

Road Trip: Paul's Journeys in the Book of Acts (1)

Start Your Engines – The Call to Go

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy...” (Acts 20:24 NKJV)
(Acts 9:1–22; Acts 13:1–3)

I. God's call transforms Saul (Acts 9:1–22)

A. Saul's Conversion (Acts 9:1–9)

- Saul was the least likely candidate for Christianity—a violent persecutor of the church (Acts 8:3; 9:1).
- His dramatic confrontation with Jesus (Acts 9:3–5; 22:6) revealed Christ's authority and grace.
- Saul was blinded physically but had his spiritual eyes opened (Acts 9:9).
- Saul surrendered to Jesus: “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6).
- This moment marked a complete transformation—Saul became a new man in Christ.

John MacArthur called Saul's conversion “one of the great days in the history of the world.”

- “Saul the predator” became “Saul the pray-er” (Acts 9:11).
- Saul's transformation mirrors 2 Corinthians 5:17 – a new creation in Christ.

B. Ananias is called (Acts 9:10–17)

- God called Ananias, an ordinary believer (Acts 22:12), to minister to Saul.
- Ananias responded, “Here I am, Lord” (Acts 9:10), though he expressed fear (Acts 9:13).
- God reassured him: “He is a chosen vessel of Mine...” (Acts 9:15).
- Ananias obeyed and welcomed Saul as “Brother Saul” (Acts 9:17).
- Saul received his sight, was filled with the Spirit, and was baptized (Acts 9:18).

Warren Wiersbe: “The important thing is not our fame but our faithfulness.”

- You may never be famous like Paul, but like Ananias, your faithfulness can change the world.

C. Our call (Acts 9:18–22)

- Saul immediately began preaching that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 9:20).
- His transformation amazed all who had known his past (Acts 9:21–22).
- Adrian Rogers notes Saul received: a new Lord, life, liberty, love, and labor.
- Conversion precedes commission—God's call begins with surrender.

C.S. Lewis: described himself as “the most dejected and reluctant convert” but fully surrendered to Christ.

II. God's call sends Paul (Acts 13:1–3)

A. The Holy Spirit's call at Antioch (Acts 13:1–2)

- While worshiping and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke (Acts 13:2).
- Paul and Barnabas were “separated” for the work God prepared.
- God often calls people already serving; calls are confirmed in community (Proverbs 15:22).

- Paul's unique background (Jewish, Roman, educated) prepared him for this mission.

If Acts 9 was the ignition of Paul's salvation, Acts 13 was the ignition of Paul's mission.

B. Launching out – obedience and action (Acts 13:3)

- The church fasted, prayed, laid hands, and sent Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:3).
- They were released (Greek: apolyō) from local duty to global mission.
- This launched the first intentional missionary journey (Acts 13–14).

The term disciple means to be a learner. The term Apostle means, sent one.

- The church partnered with God's call—missions is a team effort.
- Paul endured hardship but kept going (Acts 20:24).

“The will of God will not take you where the power of God cannot keep you.”

III. God's call continues – our response today

A. God still calls ordinary people to extraordinary impact

- Saul was unqualified by human standards; God qualified him.
- Ananias was obedient, not prominent.
- Antioch was a faithful, not famous, church.

The Apostle Paul would later write:

- 1 Corinthians 1:27 – God chooses the weak and foolish to confound the mighty.
- 2 Corinthians 3:5 – Our sufficiency is from God.
- Ephesians 2:10 – We are God's workmanship, created for good works.

D.L. Moody “...I could do little, but I could hold the light.”

B. Surrender: “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6)

- That question reveals a surrendered life.
- God doesn't show the whole map—just the next step (Acts 9:6).
- Romans 12:2 – His will is good, acceptable, and perfect.

“Obedience often comes before clarity.” Adrian Rogers: God's will isn't a roadmap—it's a relationship.

C. Encouragement for the journey ahead

- Saul was called from destruction to devotion.
- Paul's missionary journey began with surrender.

God may be calling you today to:

- Salvation
- Service
- Sharing Christ with someone hard to love
- Taking a new step of obedience – whatever it is, we have these promises from our Lord...
- “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).
- “Lo, I am with you always...” (Matthew 28:20).

Challenge for the week: Pray daily: “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then, listen and obey. Let's start our engines!