

EMPOWERED

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS

Empowered Part 7 – Encounters that Transform **Pastor Dave Patterson** **10.2.2022**

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

Nobody is beyond the redemptive and transformational power of Jesus

[2 Corinthians 5:17]

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

[Acts 9:1]

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers.

[Acts 9:2]

So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains.

[Acts 9:3-19]

³ As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" ⁵ "Who are you, lord?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting!" ⁶ Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one! ⁸ Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. ⁹ He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink. ¹⁰ Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord!" he replied. ¹¹ The Lord said, "Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. ¹² I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again." ¹³ "But Lord," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers^[c] in Jerusalem!" ¹⁴ And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake." ¹⁷ So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. ¹⁹ Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength.

God has a customized encounter waiting for those He is calling to Himself.

[Acts 6:8-10]

⁸ Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

[Acts 7:51-60]

⁵¹ "You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That's what your ancestors did, and so do you!" ⁵² Name one prophet your ancestors didn't persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted

the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. ⁵³ You deliberately disobeyed God’s law, even though you received it from the hands of angels.” ⁵⁴ The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen’s accusation, and they shook their fists at him in rage. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand. ⁵⁶ And he told them, “Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand!” ⁵⁷ Then they put their hands over their ears and began shouting. They rushed at him ⁵⁸ and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ He fell to his knees, shouting, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” And with that, he died. Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot

HOW ENCOUNTERS TRANSFORM:

- 1. Someone was reflecting the beauty of Jesus and did not know who was watching**
- 2. The church was experiencing consistent supernatural activity because of fervent prayer**

"God does nothing on earth, except in response to believing prayer."

John Wesley

"God shapes the world by prayer."

E.M. Bounds

"Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure."

D.L. Moody

“If you ask anything in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

Jesus

3. Someone took Saul by the hand and walked with him into his calling

[Acts 9:17]

“So, Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul...”

FOR MONDAY—

1. Pray for someone who is away from the Lord, especially a Prodigal or Longshot, to come to faith in Jesus. Pray into their future leadership, even if you don't see it right now. (“Get `em, God.” “Whatever it takes.”)
2. Step out in fasting alongside your prayer. Set aside one meal this week to not eat physical food and devote time to worship, reading your Bible, and prayer.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. What is one thing that you saw great potential in, long before it looked presentable or valuable?
2. Who is someone in your life that is a Longshot?
3. Why do you think Saul (later Paul) was still a chosen instrument while he was persecuting Christians? What evidence do you see in Scripture?
4. Is there enough evidence of Jesus in your life to move people closer to their own salvation story?
5. Where do our lives operate as living testimonies? Why is being filled with the Spirit essential to those in our immediate sphere? How does it impact them?
6. Who has taken you by the hand and walked with you into your calling?
7. Are you looking out for those who have recently stumbled into a God-encounter, Like Saul, but don't know how to move forward? Whose hand are you holding?
8. What “weapons of your warfare” do you need to sharpen and start using at a greater level?

