



Small Group Study Guide for May 1, 2022

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: The transformation of Saul, who persecuted the early Christians, to Paul, who gave his life for the Gospel, is one of the greatest pieces of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus and God's power at work in our lives. Paul's life would point to Christ, who now lives in us, and brings us to everlasting life.

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. Think of someone you know who was not a believer in Jesus, but then became one later in life. Share what you think was the catalyst for that transformation of faith and what did that transformation look like?
2. Share a time in your life when God became very real to you. Maybe you knew about God and believed in Him, but at a certain point, He became very real and present in your life. When did God become 'real' to you?

In the Word: Read Acts 9:1-22

3. We first meet Saul in **Acts 8:1**. What was Saul doing in this verse, and how do you think it relates to his plan to go to Damascus, as recorded in 9:1-2?
4. When Jesus appeared to Saul, He accused Saul of persecuting "Me." Jesus said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." How was Saul persecuting Jesus, when he was rallying up the people who believed in Him? (see **1 Corinthians 12:27** for a clue)
5. How long was Saul unable to see? (verse 9) What do you think is the symbolism of his blindness and the length of time?
6. Ananias was hesitant at first to go to Saul. He had heard the reports. But Jesus told Ananias specifically what Saul's role would be. What was it in verses 15-16, and from what you know of Saul/Paul's life, how was this fulfilled?

7. In verse 17, Ananias tells Paul that Jesus sent him so that Paul could 1) see again and 2) receive the Holy Spirit. In verse 18, it says immediately, Paul could 1) see again, and then 2) was baptized. How are “receiving the Holy Spirit” and “being baptized” equated? (see **Acts 2:28** and **Matthew 3:16** for hints)

Putting it all Together (what do we believe or do as disciples?)

8. Jesus turns our life around! How does Jesus make a difference in the way that you live your life now, compared to a former life or what your life would be like without Jesus?
9. Jesus sent Saul and actual person, a disciple called by Jesus to share the Gospel with Saul and to baptize him. Even when Jesus speaks to someone directly, He still sends them to another person to receive the Word and Sacraments? How are pastors like Ananias, and why do you think it is so important to have another person minister us, rather than Jesus directly?
10. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, and named after his ancestor, the first King of Israel (who wasn't so great but thought he was). Soon after his conversion, Saul started going by a new name, Paul, which means “small.” Why do you think Paul might have chosen this new name?
11. Conclude by reading Paul's own testimony of the difference Jesus made in his life, as he describes his life before and after Christ in **Philippians 3:4-11**.

Prayer: Ask for names of people who are living far from the grace and truth of Jesus Christ, or who are even hostile to the faith. Then take time to pray for these people by name, that the Spirit of Jesus would intervene in their lives and change their hearts. Ask for God to send people into their lives who will speak the Gospel to them and lead them to Christ. Ask God for the confidence and the words to be that person for others, so we can truly learn, live, and share Christ.

Next Week: The Fourth Sunday of Easter is Good Shepherd Sunday, where we are comforted by Jesus our Good Shepherd who holds us in the palm of His hand. You can read John 10 to prepare.