



Encouragement in the Midst of Conversion

By Johnny Caruso on February 16, 2022

TODAY'S READING: Acts 9

Acts 9 is the beginning of the ministry of Paul. Peter, the mouth of Christ at Pentecost, is still around, but in the next few chapters all but disappears from the record of the movement of the Holy Spirit in post-Jesus time.

In Acts 9:20 Paul begins his speaking tour of the gospel ministry. It is a pattern of things to come for Paul. He witnesses. He is opposed. He is persecuted. He escapes. He witnesses some more. He is opposed. He is persecuted. He escapes. It is the start of what the Lord told Ananias back in verse 15, Paul *"is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel."*

I think it is worth thinking about something. Do we have it on our heart and mind to be used by God? To push back the rule of darkness and advance the kingdom of God? To do great works for God? It is ever true that a great work for God comes at great cost. No cross, no crown. Now that does not mean there will not be times of joy and happiness. But Paul learned the secret of being content in every situation.

One of the main reasons Paul could continue on as he did was that he loved God and loved people. He states several times in chapters to come that his desire was to see his Jewish brothers and sisters come to a saving knowledge of Christ. And then there is his drive to see the Gentiles believe.

John 13:34-35, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

We must be driven in our spirit and actions to this kind of love so we can see those we personally know who are far from Christ come to that saving knowledge we have come to know.

It is this love, this Christlike sacrificial love, that witnesses to the power of the cross, which is used by God to show people that we are His disciples. Let us love not only in word but in action and truth too. And so living in the fear of the Lord, so that the kingdom will increase in numbers.

PRAYER: Knowing there is a cost to following Christ with our whole heart and whole mind, help us not to shrink back but be obedient to the Word.

TOMORROW'S READING: Acts 10

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