
Sermon Text Discussion 8/20/17

Acts 9:1-31 – “True Conversion: A Radical Reorientation” by Drew Hunter

Overview

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus (also known as the Apostle Paul) had radical significance. He went from being the greatest persecutor of the church to the greatest missionary for the church. His rage turned to love and changed the course of history, beginning the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth. After Paul's conversion, Christianity went from a local religion to an international movement within 30 years.

Paul's radical conversion is also personally relevant in showing us what true conversion looks like:

- 1.) Jesus always takes the initiative.
- 2.) Conversion happens in response to a personal encounter with Jesus (a spiritual sight of the heart).
- 3.) Conversion involves faith and repentance.
- 4.) Conversion is expressed by being baptized.
- 5.) Conversion involves joining the church family.
- 6.) Conversion leads to a life of service in mission (making disciples).

The sermon outlined the text as follows:

- 1) Jesus saves Paul (v.1-20)
- 2) Paul suffers for Jesus (v.21-30)
- 3) The church multiplies (v.31)

Quotations

“And in that moment [his conversion] Paul learned two things: He learned that he was more sinful than he had ever imagined. But he also learned that he was more loved and welcomed than he could ever have hoped.”
-Drew Hunter

“Conversion is not about us. It is not about how good we are. It's not about how bad we are. It's about how great Christ's grace is. It's infinite. His love is eternal. It is measureless.” -Drew Hunter

Understanding & Application

- 1) Considering Saul's life and reputation before his conversion, what made his conversion so radical? What does this say about the Lord's grace? Why should that give us hope for the unconverted?
- 2) As you review what true conversion looks like, think of yourself. Have these six points been true for you? If not, are there ways the Lord may be speaking to you right now?
- 3) The sermon spoke to the importance of remembering how God saved us. Did Jesus reveal himself to you and change your worldview? If so, when was the last time you thought about this? Does remembering what Christ did for you impact your desire to share the gospel with others? Consider sharing your conversion story and give God the glory.
- 4) What were some reasons why Ananias would hesitate to go see Paul? Given this, is the way Ananias greets and receives Paul surprising? What impact should this have on how we think of, pray for, and treat those opposed (even violently) to the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- 5) What response to true conversion is seen in verses 21-30? Should all Christ followers expect this? Why should this be encouraging?
- 6) Read verse 31. If there is a connection between this description of the church and the nature of true conversion, what implications should it have for us in making disciples and living life on mission in our community? What are some ways we can encourage one another to this good work?