Acts Series Lesson 18

Acts 9:10-22

“Saul’s Purpose Confirmed”

**Introduction:** We live in an age of information. Sometimes it feels like we are constantly bombarded with news and stories of things happening all over the world. Not all that we hear is true, especially the things we see on the internet. If we believed everything we heard we would all probably wear foil hats to keep any number of agencies or aliens away. Thought we do now always have a way to substantiate the claims we are fed we usually can stay safe by trusting reputable sources. Those who have proven themselves reliable in the past. Saul like us was faced with something very different than what he believed to be true. In our passage this morning we will see how God worked to prove that what happened to Saul was no myth.

1. **God used Ananias to confirm His working and to strengthen Paul for his divine task**.

 A. After Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus God worked independently in the life of Ananias to confirm the authority of that miraculous event. Unfortunately many people today are swayed by "visions" and "new revelations".

 a. Just like many of the signs that we see in Acts, God did this miraculous work so that the lost would believe. He confirmed that this was the true power of God by going to Ananias, who was a believer in Damascus. Ananias would not have had any way of knowing what happened to Saul much less that he was expecting him. When Paul heard this man speak the words that God had told him he would hear he had great reason to believe that these were divinely appointed occurrences.

 b. The authority by which we are called to live our lives is the Word of God. Because we have the completed Scriptures we do not have to be guided by visions and other things like that. (This is not to say that God cannot do this, He can still do anything He chooses to do, however it will never contradict God's Word). The supernatural inspiration and preservation of the Bible is enough to be our guide in this world.

 B. Ananias was chosen to befriend and strengthen Saul after he was humbled by his encounter with Christ.

 a. When people are newly saved the often are aware of the greatness of God and receive Him with a heart of humility. Saul experienced this humbling in a way that not many have but it is important that as Christians we recognize that we are not worthy, but through Christ we are made worthy.

 b. Saul did not spend time pouting and worrying about the grief he had caused the Lord. There was a heart of repentance but there also had to come a point where Saul was ready to move forward in the work. Ananias was assigned the task of being an encouragement by letting Saul know that God had further plans for his life.

Transition: Have you ever heard of a plan that seemed far fetched? If somebody seriously thought they could have recruited Osama Bin Laden to be an advocate for world peace they would have been disappointed. Osama Bin Laden is synonymous with terrorism and murder. This is the same way that Ananias thought of Saul, his name would have been synonymous with persecution and violence.

**II. Sometimes God chooses to use people that others overlook.**

 A. Ananias objects by reason of his safety and for the safety of the Christians in Damascus. He was well aware of the havoc that Saul had caused in Jerusalem. Paul's reputation had been gained by his obedience to his earthly authority which commanded him to persecute Christians.

 B. Although Ananias' heart is in the right place, trying to keep his life and the lives of his loved ones, Saul's reputation was no surprise to God. No matter how bleak a circumstance may be, if God is in it we must remember that He is aware of the entire situation.

 a. God may be calling you to do something that overwhelms you. If God is asking you to do something you think is outlandish just remember that He is well aware of your weaknesses and what is at your disposal.

 b. Many times it is through our weaknesses that God wants to manifest Himself. The important thing is to be sure that it is the leadership of God and that He will enable us to do whatever He calls us to.

Transition: No matter what the plan or the purpose, we must be careful not to trust too much in our abilities to be clever but to trust God.

1. **God's authority and His plan are always greater than earthly plans and authorities.**

 A. Saul had devoted his life completely to the sect of the Pharisees. He had much respect and likely found fulfillment in bringing suffering to the Christian community.

 a. God acknowledged the suffering that Paul had brought and was preparing him to suffer much for His name's sake.

 b. God's plans for us are not always easy, but they are always the best we can follow in our lives.

 B. God was going to take Saul through many things and before many people, but his efforts would not be in vain.

 a. Paul eventually ended up going all the way to Rome and did in fact stand before kings and rulers for the sake of the Gospel.

 b. You might not feel it right now, but God's plans for your life have great significance. Your impact on this earth will not end when you die, nor will your impact on eternity. Your impact will go on through the end of time. We may never know the many lives we touch as a result of our obedience to God, even if it seems far fetched now.

 C. If you have never considered the fact that God has a plan for your life maybe you should do that today.

 a. One of the ways that God tells us to find Him is to seek. This means that you must be willing to obey Him. Otherwise what good would it do for us to hear the plan if we do not intend to follow it.

 b. If you truly want to please God do not hesitate to ask Him. God delights when we acknowledge Him in the decisions of our life. When you pray this it can sometimes be scary. We can think that God is going to send us to Africa or some other scary place. Remember that God is not trying to make your life miserable. The blessings you will find in obedience always outshine the pleasures you can gain on your own.

Transition: God's plan for your life can seem like a daunting task, but God has not left us to fend for ourselves, He has an Ananias in your life to be a help to you.

**IV. God's plan is to use people to help young believers grow.**

 A. This is one of the great benefits of attending a good church. God will place people in your life who have been through similar situations that you will go through. It is in these friendships that we can find great encouragement and continue in God's purpose for our lives.

 B. If you have been a Christian for any amount of time you can always find someone who you can be a blessing to. Often it does not take deep theological truth, just a kind word, an effort to remember someone's name, a favor or good deed, these simple things and more are what God wants to work through us.

 a. When we begin to focus on ourselves too much is when things like discouragement and depression can creep into our lives. When we are not mindful of others we are neglectful and miss out on the blessing of being a help.

 b. When you come to church ask the Lord to make you a blessing. Come with a heart that is ready to give and you will find that it really is more blessed to give than to receive.

 C. When we do this we will find ourselves contributing to grater things than ourselves.

 a. Saul immediately went forth and had a noticeable impact for the cause of Christ.

 b. People would not have guessed it, but the very things that made Saul an unlikely candidate for the work of God are what made him that much more effective as a preacher of the gospel.

**Conclusion**: If you are here this morning it is not by coincidence. God has intervened in your life to the point that you are attending Sunday School. This is because God has a plan for your life, it is a plan that God wants to show you but it will take patience and faith. Just keep following God one step at a time and you will find that His faithfulness never fails. God's plans are always greater than our own.

In all of our lives God wants to see a people who loves others. This is manifested by the time we give to others over ourselves. This can be done in many ways that do not have to be difficult, but they will require a genuine love that will find a natural way to express itself.