

April 23, 2020

Signs of His Love - Part 11

Acts 9:1-6, “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 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. As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” 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.”

This is the last recorded appearance of Jesus after His resurrection. It comes at a time a bit later after His ascension, but is astounding in its significance. Saul, a leader in the Jewish religious sect, was on a mission to get rid of any remainder of these followers of Jesus known as “the Way.” Saul was “sold out” about this mission. He was determined to eradicate the name and the influence of Jesus. It had already spread too much and too far; hence his journey to Damascus to get rid of this “upstart religious group.” What Saul had not banked on was that his journey to Damascus would not lead him to the people of “the Way.” Instead, it led him to “The Way,” Jesus.

Now before we get too far into this, let me just point out something that is sometimes overlooked. Saul had been persecuting the followers of Jesus. He hated them. He even stood by and watched them as they were put to death. Why didn’t God just zap him and take him out? Because God has a better plan. He always does. We would be motivated by anger, but God is always motivated by Who He is; LOVE. God loves Saul just as much as He loves the disciples and the other followers of Jesus. Do you know what this means? It means God loves the unlovable; the deplorable; the outcasts. He loves that one in whom you can’t seem to see any good. He loves those who are living like He doesn’t exist. He even loves people who are fighting against His cause. God loves all people because He created them. He has knit every single one of them together. And, His plan for them is to bring them into His love and Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This tells me that no one is beyond the reach of God’s love. Maybe you think that ’ole so and so could never be reached or that they shouldn’t be reached. I mean, why waste my time on them. They are no good. They hate God. They don’t want to hear about Him. Hmmm, that sounds like a man named Saul. Who, by the way, became one of the greatest influences in the history of Christianity. He penned most of the New Testament under the influence of the Holy Spirit. We know him as Paul the Apostle. The Moral of this story? Never give up on anyone. God loves them!

Dear Father, help me to remember that today. There are so many people that I have basically “written off” as unreachable, unlovable, undesirable, but nothing is too difficult for You. Help me to love them with Your love, no matter what. In Jesus Name, Amen