

Wednesday

Read Acts 9:10-14 *Jesus calls Ananias*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Both Ananias and Saul are reluctant to answer Jesus's call. What does this say about how God chooses people to serve him?*
2. *How did God help Ananias to face his fears about Saul?*

Prayer Focus: Living God, we do hear your call but we often have our arguments ready; we want to tell you how to run things, and all the reasons why we can't do your will. Be patient with us, God, keep calling, keep telling us where you need us to further your work in your world.

Thursday

Read Acts 9:15-17 *Ananias goes to Saul*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What did it mean for Ananias to call Saul "brother?"*
2. *Why must Saul suffer for the sake of Jesus' name?*

Prayer Focus: Reflect on how God brought Saul into the community of faith through Ananias. God knows we can't live our faith alone. Pray today for the community of our church, our city, our world. Pray to be led by the Holy Spirit into peace and strength through our connection to others through God.

Friday

Read Acts 9:18-20 *Saul becomes an evangelist*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *How do you know if what you hear is a true call from God?*
2. *It's hard to see past our judgements and differences. How can you offer holy friendship to someone who is very different from you?*

Prayer Focus: Almighty, you took your number one enemy, Saul, and made him into one of the greatest teachers of the faith. You also took Ananias, whose one act of friendship toward his enemy sparked the spread your word throughout the world. Small or large, God, let our responses to you bear fruit for your purpose, as well.

An Unlikely Friendship Acts 9:1-20

Ananias and Saul were natural enemies. Saul had stood guard over the execution of Stephen. When called to go lay healing hands on Saul, Ananias is concerned. God surprises by converting Saul to Paul, a persecutor to an apostle. God often places people in our lives who we might not have chosen as friends for ourselves with opportunity to receive the gifts God gave them. We should keep our eyes open to those around us, asking if God has called us to enter their lives in improbably but holy friendship. Ananias and Saul show us that God can call us to put aside differences and serve God together.

Message Notes:

Small Group Format

Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *Have you ever become friends with someone you never dreamed would be your friend? How did you move past your differences?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on Scripture

- Have someone read **Acts 9:1-20**. Discuss observations about the text.
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)

May 5, 2019

Surprise!



Monday

Read Acts 9:1-4. *On the road to Damascus*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why did Saul want to persecute the early Christians? What made it okay for him to condone violence?*
2. *Why does Jesus say that Saul is persecuting Jesus himself?*
3. *There have been acts of violence against people in houses of worship in recent weeks. Why do you think we sometimes choose the way of hatred against others?*

Prayer Focus:

God of Creation, wake us up to the pain and loss we all suffer when the breath of murder and threats leads to persecution and even death. If we are complicit in our silence, if we are complacent in our attitudes, bring us back to your side, to see through your eyes the value of every member of your creation.

Tuesday

Read Acts 9:5-9 *Jesus speaks to Saul*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Saul did not believe in Jesus, yet Jesus chooses him. Why would Jesus choose to reveal himself to his worst enemy?*
2. *Why would God make Saul blind and helpless? What effect do you think that had on Saul and his traveling companions?*

Prayer Focus:

Gracious Jesus, you made Saul blind, but it made your voice loud and clear when you called. Help us to see where we are limited in the ways we can see and hear you, and how we can break through those barriers to discover new ways to follow you.