

ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – Seeing the Wind (Acts 9)

PART ONE:

A. Ananias:

1. The Man:

- a. *“In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, ‘Ananias!’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he answered.”* Acts 9:10

Y = You

Y = You

E= Experience

E= Experience the

S=Something Supernatural

S=Spirit

b. Reflection:

- i. How often when God whispers to you, do you say no or pretend it was last night's pizza talking? Instead what would it look like if you actually learned how to say yes to the whispers of God because that's where it starts. God can do anything. But what God really loves to do is to use His people to seek and to save those who are lost.
- ii. If you want to be blessed, when God whispers, say yes. If you want to find rest, when God whispers, say yes. If you want to be in God's presence, when God whispers, say yes.
- iii. God, in all of his redemptive potential, wants each one of us to play a key role in it. And he's whispering all the time: He's calling our name, trying to get our attention.

2. The Mission:

- a. *“Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”* (vs.11-12)

b. Reflection:

- i. I'm asking you to go to a house in Damascus owned by a man named Judas. Saul of Tarsus is there and I need your help. Would you go?

B. Saul:

1. The Man:

- a. *“If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.”* Philippians 3:4-6
- b. Saul was part of the religious elite. He would have been voted most likely to succeed Tarsus High School Class A.D. 22. He was on the triple A fast track to admiration and acquisition and accumulation.

2. The Mission:

- a. *“Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest 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.”* (vs.1-2)
- b. *“I was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.”* Acts 26:9-11
- i. “violently opposed” or “raging fury” => ‘maniac’
- c. *“Dear brothers and sisters, I solemnly assure you that the good news of salvation which I preach is not based on mere human reasoning or logic. For my message came by direct revelation from Jesus Christ himself. No one else taught me. And you know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion. How I violently persecuted the Christians. I did my best to get rid of them. I was one of the most religious Jews in my own age, and I tried as hard as possible to follow all the traditions of my religion.”* Galatians 1:11-14

PART TWO:

A. Saul:

1. The Commission
 - a. *"As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied."* (vs.3-5)
 - b. *"Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'" Matthew 25:44-45*
 - c. *"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."* (vs.6)
 - d. *"The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 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."* (vs.7-8)
 - e. **Reflection:**
 - i. Something has happened but the guards aren't in on it because this was all about Jesus and Saul. This was an intensely personal thing and when you think about it – isn't that the way it is for each of us. It's an intensely personal moment when you come face to face with Jesus even figuratively - see your sin before you, confess and believe. It's between you and Jesus – no one else. Have you said YES?
 - ii. What gets your attention? "How far do you want God to go in getting your attention? If God has to choose between your eternal safety and your earthly comfort, which do you hope he chooses? Don't answer too quickly. Give it some thought. God does what it takes to get our attention. God will whisper, God will shout, God will touch and tug. He will do whatever it takes to get our attention.
 - f. *"For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything."* (vs.9)

B. Ananias:

1. The Commission:
 - a. *"Lord," Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.'" (vs.13-14)*
 - b. *"For right in the middle of our sin, Christ died for the ungodly."* Romans 5:8
 - c. *"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. I will show him how much he must suffer for My Name.'" (vs.15-16).*
2. The Submission:
 - a. *"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.'" (vs.17)*

A. Saul:

2. The Submission:
 - a. *"Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God."* Acts 9:18-20
3. The Man:
 - a. Saul means => 'asked for' vs. Paul means => 'little'
 - b. **Reflection:**
 - i. There's no such thing as a lost cause. Grace never draws a line with a willing soul. His arm is never too short to save. He can reach into the dirtiest trash can or down the dustiest, desert road to Damascus.
 - ii. So think again if you are saying to yourself – I'm just an ordinary person - I'm too little to do anything for God. Crudely translated you're saying I'm too Paul to do anything for God. And don't forget - Paul would have never happened if ordinary 'little' Ananias didn't show up. The Church grows and fulfills its mission when the Church begins to live like Ananias, when we begin to simply say yes. Will you?