

ACTS

THE PERPETUAL POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Living Risen
Acts 9:1-19

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But 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 belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.”

¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and taking food, he was strengthened.

Our Ways

**We all have our own “gospel”
The idea/philosophy/theology of what is “right”
“If others would just ____, this everything would be fine.”**

Saul/Paul

**Insider who was hunting
down Jesus-followers**

**His “Rightness” was in his
zealous behavior and
religious fervor.**

Outward Rebellion

Ananias

**Outsider who was a
Jesus-follower**

**His “Rightness” was more
in his newfound faith
rather than in Jesus.**

Inward Rebellion

Both (all) elevate self > others

The Gospel for All

For the PreBeliever (*Saul*)

“I’ve too far gone. You have no idea what I’ve done.”

“I’m fine without Jesus. I’ve never done anything too bad.”

Jesus takes it personally

Sin isn’t a list of do’s and don’ts but a personal betrayal of our God-given identity as His child and of him as our Lord, Maker and Groom.

Jesus meets the unbeliever on her road with a cut and balm.

Cut: Why are you wrestling against me?

Balm: Come home. Be loved. Regain Sight.

The Gospel for All

For the Believer (*Ananias*)

“They’ve gone too far gone. He doesn’t deserve Jesus and will never come around.”

“Jesus saved me. Now I need to work hard to prove to Jesus how much I love him.”

We are all in equal need.

Before we have Jesus we all require Jesus’ sacrifice.

Once we have Jesus, we are utterly dependent on him for our everyday living and loving.

Jesus meets the believer on her road with a cut and balm.

Cut: Why do you look down on others?

Balm: I am Love, both for you and for the world.

Why Easter Matters

Jesus is victorious and untethered

1) Jesus meets us personally

His resurrected self can meet us no matter where we are

2) Jesus heals us personally

Because he rose, he decimated death on our behalf.

1 Corinthians 15:54

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ *“O death, where is your victory?*

O death, where is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:5-8

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

**Jesus re-creates
our spirits**

**From blindness to
sight.**

**“scales fell off his
eyes”**

**Jesus re-creates
our community**

**Ananias: laid hands
on Saul and called
him “brother”**

**Jesus re-creates
our bodies eternally**

**1 Thess 4:14
God will bring with
him those who have
fallen asleep.**

Living Risen

**Saul called to go into
community.**

“Rose and was baptized”

**Ananias called to draw
others into community.**

“Rise and Go.”

**To “rise” is to leave behind your old life
as you trade it for Jesus’ life.**

**To accept that you lived and live as self>
and that Jesus lives as self<
and invites us to join in him love.**

**We are now called to rise perpetually
and go to “straight street”**

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*”