

Sunday, April 8, 2018
Union Baptist Church, Wilmington
Dr. LaBarron McAdoo, Sr.
Series:
Sermon: Grace to Change

You ain't gotta stay wrong; you can change

-[Acts 9:1-22 - (KJV) 9 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.[a] It is hard for you to kick against the goads." 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Ananias Baptizes Saul 10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." 13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." 17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus,[b] who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. 19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Saul Preaches Christ 20 Immediately he preached the Christ[c] in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. 21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?" 22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.]

The church was going through a stage of divine development through divine deployment. Church became routine rituals. Trouble was allowed to create mobility in ministry. There were a whole

series of actions and it looks like God is not doing anything. The stoning of Stephen and the church scattered. Sometimes, God allows trouble to get us to move. When the church is scattered, it is not to be surprising who and what kind of people we might meet. It might be some folks like Saul who need to be changed. It might be some church folk who need to know that God can change some people we don't think are capable of being changed.

We can shout and praise about his accomplishments but ignorant of the process he went through. Stop counting folks out because you only see their now but don't see their potential. He is not church familiar or church friendly. He wants to see if your faith is worth fighting for. Trouble test your testimony. He is contesting the movement. He is getting letters to find men or women to bring chained for persecution. In order to use grace to change, you must:

1. Face the Confrontation - God arrest activities. Some are still fighting arrest. In his confrontation, there is a new cognitive awareness that in who he thought he was fighting for he was fighting against. How many times does God have to put us in divine detention because your activity is not authorized? God got something that will stop you. V. 3 -4
2. Be Faithful in the Conversion - The Steps Necessary where grace comes in and you don't have to stay wrong. The process of conversion - alignment and true transformation takes time. Don't shortcut the change. You can't all of a sudden get right if you are going to continue to do wrong. Paul in his spiritual handicap had more ability than when he was whole. While Ananias is talking to God, Paul is talking to God. What we can't do, don't mean that God can't do it. Saul is praying and God is providing a prayer vision. There is a whole process of transformation that God has decided not to do directly. Most of it happens between people. Stayed with the sequence of conversion. V. 6-17
3. Stay firm with the commitment when He commissions you. Commissioning of Paul. Saul begin to preach Christ. He preached what he use to persecute. Declared what he used to destroy. V 20-22

God arrested, aligned, anointed, and appointed Saul/Paul to make it possible for him to do things that he accomplished. Change is possible if you use the grace that God has extended unto you to face the confrontation, be faithful in the conversion, and stay firm with the commitment when he commissions you.