

Sermon Outlines

The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

Readings

Acts 9:1-6

Introduction

- 1) The testimony of Saul is recorded three times in the Book of the Acts, and in each reference there is mention made of the light which shone around him.
 - a) "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven." (Acts 9:3)
 - b) "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me." (Acts 22:6)
 - c) "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me." (Acts 26:13)
- 2) Several observations must be made:
 - a) In all three the source of the Light is emphasized - it came from Heaven.
 - b) In each recording is expansion of two things:
 - i) The brightness of the light:
 1. It was a "light from heaven." (Acts 9:3)
 2. "From heaven a great light." (Acts 22:6)
 3. "A light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun." (Acts 26:13)
 - ii) The expansion of the light to those with Saul:
 1. It "shone round about him" (Acts 9:3), and "It shone round about me." (Acts 22:6)
 2. "Shining round about me and them which journeyed with me." (Acts 26:13)

His Awakening

The first mention of Saul. (Acts 7:58)

- a) Two young men are brought before us, Stephen and Saul, but what a contrast.
 - i) If death had overtaken them at that moment, one in Heaven and one in Hell.
 1. The great divider for eternity.
 - (a) David is in Heaven, his son Absalom went to Hell - a family divided for eternity.
 - (b) Abel is in Heaven, his brother Cain in Hell - brothers divided for eternity.
 - ii) The conscience of Saul was awakened and he sought to silence it.
 1. He saw a man filled with the Holy Spirit and preaching the gospel, and he did not want to hear. (Acts 7:57)
 2. He had full fellowship with those who slew the man of God, they "laid down their clothes at his feet." (Acts 7:58)
 3. His pride was hurt for he was hearing that his religiosity was not sufficient to enable him to meet God (Acts 7:51) and he was resisting the Holy Spirit.

His Anger

Note the development of the words:

- a) "And Saul, yet." (Acts 9:1)
 - i) He was not content being associated with those who murdered Stephen, he had tasted the blood of the one whose truths he could not stand against.
 - ii) Despite the fact that his conscience was being pricked (Acts 9:5) by the Spirit of God, he was suppressing it.
- b) "Breathing out." (Acts 9:1)
 - i) This is the only time this Greek word is used.
 - ii) This was a man who was filled with venom manifested in his threatenings.

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- c) “Threatenings and slaughter.” (Acts 9:1)
 - i) Not contented with threatenings he was also slaughtering the saints of God.
- d) Desired letter to Damascus. (Acts 9:2)
 - i) He had been threatening and slaughtering the saints at Jerusalem, now he wanted to go to Damascus, a distance of approximately 140 miles.
 - ii) This was a journey of several days, possibly 5-6 days, and all the time Saul was steadfast in his intent.
- e) If he found any of this way, whether they were men or women:
 - i) He cared nothing for sympathy for the saints, they must be brought to Jerusalem with evil intent. (Acts 9:13)

His Antagonists

- 1) It was not that they were terrorists callously following a political agenda.
- 2) These were people who kept the law of the land but believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah and that he was slain, buried, and rose again. They taught that Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended to Heaven.
- 3) When they preached this it was against everything Saul accepted, Jesus was not the Messiah he had looked for, He was not fitted for what they had expected.
- 4) The boldness of their preaching and the effectiveness of it was too much for Saul, they must be stopped.

His Arrest By God

Consider the apparent impossibility of this man ever getting saved and compare:

- a) Who would have thought that the thief could ever have been saved (Lk. 23:43); or the jailor (Acts 16:30); or the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-38).
- b) The pursuing of God in love for the “whosoever” (Jn. 3:16).
- c) We must never give up hope for: “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).

His Astounding Conversion

- 1) God spoke to him specifically:
 - a) Saul, Saul (Acts 9:4)
 - b) God convicted him of his stubborn ways and sin (Acts 9:5).
 - c) When God was speaking to Saul the men with him heard the voice but saw no man (Acts 9:7).
 - d) God may be speaking to you this evening, no one is aware of it, but you are very conscious of it.
 - e) The words of Pilate come thundering down the centuries: “What shall I do then with Jesus?” (Matt. 27:22)
 - f) It’s pounding in your ears and mind like the waves of the ocean, “What shall I do with Jesus?”; “What shall I do with Jesus?”
 - g) Saul could take it no longer and asks who is he dealing with? “Jesus”
 - h) Jesus is dealing with you, will I be your Saviour or Judge?
- 2) How long did it take for Saul to get saved?
 - a) Read the verses 3-6 and time it?
 - b) Repeat the story of the thief, how long did it take for him to get saved, to change his destiny for eternity?
 - c) You have come into this meeting a sinner in rebellion against God, and go out a child of God:
 - i) Come in under the judgment of God and go out justified by God.
 - ii) Come in bound for Hell and the Lake of Fire, go out assured of Heaven.
 - iii) And the decision can be made in a matter of seconds.

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- 3) How long will it take for you to get saved?
 - a) As long as it takes you to long to be free from the conviction of sin and make confession of sin and personal helplessness.
 - b) As long as it takes you to receive Christ as your personal Saviour, depending 100% on Him and His finished work for salvation.

His Astounding Declaration

- 1) What was the evidence Saul was saved?
 - a) A changed message, Christ is the Son of God. (Acts 9:20)
 - b) A changed attitude toward the saints. (Acts 9:26-27)
- 2) The gospel is not just a piece of historical data. It is a message from the Living God, and when a person accepts Christ, there is a change in the life, not a change wrought by human endeavor but by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Your Accountable Decision

- 1) Will you accept Christ as Saviour or not?
- 2) The folks on this side, you in the middle, you on this side
- 3) The Holy Spirit is convicting
- 4) What will you do then with Jesus, accept or reject?

Closing Hymn

Sinner, how thy heart is troubled,
God is coming very near;
Do not hide thy deep emotion,
Do not check that falling tear.

Refrain:
O be saved, His grace is free;
O be saved, He died for thee;
O be saved, He died for thee.

Jesus now is bending o'er thee,
Jesus lowly, meek and mild;
To the Friend Who died to save thee,
Canst thou not be reconciled?

Art thou waiting till the morrow?
Thou may'st never see its light;
Come at once—accept His mercy,
He is waiting—come tonight.

With a lowly, contrite spirit,
Kneeling at the Savior's feet;
Thou canst feel this very moment,
Pardon—precious, pure and sweet.

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Let the angels bear the tidings,
Upward to the courts of Heav'n;
Let them sing, with holy rapture,
O'er another soul forgiv'n.

May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13

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