

Dare to Speak Up

Next Steps

August 9, 2020

Acts 9:20-30

OPENING PRAYER:

Mighty God, all things are possible in You. We don't always see how this can be so, for we think we ought to be able to explain everything. Make us aware today of the mystery of Your presence, and help us to feel Your companionship, even when we don't understand You. Amen.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:¹

Read Acts 9:20-30.

- What would others have expected Saul to say when he came to the synagogue? When he proceeds to preach about Christ, how do they react? Why?
- Why would the Jerusalem disciples still fear Saul? What risk is Barnabus taking?
- People in Damascus and Jerusalem wanted to kill Saul. What does that say about him?
 - How would you have felt if you were part of the church in Jerusalem when Saul wanted to join it?
 - How would you have felt if you were Saul encountering the kind of suspicion that he did?
- What led Barnabus to help Saul?
- Who has been a Barnabus to you - encouraging you or helping you feel accepted? How did that person go about encouraging you?
 - Whom have you served as a Barnabus?
- What does 'living in the fear of the Lord' (v. 31) mean to you?
- Where have you spoken up and you knew there would be opposition to you and/or your words? When have you remained silent?

GOING DEEPER:

We ought to make the best possible use of God-given opportunities and should not waste our precious time by neglect or carelessness. Many people say: there is plenty of time to do this or that; don't worry. But they do not realize that if the habit formed now will be so ingrained that when more time is given to us, this habit will become our second nature and we shall waste that time also. "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10).

Sadhu Sundar Singh

And after he had eaten, St. Francis called Brother Masseo into the woods. And there he knelt down before Brother Masseo, and baring his head and crossing his arms. St. Francis asked him: 'What does my Lord Jesus Christ order me to do?' Brother Masseo replied that Christ had answered both Brother Silvester and Sister Clare and her companion and revealed that "He wants you to go about the world preaching, because God did not call you for yourself alone but also for the salvation of others." And then the hand of the Lord came over St. Francis. As soon as he heard this answer and thereby knew the will of Christ, he got to his feet, all aflame with divine power and said to Brother Masseo with great fervor: "So let's go - in the name of the Lord!"

St. Francis of Assisi

- What spoke to you in these passages?
- Is there something in your life that you are doing that is interrupting your faith and ability to speak out? Something you're not doing that you need to be doing?
- Has God ever spoken to you through a friend?

NEXT STEP:

- Learn to be faithful in the little things, as Jesus said. Make good use of time, redeeming the moments by taking advantage of your opportunities to share your faith, to pray, or to read scripture.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.

Come, my Life, and revive me from death.

Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.

Come, Flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my sins, kindling my heart with the flame of thy love.

Come, my King, sit upon the throne of my heart and reign there.

For thou alone art my King and my Lord.

Dimitrii of Rostov, 17th century, *The Oxford Book of Prayer*

¹ Adapted from *The Serendipity Bible* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1998)