

## MAXIMUM IMPACT IN OUR WORLD

December 6, 2009

### SERMON TITLE- ACTS-traordinary: When the Hunter Becomes the Hunted

Acts 9:1-31

#### NOTES BY BILLY GROSS

##### A survey of the powerful redemption/transformation of Saul (Paul) . . .

- Saul was 1st century “celebrity . . . from a well-respected family, wealthy, highly educated, a respected religious zealot (a Pharisee)
- A man of great influence and power - devoted to stamping out the “heresy” of the Way (the followers of Jesus)
- The words used to describe his obsession with stamping out Christianity depict a -- wild animal “mauling” its prey
- He was in pursuit of Christians who had fled to Damascus (to round them up and imprison them) **when** . . .

##### HE MET JESUS “face to face”:

- Jesus, the one Saul was hunting, was really after him! The hunter was really the hunted. The one persecuting was being pursued!

**No one** (even a vehement enemy of the church) is beyond the reach of God's saving, transforming grace!

- Saul is literally “knocked off his donkey” and blinded by the glorious presence of the Lord. The Lord Jesus speaks to him . . .
- “Saul, why are you persecuting me?” - Jesus, experiences the suffering of His people PERSONALLY. He identifies with His followers in their persecution: “Saul you are persecuting **ME!**” Our lord is ever present, in all circumstances. He does not just watch from afar. He is **with us**, sharing in our sufferings.
- Saul is told to go to the city and God will show him what to do next. He is only given his next step – *not* the whole picture; not the full roadmap. This is the way of the Lord with all of us – he only gives us a portion of His direction, so we will wait on Him, trust in Him, and listen for his voice. The journey and the relationship is just as important (perhaps even moreso) than our destination.
- It is in Saul's blindness, weakness, and brokenness that he comes to truly SEE Jesus. In this place, he is transformed. In this posture, he becomes Paul: the

greatest ambassador of the kingdom in all history.

As we celebrate the wondrous incarnation of our Savior King, may we kneel in such a posture of brokenness and weakness. Yearning to see Him as He truly is and open to His grace to transform us and lead us in whatever way He chooses. May we say, with Mary, "may it be with me (O' Lord) as you have said."

Joyous Advent,

Billy