



Message Discussion Guide Week of May 14, 2023

Message: Encounters with Jesus, Part 5: From Blindness to Restored Sight

Key Scriptures: [Acts 9:1-9, 17-19](#)

Preacher: Pastor Tom Parkinson

Message Highlights:

What comes to mind when you hear the word “conversion?” Some think of negative experiences of being coerced or manipulated into religious belief. Others think of joyful experience of God’s presence and power.

Conversion is an encounter with Jesus that prompts us to turn away from sin toward a life of righteousness.

- It can be sudden or gradual.
- Jesus teaches that conversion is necessary to be saved ([John 3:3](#))

The conversion of Saul is one of the most famous conversions in history. While we will not all have a dramatic Damascus-road experience, Saul’s conversion contains three elements that are part of every conversion:

1. The encounter ([Acts 9:1-6](#)) – Conversion begins with God’s initiative. God encounters us in the midst of our story. When God’s story collides with our story, we have a “converting moment.”
2. The Emptying ([Acts 9:7-9](#)) – Conversion requires us to be emptied of ourselves – to be knocked off the high horse of our pride and to be humbled.
3. The Fulling ([Acts 9:17-19](#)) – Conversion requires us to be filled with God’s Spirit so that we can live a new life in surrender to God’s will.

Have you experienced conversion? Conversion is a moment in time, but it is also a life-long process of being converted.

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Have you experienced a conversion to faith in Jesus Christ? What is your conversion story? Was your conversion gradual or sudden and dramatic?
- 2.) [Read Acts 9:1-9, 17-19](#)
 - a. What do you know about Saul's life before he knew Jesus? Why is Saul the chief enemy of the early church?
 - b. Why do you think God decided to blind Saul? What God's purpose in encountering him?
 - c. What do you think Saul was doing during the three days when he was blind and did not eat or drink?
 - d. What is the significance of the scales falling from Saul's eyes?
- 3.) Saul thought that he knew God, and it turned out that much of what he thought he knew about God was wrong. Can you think of ways in which God has changed your mind about what you thought was true? How has Jesus changed the way you think, act, and feel?
- 4.) Converting moments occur when God encounters us. Can you think of times when God showed up in your life in surprising way? How have you been encountered by Jesus?
- 5.) What is your primary takeaway from this message? How will this message challenge, inspire, and impact your faith this week?

Abundant Life Tip: Conversion is necessary to be a follower of Jesus. But don't worry if you don't have a dramatic conversion story. Conversion can be sudden or gradual. True conversion takes place over the course of a lifetime, as we allow God to empty us of ourselves so that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit.