

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 25TH–26TH, 2026 //BOOK OF ACTS

## IRONIC (ACTS 9:19B–25) GETTING RIGHT TO WORK

One would think that Saul would take some time to gather his wits before preaching that Jesus is the Savior, but “immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues.”

- This is often the case: those who experience the most dramatic conversions proclaim Jesus with extreme passion.

## SAUL WAS SOMEWHAT PRIMED FOR THIS

- Though misdirected at first, Saul's goal was to honor God. **Because he dedicated time to study and had a heart for truth**, when Jesus revealed Himself to Saul, **he was able to quickly pivot and focus his energy in the right direction.**
- It goes back to **“Are we looking?”**

## “ISN'T THIS THE MAN...CAUSING HAVOC?”

- Saul was well-known for his intellect in the synagogues in and around Jerusalem, and he had become somewhat famous for his aggression against Christians.
- He became even more famous for his conversion and for “confounding the Jews...by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.”

## THE HUNTER BECOMES THE HUNTED

- Jesus' words were already coming to pass. The Jews in Damascus “conspired to kill” Saul with the help of King Aretas (2 Cor. 11:32), but Saul already had “disciples,” and they helped him escape.
- We still see a similar hatred for well-known converts today.

## GROWTH (ACTS 9:26–31) AN UNDERSTANDABLE SKEPTICISM

The news of Saul's conversion had made it to Jerusalem. After trying to join up with the disciples, Saul wasn't immediately accepted because they were “afraid” and “did not believe he was a disciple.”

- Like us, these people were **real humans who had real fears and faults.**

## BARNABAS

Nicknamed the “Son of Encouragement,” Barnabas was known to serve people and to do whatever the church needed. He was the first in Jerusalem to welcome Saul and eventually traveled with him on his first missionary trip.

- They would eventually part ways due to disagreements about Barnabas's brother.

## WE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM BARNABAS

- Barny was an **encourager** and **servant**. He was the one who **bridged the gap** between Saul and the apostles. He was **forgiving** and **continued his mission even after conflict** with Paul.
- Barnabas **isn't the most famous**, but he was **effective** and is a **great example of how to follow Christ and bless others.**

## MORE OPPOSITION

Eventually, the apostles believed Saul. Saul followed Stephen's lead (ironic) and debated the Hellenistic Jews, who tried to kill him. When the disciples found out, they sent him to Tarsus.

- We are to **build relationships, love, and share truth. This will get mixed results and, at times, even hostility.**

## PEACE AND STRENGTH THROUGH ADVERSITY

- When we are **“living in the fear of the Lord”** and are **“encouraged by the Holy Spirit,”** we—and the church—grow.
- We are to **honor/respect Jesus and understand that sin has consequences as we find inspiration and encouragement through a relationship with His Spirit.**

## RESTORED (ACTS 9:32–35)

### WE WILL CATCH UP WITH SAUL LATER

We flash over to Peter as he is “traveling from place to place” and ends up in Lydda. There he finds a man who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years named Aeneas.

- Peter boldly claims, “Jesus Christ heals you,” and commands him to “get up and make your bed.”

## GEOGRAPHY AND PLANTING SEEDS

Luke mentions geography a lot to show how the gospel spread. It also shows the importance of one person planting seeds as others come back to water them (1 Cor. 3). Peter's fruit in Lydda was a result of Philip planting the seeds.

- **We cannot control (and may not even see) results, but we must trust God is working.**

## REMEMBER THE POINT OF MIRACLES

The result of the miracle was that “all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”

- Though “all” is probably figurative, **the point is that the miracle drew people to Jesus, salvation, and restoration.** This is the point of miraculous work in the NT.

## SERVANTS (ACTS 9:36–43)

### GREAT WOMAN, QUESTIONABLE NAME

About 40 miles northwest of Jerusalem, in Joppa, there was a woman named Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek), known for charity and “**good works,**” who became sick and died.

- This disciple had **the gift of help and service** (Romans 12:7), and she helped the poor and widows.

### SOME PREEMPTIVE FAITH

Normally, a body would be buried instantly. The washing and placing of Tabitha's body leads us to believe the people intended to call Peter and expected she would be resurrected.

- **We trust God's will, but we should also have faith that He can do anything and live with anticipation of seeing Him work.**

### “PETER SENT THEM ALL OUT OF THE ROOM”

As the women Tabitha had helped wept and held clothes she had made them, Peter got to work. He “knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body,” told the dead woman to “get up.”

- The ultimate consequence of sin is death. **Evil brings us grief, fear, and pain, but Jesus has come to offer life.**

## FORESHADOWING WHAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE

Resurrecting the dead was not a normal part of ministry. In 3 ½ years, Jesus only did this three times, and Peter had witnessed all three.

- The resurrection of Christians in the Bible did two things: 1) it brought people to truth, and 2) it foreshadowed the resurrection all Christians will receive before eternity.

## STAYING WITH A LEATHER TANNER

Peter staying with a leather tanner named Simon seems insignificant, but rabbis would have considered being around this man unclean because of his occupation.

- We get another example of how **Jesus longs to save all kinds of people and how we're to be vessels to bridge the gap.**

## HOW WE GROW

- If we, as individuals or the church, are to mature and grow, we must **respect (fear) Jesus and the Word, know that sin has dire consequences**, and **seek encouragement and hope** through **prayer, the Bible**, and obedience. In other words, we need a **strong relationship with and understanding of Jesus.**

## TRUE FOLLOWERS ARE NOT STATIC

- Notice Saul, Barnabas, Peter, and Tabitha are not idle but active. **Mature Christians understand that they have work to do and that God will lead, equip, and empower.**
- Are we encouraging, believing, teaching, serving, giving, praying, forgiving, and loving? **Are we actively blessing others?**

## COST AND REWARD

- We have seen that **true faith comes at a cost.** This can be loss of friends, family, and plans, or even risk of violence and death.
- Just like Tabitha rose, we will as well. It is imperative for us to understand that **no good work goes unnoticed by God, and He will reward us in an unimaginable way.**
- *1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. 3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. 5 Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true” (Revelation 21:1–5, CSB).*