

## Saul of Tarsus Transformed - Acts 9:3-6 Transcendent Series

I love transformation stories like that! – Jesus steps in and transforms a life!

A) That has been the focus of our Transcendent series

B) Transcendent = surpassing the ordinary – Exceptional  
That is Jesus

C) One place where that is seen so clearly – is in his encounters with individuals –

1) Real people – Real needs - Real problems

D) Who Change radically -when they encounter a Radical Savior

E) Today is our final study in this series – Encounter after His Resurrection with Saul of Tarsus

Acts 9 PRAY

Pray for offering – bless – help us to be a blessing to others

Pray for first responders – keep us save

Pray for researchers – cure

Pray for GOVT leaders

Pray for an out pouring of your Spirit

How do you respond when life...curve ball?

A) When I was in High School – I played baseball-pretty good pitcher.

B) The interesting thing about throwing a Baseball is the way you hold the Ball – **determines how it travels**

C) Example – Fastball – with seems – in or out

1) Cross seems – **Rise** – backwards spin

D) For a pitcher who has a good fastball – a **key pitch is the Change up** –

1) You push the ball back in your hands – same arm speed and same arm motion.

E) The goal of the change up is to get the batter out in front or off guard ... key in on fastball

Another key pitch is a curve ball

A) Fastball high and inside - gets the batter thinking – this guy is wild –

B) Curveball – One seem – wrist action — looks like it is coming at the head –

1) **The goal is to get the batter bailing out**

Often times in our walk with God – Life can throw us a change-up – catch us off guard

A) Or a curve ball that – knocks us off balance.

B) Maybe that is how you feel right now – Virus thing

C) Caught us all Off guard – Maybe left you off balance- no one was expecting this

1) Feeling out of sorts – Where am I – Where going  
Where will I be when this is all over?

Today in this encounter – how Saul of Tarsus whole world is upended by this encounter with JESUS

<sup>3</sup> As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”<sup>5</sup> And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for **you to kick against the goads.**”<sup>6</sup> So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

Then the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

Have you ever thought – that guy or that gal will never get saved. –

A) That is how the early church would have felt about a man named - Saul of Tarsus

B) The last guy in the world that would ever get saved.

1) **Saul was a renegade – religious ZEALOT**

C) Saul was on a fast track to being one of the Top religious leaders in Israel.

1) **He was taught by the top teacher Gamaliel** –

**But Saul was a renegade – religious ZEALOT**

A) In Saul of Tarsus – we have an individual who was adamantly opposed to JESUS

B) Many would say that **in that day – in that moment** - **The greatest enemy of Jesus**

C) He didn't believe that Jesus was risen – OR Messiah

1) Saul viewed the followers of Christ **as a threat** to the Judaism that he held so dear to his heart.

**He was out to destroy the Church – imprisoned and have killed – followers of Jesus**

A) Today – Saul of Tarsus would have been labeled by the GOVT'S of Israel/ USA – religious terrorist

B) He set out to single handedly – put an end to this new movement - Followers of Jesus

C) So Saul - Armed with a passion – a zeal – and official papers from authorities

1) Headed to the city of Damascus ..... families

D) He was a MAN ON A MISSION! – He thinks he is on a mission FOR GOD!

1) AMAZING – SO SINCERE – SO WRONG

**E) Here comes the curve ball – maybe more like a Gin fastball**

**V.3 It Comes in the form of a light shone from heaven**

A) Acts 26 recount – **brighter than the sun at noon day.**

B) Saul of Tarsus suddenly falls to the ground.

C) He hears: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

<sup>5</sup> **And he said, “Who are You, Lord?”** Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for **you to kick against the goads.**”

Note that phrase in the end of V. 5 - **It is hard for you to kick against the goads.**

A) A goad was a pointed stick that would keep a donkey or oxen in line – on the right path.

B) **A stubborn OX** who wanted to go its own way would kick against that – Goad.

C) The Goad that Saul of Tarsus was kicking against was **the Holy Spirit in his life.**

**The Holy Spirit was trying to get his attention – for some time now- Saul had been resisting**

A) He was present when Stephen was martyred heard his POWERFUL sermon. ACTS 7

B) He was no doubt aware that fellow religious leaders like –

1) Joseph of A and Nicodemus become followers

**C) Saul couldn't deny that something spiritually was happening in Jerusalem – never seen before.**

1) But Saul was kicking against all of that –

**D) Saul of Tarsus was resistant**

**Maybe prior to all this Pandemic you had been resistant to the voice of the HS in your life**

A) Maybe you have been kicking against the goads

B) Holy Spirit has been tugging on your heart about something

1) Seeking to move you in a direction -

C) Maybe you have been that guy or gal – resisting Jesus altogether -

1) The Holy Spirit has been – convicting you of your need for God – Savior – RESISTENT

**ONE THING I believe this pandemic has done**

A) It's rocked the souls of non-believers – aroused the faith of true believers – at the same time

B) People all over the world – have been stirred to seek God like never before

1) **That is how Revivals get started.... Do it again**

C) Pour out your spirit – BC the inauguration

1) Hearts are hungry

**Maybe that is you today – Cultural idols have been stripped away – yearning in your heart**

A) Know this - God is trying right now to get your attention right now –

B) He loves you – sent his son to die for you – He has a plan for you.

1) **Quit running – quit resisting**

**We can learn something really valuable from the response of Saul of Tarsus in this moment**

A)Saul asked two questions in this encounter that would shape the passion and pursuit of his life

- **Question #1 Who are you Lord?**
- **Question #2 What do you want me to do?**

B)Now going back to the baseball analogy –

1)Curveball – Don't bail – hang in there  
Dad – bats behind me

C)Change up – dig in weight on the back foot

1)Don't get out in front – HOME RUN

**When this curve ball comes crashing into his life – what did Saul do**

A)He is not backing away – he is not bailing out but he is leaning into the pitch – TO JESUS

B)WHO ARE..... WHAT WANT ME TO DO?

**When the Lord allows a curve ball – change up to come crashing into your life – DON'T BAIL**

A)Don't get out in front of the Lord

B)Stay planted – lean into the Lord – and allow the work that he wants to do in your life to happen

C)How do we do that?

**We follow the example of Saul of Tarsus in this response**

A)Jesus became his #1 passion – Who are you Lord?

B)Knowing Jesus became his Master Passion

C)You are risen and you are real – now I want to get to know you.

**Shortly after this encounter – Saul of Tarsus went into a time of isolation**

A)Where his whole aim was to search the scriptures to see what they revealed to him of Jesus

<sup>15</sup> But when it pleased God, who.....called *me* through His grace, <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, **I did not immediately confer** with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I

go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Galatians 1:16, 17

**B)Saul is not getting out in front of the Lord**

**C)HE IS NOT BAILING AND RUNNING**

1)HE LEANS IN

D)He puts himself in Self isolation for the purpose of building intimacy with Jesus

**Saul of Tarsus came out of that – convinced that Jesus was who he said he was.**

A)Jesus was the answer to the longing in his heart  
**DIED TO SAVE HIM – ROSE TO LIBERATE....**

B)KNOWING Jesus became his MASTER PASSION

C)He comes out of that time – a worshipper of Jesus

D)I mentioned this quote in our Wednesday night Panel study

**Great love is born of great knowledge. In fact, your knowledge is your worship ceiling! Quality of worship is determined by the quantity of knowledge. The more you know, the more you have to worship.** Mark Batterson

**E)Saul's love for Jesus grew and grew as his knowledge of Jesus grew and grew**

1)The more he understood what Jesus did for him and how much he loved him. – GREW

**That continued for his whole life. –**

A)Saul of Tarsus became – known as Paul the Apostle – Complete – transformation

B)He went from being the #1 adversary of Jesus to the #1 Advocate of Jesus

C)Motivated by his understanding of How much Jesus loved him

1)**The Love of Jesus compels me**

**Jesus being his #1 Passion continued throughout his entire life – listen what he wrote in Phil 3**

A) Paul is writing 30 yrs after this moment at his conversion on the road to Damascus

B) 30 yrs after his first response – Who are you Lord – He write these words.

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have **counted** loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also **count** all things loss for the **excellence of the knowledge** of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

C) 30 yrs later it is still his passion – know Jesus

1) Counted loss – what he had gained -

D) Paul lost a lot in his following of Jesus – wife..

1) Religious Position – status – all his friends –

**I counted everything that represented me before as loss- But I continue to count all things loss**

A) For this: the **excellence of the knowledge** of Christ Jesus my Lord,

B) Excellence of the knowledge – Knowing about and knowing by experience

I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, **that I may gain Christ**

C) I might gain Christ! – So much of him to know and gain!

**So we see in his first response - Who are you Lord.**

A) He is leaning into Jesus –

B) His 2<sup>nd</sup> question – relates to what would become His pursuit - #2 **What do you want me to do?**

C) When Jesus is our Master Passion – we end up being focused on our MASTER'S PASSION

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also **laid hold of me.**

**Saul's response to this encounter changes everything**

A) The whole trajectory of his life changes – Jesus laid hold of me for a reason. – Discover the reason

**13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended;** – 30 years later – still on a seek and discover mission

A) Every new city – every new experience – every new encounter with a new person –

B) Jesus laid hold of me for this purpose.

C) Same is true in your life and my life – nothing happens by accident –

**I have been thinking a lot about this recently – This thing we are living through right now – Pandemic**

A) Took us by surprise – more crazy than any of us could imagine

B) But this did not take God by surprise. –

C) Esther – told by her uncle – For such a time as this

**God would say the same thing to all of us – When COVID 19 was going to invade planet earth 2020**

A) I determined – that you guys would be on the earth as my reps - for such a time as this

B) You and I have been laid hold of by Jesus – to represent him to the world – for such a time...

**13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended;** but **one thing I do,**

C) One thing – Focus – passion – priority – still after 30 yrs of walking with Jesus forgetting those things which **are behind** and **reaching forward** to those things which are ahead, 14 I **press toward** the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**D) After 30 yrs – he is still leaning into that moment that started in Acts 9 -**

1) Who are you Lord – what do you want me to do?

**Close Church**

A) Can I encourage you to ECHO THAT PRAYER

TODAY – THIS WEEK – THIS MONTH / YEAR

**B)PRAY** Who are you Lord – what do you want me to do?

**C)MAYBE – WATCHING TODAY – not a Christ follower – stumbled on this – curiosity – baseball**

**D)Jesus has been speaking to you – Realize – He is the one – Who fills the void and longing**

**E)Lean into Him today – quit fighting – running resisting – LEAN IN**

**1)Jesus died to Save you – Rose to liberate you  
LEAN IN**

**JESUS – I SURRENDER MY LIFE TO YOU**

**A)He will meet you in this moment right now – Save you – liberate you**

**WE ARE GOING TO CLOSE – COMMUNION**

**A)Elements out –**

**B)The Best example of leaning in Jesus**

**C)Night before his death - Father let this cup pass from me – not my will but yours be done**

**Lean in – Your plan for my life – Your purpose**

**A)Stop complaining – stop resisting – lean in**

**B)As we partake of these elements – Yes remembering his death for us**

**1)Also remember he didn't stay dead – He Rose to liberate us from – fear – sin – death – and give hope – healing**

**C)So yes we remember – but in communion we also surrender**

**1)Lord right now in this moment – lean into what you are doing in my life**

**D)Lean into making you my passion and my pursuit**

**Pray**

**A)Lord we lean into you – know you more**

**B) Bread – As you gave your body for me – I am giving mine to you – living sacrifice like you prayed –**

**C)I am praying not my will but your will be done –I am lean into your plan – partake of the bread**

**This cup your blood shed for me to cleanse me**

**A)Lord I am leaning into the fact that in you I am righteous – forgiven – made new**

**B)Lord I want my life to COUNT FOR YOU**

**C)PARTAKE OF THE CUP**

**CLOSING**

**Next step questions to ponder today**

- 1. In this curve ball called the COVID 19 pandemic -what more consistently represents your response – bailing out or leaning in?**
- 2. What is something you can do this week to build intimacy with Jesus?**
- 3. What is Jesus asking you to lean into?**