

May 1, 2022

Paul's conversion

Acts 9: 1-19a

I am going to continue on with the theme of witness. Paul's conversion is a great example of the typical idea of witness being put on its head. Things are very upside down. Paul's conversion and witness does not follow the set Jewish norms for witness of his day. I am sure Paul quickly realized that God's ways are not our ways. God is certainly not restricted to act or perform in our set ways. Or the ways we think God should act or behave. Our understanding of God should not be restricted to human confines.

Paul is blinded and does not have the use of his eyes to see everything that happened to him on the road to Damascus. Even those who were travelling with him saw nothing. They were only lucky enough to hear Paul's conversation with the Risen Jesus Christ. One can now be a witness with your ears only. Your eyes do not have to be involved. How witness can happen is now wide open. Could you imagine how powerful a witness would be if God touched your heart? It has happened.

The story would later shift to Paul giving witness to others about his witness with the Risen Jesus Christ. Powerful things happened on that road to Damascus that day. All of this would happen with the help of other people that Jesus set on Paul's path of life. A person named Ananias would be important in helping Paul share his witness with others. Ananias is the one instructed by Jesus to give Paul back his sight. There is much irony here. Paul gets his sight back after his witnessing encounter with the Risen Jesus Christ. Paul needed to be blinded in order to get the full witness encounter.

Paul would become who he was destined to be only with the help of others. It would actually be a community that would help him fulfill his greatest potential. The same community that he used to persecute. Yet Jesus has big plans for Paul. Jesus would take Paul from being an active persecutor of The Way to a leading preacher in the church. Paul's witness to others would spread the Good News far and wide. Paul's conversion is a new way to witness God's presence in our world and our lives. It is an example to us that our witness is to be shared with others also. That is not a big thing among Lutherans.

I can only imagine the fear Paul had with losing his sight for a few days. Especially during his encounter with the Risen Jesus Christ. This is the same person whose followers Paul is hunting down. The Risen Christ is with Paul through his fears. Yet He uses Paul's fear for the greatest possible good. When Paul's sight is returned it is like he has a new set of eyes. So that he can see the world differently and his place in it.

Paul can see his future mission clearly. With his new eyes God will use Paul to spread the Good News far and wide in the world.

Paul's witness and conversion is a powerful story. It is a testimony of what we can become and accomplish when we work God and not against Him. This is an encouragement to our children of what they can do and become. When you work with God and in a Christ focused community anything is possible. This story is a how to guide for adults. So that we can guide and encourage our children and grandchildren. We are that community. Like Paul, sometimes it takes a community to help us get to where we need to be. Remember that in the midst of our fears, God is there with us. This is the purpose of the church. To encourage and support our gifts and others, so that they can be the greatest person they were meant to be. Christ is Risen! Pastor D