

How We Change

HOW WE CHANGE

Acts 9:26-30

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

²⁶ When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples, and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He spoke and argued with the Hellenists, but they were attempting to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers and sisters learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

As we wrap up this series, we examine how we can actually sustain the change that we discern God wanting to make in our lives. The focus of the previous weeks have been Saul's experience in Damascus, and this week we follow him to Jerusalem. The disciples become his new community, and protect and support him as he preaches there. **How have you sensed God wanting to change you through this series? Who has your community been and how might it have evolved or changed?**

As Saul begins to preach and teach in Jerusalem, he falls under the threat of death, and so his brothers and sisters send him back to his hometown of Tarsus (v. 29-30). Saul does not reappear again until chapter 13 of Acts, and so it is in his time away from Jerusalem that Saul experiences restoration and flourishing to better prepare him for his mission ahead. **Who do you think of in your life that is "flourishing?" What does that word mean to you?**

Lasting change can happen when we incorporate patterns of flourishing into our own lives. Based on the research of Brian Wallace who created the Formation Cohorts*, these are the characteristics of people who live flourishing lives. **What do you need to do to move toward each of these? Who will help you do this?**

- 1) **A Guided Life:** who has access to you and can speak with authority into your life, as the disciples did for Saul?
- 2) **Regular Retreats:** how can you build a routine of regular retreats into your calendar?
 - A)** Once least once a quarter and half a day.
 - B)** Turn off all technology, be present.
 - C)** Pay attention to the setting, how it connects you with God.

- D)** Bring a Bible, let the word of God inform how you enter into this time.
- E)** Bring a journal to record your thoughts and feelings.
- F)** Where do you sense joy, and how do you lean in that direction?
- G)** Where do you feel burdened, and what do you want to change?

Prayer: *Lord, we know that we can do this - we just need to choose to do so. Please guide us as we sense how you want to change us, and to sustain these changes through creating a guided life. We want to live into the joy of the life you have prepared for us. If You can change death, Lord, we know You can change us, our relationships, and the world around us. We walk with hopeful expectation into this new year! Amen.*

*Our next round of Formation Cohorts will begin in September 2024 and run for nine months. Promotion and registration will begin in April. Contact Kathryn for more details!