

LEAD SHEET

ACTS : You Won't Believe This! - WK. 3

ANANIAS AND PAUL

JANUARY 31, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

NAVIGATE THE BIBLE

If you want to know God better, read His Word!

GETTING STARTED

General Discussion:

- What do you normally think of when you think of bad people? (*Murderers, rapists, people who hate, criminals, etc.*)
- Of the people we named, do you think that any of them could have been saved? (*This will probably prompt a discussion about how bad is too bad, which is where we are headed.*)
- Is there anyone who is "too far gone" to experience God's grace? (*Let students express their opinion.*)

DIGGING IN

What if the first century Church had played the game we just played. Saul certainly would have been nominated. We know from our Acts study that he was present at the murder of Stephen. We have talked about his radical conversion. Today, we are going to focus in on an unlikely relationship between Saul and a man named Ananias.

Read Acts 9:10-19

Discussion Questions:

1. What do we know about Ananias? (*He was a disciple who lived in Damascus.*)

2. How does the Lord communicate with him?
(The Lord calls to him in a vision.)
3. What does God say?
(Go to Judas' house and ask for Saul.)
4. What is Anania's understanding of Saul?
(See verse 13. It wasn't good.)
5. Does God reconsider His command?
(No, there is an exclamation mark after the word "Go!")
6. God reveals His plan to Ananias in verse 15. What is it?
(Saul will be His chosen instrument to proclaim God's Name to the Gentiles and the people of Israel.)
7. What does Ananias do? *(He obeys God and goes to the house.)*
8. What does Ananias do next? *(Lays hands on Saul, prays, and God restores Saul's sight. Saul is then baptized.)*

We need to understand that this is the equivalent of Ananias walking into a house to meet a terrorist he'd never met and then baptizing him or her just because God said to do it.

General Discussion:

- What sort of emotions do you think Ananias felt when God was giving him instructions? *(Nervous, scared, reluctant, doubtful, etc.)*
- Do you think Ananias doubted whether or not he was hearing from the Lord? *(Probably.)*
- What do you think he felt as he walked into the house where Saul was staying? *(Terrified, fearful, nervous, etc.)*
- Why did he still obey? *(Because he respected God more than he feared Saul, he was a disciple committed to doing what the Lord said, etc.)*

- Could you have done the same, why or why not? (*Allow for discussion.*)

MAKING IT REAL

This is a fantastic historical account of a brave man used by God to convert Saul into the most prolific missionary the world has ever known. Saul was an enemy, but God made him a friend.

What about us?

We are going to revisit our game from before.
(*hand out a scrap piece of paper to each person in your group*)

This time I do not want you to write the name of an awful historical figure. Instead, I want you to write the name(s) of a couple of people you know who you think are awful. Just a first name will do.

Who is it that you think is beyond the reach of God's Grace? Who is someone you consider to be the worst of the worst? Someone who's name makes your hand tremble even as you begin to write it. We are not going to share these with anyone, but I want you to be able to look down at the names of these people.

(*Give students a couple minutes to sit and think and write a name or two. Make sure they are not sharing these names with anyone around them.*)

Okay, for the rest of our time together, I want you to look frequently at those names. We are going to read some Scripture, and I want those people to be on the forefront of your minds.

Read Matthew 5:43-44

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it hard to love our enemies? (*They have hurt us, abandoned us, etc.*)

2. Does Jesus command that we love them? *(Yes.)*

3. Did Ananias love Saul? *(Yes.)*

By loving our enemies, we realize that God has not finished writing their stories. That doesn't mean we have to be their best friend. In fact, some relationships are not healthy for us to continue to be in. However, loving these people means we are willing to point them toward Jesus and share Jesus with them when we get the opportunity. It means being able to tell them we love them and forgive them for any hurt they've caused us or others we care about.

Look at the name again. Do you love them?

Read Romans 5:9-11

Discussion Questions:

1. Have we always been in good standing with God?

(No.)

2. What does verse 10 say we used to be?

(Enemies of God.)

3. How does this relationship change?

(Through the death of Jesus.)

4. What has happened between us and God? *(We have been reconciled and now have a relationship with Him.)*

5. Does this passage indicate that there is anyone who is unable to be reconciled? *(No.)*

Look at the name again.

That person, even though they have hurt you deeply, even though you think they are too far gone, can be reconciled to God. Even if they are far from God now, they are not unlike we once were. Apart from Christ, we are all God's enemies.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Discussion Questions:

1. How many times does the phrase “all people” occur in that passage? (*At least three.*)
2. Does God want just some people or everyone to know Him? (*All.*)
3. Is there anyone who is off limits? (*No.*)
4. Who wrote these words? (*If they don't know, it's Paul, the man Ananias baptized.*)

Look at your name again.

Does God want your enemy to know Him?

There is **no one** who is too far gone, not the people on your papers, not the people we talked about earlier, no one, not even Saul. Thankfully, Ananias was obedient and reached out to his enemy.

General Discussion:

- Why don't we want to reach out to our enemies?
(*We are scared, nervous, etc., just as Ananias was.*)
- Where do we start if we want to obey God?
(*Prayer, counseling, make a plan, etc.*)

I want you to wad up your paper with the name on it and throw it in a pile in the middle of our table. The name you wrote on the paper is not important to the group as a whole, but we do want to pray. Before we pray, I want to mention two very important things.

First, if the person you wrote is completely absent from your life, figure out a way to get in touch with him or her. If he or she is an abuser or someone who has scarred you deeply, you need to consult a counselor before making contact. I want you to obey Jesus, but do so in wisdom.

Second, you are students. Ananias was a grown man. You may need someone's help to reach out to an enemy. A peer at school is one thing, though you may still want to seek counsel first. If you are reaching out to an adult, please let us know how we can help.

All right, let's throw those names in a pile. We are going to pray over them.

CLOSING PRAYER

Conclude the prayer time by praying for names in the pile, as well as for your students—for boldness, courage, and truth to prevail.