



Acts 9:10-15

10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

11 The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.

12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

13 “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.

14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

15 But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.

Special Music - Rescue - Lauren Daigle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PugD11k3JU>

AN ADDICT FELL INTO A HOLE...

An addict fell into a hole and could not climb out.

A businessman came by the hole and the addict called out for help. The businessman threw him some money and told him to buy himself a ladder. But the addict could not buy a ladder because... he was in the hole.

A doctor walked by. The addict said, "Help! I can't get out!" The doctor gave him some drugs and said, "Take this. It will relieve the pain." The addict said thanks, but when the pills ran out, he was... still in the hole.

A well-known psychiatrist rode by and heard the addict's cries for help. He stopped and asked, "How did you get into that hole? Were you born there? Did your parents put you there? Tell me about yourself, it will alleviate your sense of loneliness." So the addict talked with him for about an hour, then the psychiatrist had to leave, but he said he'd set up an appointment for the addict the next week. The addict thanked him... but he was still in the hole.

A priest came by. The addict called for help. The priest gave him a Bible and said, "I'll say a prayer for you." He got down on his knees and prayed for the addict. Then he left. The addict was very grateful for both the Bible and the prayer. He read the Bible and found it very enlightening... but he was still in the hole.

A recovering addict happened to be passing by. The addict in the hole cried out, “Hey, help me. I’m stuck in this hole!” Without a second thought, the recovering addict immediately jumped into the hole beside him. The addict looked at him incredulously and said, “What in the world are you doing? Now we’re both stuck here!!”

But the recovering addict said, “Calm down. It’s okay. I’ve been here before. I know the way out.”

The story of Ananias and Paul

1. Found in two places

- a. Acts 9:10-19 – This is story as told by Luke as a second person narrative.
- b. Acts 22:12-16 – This is the same story as told first hand by Paul as he relates the story of his conversion experience as part of his defense in Jerusalem after his arrest

12 “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

13 He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

14“Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

15 You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.

16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

2. Who is Ananias?

- a. “He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.” Acts:22:12**
 - i. He was a respected by all the Jews in Damascus, including those who had not embraced “The Way.”**
- b. “In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias.” Acts 9:10**
 - i. He was a disciple – a believer in Jesus Christ as the Messiah**
 - ii. This did not seem to diminish his standing among the Jews in Jerusalem.**
- c. “The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!” Acts 9:10**
 - i. God speaks to him by name in a vision**

- ii. He is devout enough that this neither surprises him nor does it cause him consternation.
- iii. When God speaks to him in the vision, he does not question the source.
- iv. By this we can understand that Ananias has a personal relationship with God.

3. We could so easily turn this into a message about Ananias

- a. How he tries to let God know that God's thinking is flawed. When God tells Ananias to go and heal Paul, he replies to God:

13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.

- b. How he does what God asked him to in spite of the perceived danger
- c. His courage as he stood beside Saul and allowed God to work through him to make Saul whole again.
- d. How he did everything God asked him to do even though doing so could have gone either way. Saul could have been made whole and gone back to persecuting Christians.

4. But the message is not about Ananias. We are discussing how the events in Paul's life come to shape both his character and his ministry.

- a. Imagine for a minute that you are Saul.
 - i. You are quite aware of how you have been persecuting Christians.

- ii. You have an unbelievable tale about a light from heaven causing you to go blind and the voice of Jesus telling you to go to Damascus.
- iii. For three days, you have been blind, forced to reflect on your life. Wondering if this blindness is permanent or not.
- iv. Suddenly being totally dependent on those around you to make sure that your needs are met.
- v. Trying to figure out if God is punishing you, coercing you, guiding you, or just plain cursing you.
- vi. And in the midst of all this chaos of trying to separate truth from fiction and reality from perception.
 - 1. Ananias shows up.
 - 2. A Christian shows up.
 - 3. A follower of “The Way”
 - 4. A representative of the very people you came to persecute and kill
 - 5. And since you are blind, you are completely at his mercy. if this Christian should want to, he can take revenge upon you or just put an end to your mission of persecution.
 - 6. If he wants you dead (and by any understanding of the human condition you have to believe that this is a

real possibility) that there is nothing you can do to prevent it.

vii. But this Christian doesn't kill you.

viii. Instead, he simply says this:

13 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

1. Do you hear that? Not Murderer Saul. Not despicable Saul. Not cursed Saul. Not enemy Saul. He says "Brother Saul" and then heals him.

a. No strings attached.

b. No "you are going to need to pay for your crimes."

c. No "you owe me big time for this."

d. No "you should be so very sorry for all the harm and pain you have caused."

e. No laying on of a guilt trip.

ix. Instead, he delivers the message that God wants delivered to Saul with an expectation of obedience:

14 "Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

15 You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.

16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

- 1. There seems to be a implied understanding here that Saul has reached a conclusion that this message is from God and that he has seen his face in the mirror and needs to admit that his life is changed forever.**
- 2. God did not take away his purpose, he repurposed Saul's energies towards a new goal.**
- 3. God tells Paul:**
 - a. You have been chosen to know God's will**
 - b. You have been chosen to see the Righteous One, Jesus the Messiah.**
 - c. You have been chosen to hear the voice of Jesus as He speaks into your life.**
 - d. You have been chosen to be a witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.**
 - e. What are you waiting for?**
 - i. Believe what is right in front of you**
 - ii. Make a public profession of that belief through Baptism**
 - iii. Allow God to wash all the filth and garbage from your life by calling on His name.**

iv. Time to get to work.

Paul had fallen in a deep, dark hole

- 1. When he had no friend in the world to help him and plenty of people that wanted to kill, Ananias jumps into the hole with him.**
- 2. As incredulous as this is to Paul who must be saying “What are you doing? You are going to get us both killed.”**
- 3. Ananias simply tells him, “Calm down. It’s okay. I’ve been here before. I know the way out.”**
- 4. And then led him out of the darkness, not into the purpose that he has come from. Not into the same life that led him into that hole to begin with, but into a whole new life and purpose.**

God used Ananias to show Saul the way to a new life. Without Ananias’ willingness to jump into the hole with Saul, and Saul’s willingness to listen and embrace the words being spoken into him, the story of Saul may have been completely different.

That, my dear beloved friends, is how we need to serve our Lord. We need to allow God to use us to drop the scales from the eyes of those we encounter, jump into the hole with them and show them the way into the arms of Jesus so that they can find a new purpose.