we have to tell the gospel is through Scripture.
      1. It does not depend on how eloquent you are
      2. It does not depend on how good of a salesman you are
   2. You can learn the verses on the back of our gospel tracts and talk to someone about their salvation.
   3. You can invite people to church where they will hear the gospel and be confronted through the preaching of the Word of God.

Transition: God not only saved Saul, but he immediately began to work out His plan and took him to Damascus to wait.

1. God will guide you as you submit to His will.
2. Paul humbled himself before God when he was confronted with the truth.
   1. Paul did not argue but immediately addressed Jesus in a very respectful if not reverential manner. He did not try to justify his previous actions or blame anyone else.
   2. Paul was willing to admit that he had been wrong and made himself wholly available to do whatever God wanted.
3. Many times as Christians we need to be confronted with the truth of God’s Word.
   1. The Word of God is what God has left us to direct our lives. The Holy Spirit guides us in learning things that are spiritually discerned and works through the Word;
      1. Bible Reading
      2. Preaching
   2. The more you expose yourself to God’s Word the more you will find that God will bring verses to you at just the right time.
   3. It is vitally important that you maintain a humility before the Lord. When you are going to read your Bible or hear preaching always pray that the Lord will speak to you.
   4. When the Lord speaks to you always be ready to respond:
      1. Repent
      2. Give Thanks
      3. Commit to doing what God wants
      4. Ask for God’s help
      5. Do what you say you are going to do
4. God has a plan for your life and will guide you in it.
   1. You must submit to what He wants.
   2. We do not always know how we will get to the end of the road, but God often leads us like the lights on a car. They do not light the entire route we are on, they only light enough of the road to get us a little farther down the road. When we get to the next section they will keep shining.

Conclusion: You may not feel like God has grand plans for you. Sometimes you may question whether God can use you at all. Just because you have not seen Christ in a bright light does not mean you are not important to Him. Chances are that you have seen Christ many ways throughout your life, through other people, through His Word, through answered prayers. You and I this morning have a lot to be thankful for. Thank God that He confronted us with the truth, even though it was uncomfortable. Remember that we all need to be corrected along the way. Just don’t get to the point that you do not listen to God because your intentions are so good that it must be ok. His truth is what ultimately matters.

Will you pray and ask God to help you learn to confront others with the truth? If you come out to visitation you can see some ways that we at Hillcrest are trying to do that very thing in our community.

Will you pray for those who have given their lives for this very task? We have missionaries all along the auditorium wall who are now working to see people saves. You can help them by making it a family tradition to pray for them. You can help them by setting aside finances to give to these missionaries all around to world.