



It's one thing to believe in something from a distance. It's a much different thing to join the work.

Acts 1:8

“...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Saul of Tarsus

Acts 8:1-3

“And Saul approved of their killing him.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.”

Acts 9:1-2

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Sauls Response

Acts 9:4-7

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.

From this encounter, Saul was made blind and could not see. But Saul did as was commanded of him; he went to the city. While waiting, he fasted and prayed.

Then God spoke to a believer named Ananias. Ananias is a leader within the growing community of believers. God told Ananias to go see Saul. Ananias knew of Saul. He knew what had happened under Saul's supervision. Ananias knew that believers in Jesus were in danger in Saul's presence.

Acts 9:13-16

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

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. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

At that time, for followers of Jesus, there was nobody more dangerous than Saul. He was so far from believing in Jesus that Saul was a condemner and attacker of those who did believe. It was the core of who he was. A bearer of "murderous threats."

Who in your life is the furthest from God?

Simon the Sorcerer

Acts 8:18-19

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Money cannot buy what God gives for free.

Acts 8:30-31

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and **sit** with him.