

Date: August 18, 2019

Text: Acts 26

Title: Finding Your Story

Big Idea: Everyone who follows Jesus has a story to tell about Jesus' grace and his glory.

Part I: My Life Before Meeting Jesus (Acts 26:4-11)

Paul first tells of his Jewish pedigree (verses 4-8), then of his violent opposition to Jesus (verses 9-11).

What are you tempted to trust in to earn your salvation or acceptance with God (other than Christ alone)? See Ephesians 2:8-9 & Philippians 3:4-6.

How had Paul come to see his life before meeting Christ (see 1 Timothy 1:13-15)?

Share with each other as a group what your life was like before meeting Jesus.

Part II: How I Met Jesus (Acts 26:12-15)

Share with each other as a group what your experience was like when you met Jesus.

Describe what *grace* and *forgiveness* mean to you. Use Ephesians 2:1-7 and Romans 5:8-11 to prime the conversation.

Have you met Jesus? Here are three normal elements of a biblical encounter with God:

- First, a realization of Christ's holiness.
- Second, a realization of our own sin. See Luke 5:1-11 or Isaiah 6:1-5. Why do we deeply need to see and understand our own sin in order to be saved?
- Finally, a real response of repentance and faith. See Luke 15:11-21 for an example of eyes being opened and true repentance (see Acts 26:18).

Part III: My Life Has Changed Since Meeting Jesus (Acts 26:16-23)

Read Ephesians 2:8-10, focusing on verse 10.

What has your life been like since meeting Christ? Has it primarily been about *you* or about *God*?

What specific work do you think has God "prepared beforehand" for you to walk in?

Part IV: What We Can Learn From Paul's Story

- *You have a story to tell if you know Jesus.* See 1 Timothy 1:16
- *You have a story to tell despite your circumstances* When Paul told his story in Acts 26, he had already been imprisoned for 2 years. See also Philippians 1:12-18.

- *You have a story to tell to whomever will listen.* See verses 24-29. Who has God put in your life to tell you story to?
- *You have a story to tell because God has a Story to tell.* Your story only makes sense in the context of God's greater Story—and this is a good thing!

Application

Here's the challenge for you this week: Write your story down (beginning-middle-end), and tell your story to someone.

As a group, you may also consider sharing your stories with one another over the coming weeks and months (1 story per week, or something like that). What a great way to get to know each other, celebrate God's grace in your lives, and also speak into one another's lives in a real way!