

How We Change

HOW WE CHANGE

Acts 9:1-9

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

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing;^[a] so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.

During this five-week series, we'll examine what it means to change. In spite of our failure to change, the promise of Christian faith is that God can change anything. The point of this five-week sermon series is to set up a conversation between each of us and God. **What hopes or dreams for the new year do YOU have? Have you thought yet about how GOD might want to change you?**

Up to this point in Acts, Jerusalem has remained the center of all the events of the first church. The first time we see Saul's name, he leads a lynch mob to stone to death Stephen, the first Christian martyr. As Saul hears that followers of Jesus are fleeing to Damascus, he heads that way under the authority to hunt and kill them. Near the end of his eight-day journey to get there, he's knocked to the ground by God.

Have you ever been knocked to the ground by God? What do you think of Saul's response, "who are you, Lord?" How does that resonate with you?

God reorients Saul's life **not** because Saul wants to change. Our resolutions are typically **our** ideas for our lives, not God's. The very thing that gave Saul identity, that he would have likely claimed was his greatest strength - his faith - is precisely what God changes in him. Like Saul, transformation most often occurs after confusion and disorientation. If we are really willing to change, we must be prepared to journey through the wilderness first, and let God be in charge. Thomas' friend laid out post-it notes representing all the areas of her life and offered them up to God. To imagine God's call for us, we need to reflect on the past year, which the [Examen](#) can help us do. **What will it take for you to commit to a conversation with God and a willingness to change?**

