



November 14-15, 2015

Acts – Faith in Motion

The Power of Sacrifice

I. Accepting God's Invitations

Acts 9:1-16 (NIV®)

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² 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. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. ¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹ The Lord told him, "**Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street** and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." ¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." ¹⁵ **But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.** ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

- A. God interrupts our plans, v.3
---A Defining Moment
- B. Reluctant disciples, v.13
---the "risk" of following God
- C. "Suffer for my name", v.16
---a theme of Luke's letter

Matthew 10:32-33 (NIV®)

³² "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

1. Ridicule

Acts 2:11-13 (NIV®)

¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

2. Arrest

Acts 4:18-21 (NIV®)

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and **commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.** . . .

²¹ **After further threats they let them go.** They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

3. Physical Abuse

Acts 5:17-18, 27-28, 40-41 (NIV®)

¹⁷ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.

¹⁸ **They arrested the apostles** and put them in the public jail. . . . ⁴⁰ **They called the apostles in and had them**

flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because **they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.**

4. Murder of Believers

Acts 7:59 (NIV®)

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Acts 12:1-2 (NIV®)

¹ It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ² **He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.**

II. The Joy of Sacrifice

A. The seed of success

2 Samuel 24:18-20, 24 (NIV®)

¹⁸ On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹ So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. ²⁰ When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. . . . ²⁴ But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. **I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.**" So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

B. The privilege of preparation

1 Chronicles 29:1-5 (NIV®)

¹ Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. ² With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God--gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble--all of these in large quantities. ³ Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: ⁴ three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, ⁵ for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?"

C. The honor of serving

1 Chronicles 29:14-16 (NIV®)

¹⁴ "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. ¹⁵ We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. ¹⁶ O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you."

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for awakening me to Your eternal purpose. Your provision for my life is complete---nothing is lacking because of Your great mercy and grace. Give me the wisdom to live generously. I have received freely of your great love. May I live in such a way that others might see your goodness and provision. I rejoice today in my Lord and King, Jesus of Nazareth, amen.

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