

## Acts 9:23-31 – Fellowship Group Notes

Here in this small, seemingly insignificant passage we see many great truths and hallmarks of a new believer. We've seen how Saul had a new reverence for God (9:11), here we now see that he has a new desire, and a new mission.

### **v23-25**

- What's the great irony in this? Where did Saul start and set out to do? (9:1-2). *Saul goes from persecutor to persecuted.*
- From Saul's testimony here what do we see as one of the hallmarks of witnessing? *It's costly. Costly even to death.* Is our witness costly? In what ways is it? Is it even costly? If it's not costing us anything in any way, should we question whether we really are witnessing as Christ showed us to? In what ways is *costly* witness also *priceless* in terms of encouragement to us?
- Saul's already gained disciples who care and support him (He's clearly a changed man!). How can we protect and support our fellow brothers and sisters in the way that Saul's disciples supported him? How can we creatively or strategically do this today?

### **v26-27**

- When someone comes to know Christ as their saviour. Who else do they come to know? What's the link between 9:4 and 9:26. Saul is now a man *in Christ*, therefore he's also a man *in the church* surrounded by brothers and sisters *in Christ*.
- So Saul knew where he now belonged, where was that? True, new believers should *want* to join the church. And the church should welcome them with open arms. What can we do to encourage this?
- How integral is Barnabas to the whole of church history?
- How can we be like Barnabas today? Do we have a church 'framework' or 'strategy' in place to know how best to welcome in and support new believers? If next week we have a new believer come through CAP who wants to be part of Surrey Chapel, do we know what to do? What will we all do as individuals to best welcome and support that new believer?
- Look back at 9:2. How much has Saul been transformed? What new desires and passions does he now have? (v27). Do we see new believers with this same passion and boldness in speaking for Christ today? How do we see this? When you discover something incredible, what do you want to do? *Share it!*
  - (In university Christian Unions it's remarkable to see that often those who are very recent new believers are often the most passionate and bold members. I remember seeing somebody come to Christ in my first year in the CU; just weeks later that same person was sharing their testimony at an event and we saw many more people come to Christ that night through hearing her testimony).
- How can we as Christians who perhaps have 'seen it all' and 'know it all' renew our 'first love' for the gospel? *We must every day 'preach the gospel to ourselves' in order to be astounded by Christ's love. Whatever book of the bible you are reading, continue to look back at the Gospels.*

### **v28-31**

- *How* did Paul speak? What's so remarkable about this and what can we learn from this? *He spoke boldly even though he knew the consequences.* In what way can we do this?
- What marks of the church do we see in this verse (31)? Why do you think the church experiences these?

### **Summary**

- True witness, true discipleship is costly. "Suffering then, is the badge of true discipleship... That is why Luther reckoned suffering among the marks of the true church". (Bonhoeffer).

### **Pray**

- For each other – that we would witness with the same hallmarks that Paul did.
- For new believers – that they would have this same desire to join the local church and passion for making Christ known

SU.