

## Gaining Clarity

### HOW WE CHANGE

#### Acts 9:10-19

#### EXPLORING THE SERMON

- \* What did you hear?
- \* What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- \* What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

#### KEY VERSES

*<sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." <sup>11</sup>The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision<sup>[a]</sup> a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; <sup>16</sup>I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." <sup>17</sup>So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul<sup>[b]</sup> and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup>and after taking some food, he regained his strength.*

We were encouraged to start a conversation with God last week to see what He might want to change in our lives this year. Knowing God changed Saul's strongest trait without Saul asking, we trust that God knows best. There's also a chance that there are things that God might not want to change in 2024, but we have the opportunity to put everything about ourselves on the table and ask questions. **What insights, if any, have you gained since last week? What has helped provide you clarity?**

In this second week of exploring how God might get involved in changing our lives in 2024, we look at a story of a very unlikely pairing - Ananias and Saul. Though disoriented and terrified, a faithful Ananias follows God's command to go to Saul to deliver His message. Saul could not have gained clarity or direction on his own; he is helpless. Sometimes we're called to be Ananias in the life of others, even if we don't know the details, and other times an Ananias is sent to us. **When you have been through times of disorientation, how has clarity come to you? Who has been an Ananias figure in your life? Where might you be called to be this for someone else?**

As we think about the community that God has placed around each of us, reflect on these two key elements and discuss their meaning for your life:

1) **Ananias has insight into what God's doing in Saul's life before Saul does.** This is biblically

important because there will be moments in which someone else will have insight or clarity that helps the fog clear. When have you experienced this?

2) **Ananias is how Saul is healed.** Why is it through him? Why does God send us to be the hands and feet rather than just changing someone Himself?

Ananias does not have insight into Saul's situation or the actual ways in which God will change him. However, Ananias embodies what Saul's life is going to be built upon. Ananias is tasked to take the word to Saul, just as Paul is then tasked to take the word to the Gentiles. Paul received the same grace from God after his murderous acts that the Gentiles would receive by being enveloped into the family of believers. The first two words Paul hears from Ananias are, "Brother Saul" (v. 17). **What has Saul done in his life to deserve this immediate acceptance? How does this represent the scope of God's love and a celebration of what Jesus has done for us?**