



## WHAT CAN GRACE DO FOR OUR CHURCH?

Acts 9:19-31

PASTOR BRAD JURY

*(Acts 9:19-31) And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. (KJV)*

### **I. Grace creates an "image."—v. 19-23 (Paul preaching Christ post-conversion)**

Explanation: We're missing the point of God's plan for our church when we...

#### **A. Don't engage the current culture with the teachings of Christology.**

- Paul probably spent the next 3 years in study and meditation of Scriptures to better expound on the promises of a Christ-centered life!

#### **B. Don't envision our community as "potential" for our church**

- Paul was originally going to Damascus to find the Christians, partnering with the Sanhedrin with intentions to even search the synagogue. Now he is preaching

Christ to the very people and more who saw the Christians as enemies. He does not hesitate in proclaiming Christ to the enemies of Christianity!

### **C. Don't broadcast our message pervasively!**

- Paul is in earnest about spreading the Gospel. We find him increasing in strength, confident in delivery, and pervasive in broadcasting the message of Christ. He is urgent and unashamed!

## **II. Grace encourages team-work (v. 28) (coming & going)**

A. We need to encourage full devotion to Christ by

1. *Presenting opportunities for service*
2. *Promoting the rewards of spiritual growth*
3. *Participation in the life of the church*

B. When those of us with leadership gifts fail to lead effectively, the entire local church is affected, not to mention the unchurched people in our communities.

## **III. Grace revives a church v. 31**

- A series of churches through-out the region—"church" (universal)

*It's a process:*

**A. It brings rest (peace)**

**B. It builds (spiritual development)**

**C. It promotes walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost**

**"fear of God": (mentioned over 300 x in O.T.)**

*-all pervasive sense of God's presence*

*-all pervasive understanding of God's person*

*-all pervasive obligation to obey God's precepts (Ez. 36:27) (I Peter 1:17)*

- the church dreaded to do anything that might displease and offend the Lord
- the church people had a healthy distaste for the world and a life-style of holiness
- **comfort of the Holy Spirit:**
  - like a coach (John 14:26, 15:26) running along side of the runner calling out to him
  - para-clasis (coming along side of)
  - they were going on in fear and in the comfort...both!

**\*\*\*Note that they were walking in...all at the same time!**

**D. -Result---Increase "were multiplied"**

- unusual time in church history (3,000 added) Acts 2:41
- first excommunication (Acts 5:14) Annanias & Saphira
- feeding of the widows (Acts 6:7) (neglect of the widows)
- Antioch (Acts 11:24) Barnabas is sent out as a result of Stephen's martyrdom
- Derbe & Lystra (Acts 16:5) Timothy meets Paul and is sent to preach

**Conclusion:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What type of "image" are we striving for?**

**How are we working together in the body to accomplish God's plan?**

**Would our church be characterized as a grace-driven church?**

- **Does it have peace—promoted by the accord of one faith?**
- **Does it build?—is our church effectively building believers**
- **Does it depend?—how are we modeling a life of dependence on the Holy Spirit and effectively communicating the commands of Christ?**