

## Application

- Although our sin may not manifest itself as dramatically as Saul's, apart from Christ we are desperately wicked (Romans 3:10-18)
- We deserve God's wrath as much a Saul did, and it is just as astounding that God would spare, save, and use us as that he did Saul
- We may think of brokenness as a stage we go through when we first believe, but this meekness is basic to our new and permanent nature in Christ (Matthew 5:5; Philippians 2:5-9)

## From Predator to Prey

Acts 9:1-9

Pastor Philip Bovenkamp

July 2, 2017

### The Foremost Sinner

- The foremost (or chief or worst) sinner is Paul's own term 30 years later (1 Timothy 1:15-16)
- Saul's disposition toward the disciples is described as breathing threats and murder
  - Saul was from Tarsus, a city in what is now Turkey (Acts 22:3a)
  - He came to Jerusalem and became the disciple of a prominent Pharisee
  - This would have established Saul as a leader among the Hellenist Jews in Jerusalem
  - He would have been protective of the Hellenist synagogues and zealous against any interlopers
- Saul was almost certainly among those who disputed with Stephen in the Hellenist synagogues (Acts 6:9)
  - If he was one of the disputers, then he was also one who stirred up lies against Stephen (Acts 6:11)
  - And he was likely one of those who initiated the false charges brought against Stephen

- If there was a vote to stone Stephen, Saul may have participated (Acts 26:10)
- Regardless whether he voted, he seemed to be \_\_\_\_\_ presiding \_\_\_\_\_ to some degree over the stoning
- We are expressly told in Acts 8:1 that Saul approved of Stephen's execution
- Stephen's stoning did not quench Saul's bloodthirst as he began \_\_\_\_\_ ravaging \_\_\_\_\_ the church
  - In Saul's own account, he acknowledged that he locked up many of the saints (Acts 26:10a)
  - He also cast his vote to put them to \_\_\_\_\_ death \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 26:10b)
  - And he punished Christians (by flogging) to try to make them blaspheme (Acts 26:11a)
  - Saul himself said he was in a \_\_\_\_\_ fury \_\_\_\_\_ fury (Acts 26:11b)
- He was as monstrous as any persecutor of the Church in history
- Having terrorized the Church in Jerusalem, Saul set his sights on those in Damascus, both men and women

## The Gracious Redeemer

- It was about noon in the desert (Acts 22:6), so the sun would have been bright
- But the light from heaven was so much brighter that it \_\_\_\_\_ blinded \_\_\_\_\_ Saul (Acts 22:6, 11a)

- You might expect when the Lord confronts the persecutor of his people, the Lord would be looking for vengeance
- Instead, Jesus responded in three ways:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ Mercy \_\_\_\_\_ — Jesus did not cast Saul immediately into hell
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ Grace \_\_\_\_\_ — This comes into more clear focus in the next we will study next week, but Saul was called to salvation (Acts 22:16)
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ Service \_\_\_\_\_ — Jesus called Paul to ministry
    - To kick against the goads (Acts 26:14) was a Greek and Roman expression that meant to resist your destiny
    - Jesus then named Saul a witness, as he had the eleven (Acts 26:16)
    - Jesus used the overwhelming light as an object lesson for the ministry Saul was called to (Acts 26:18)

## The Broken Dependent

- Saul was physically blind — although \_\_\_\_\_ spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ he saw more clearly than he'd ever seen before
- He could not rely on himself — and this was his spiritual condition as well
- For three days he waited — broken and helpless