

The Importance Of The Local Church

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of the local church in the life of a new convert, focusing on Saul of Tarsus' transformation from a persecutor to a preacher through his encounter with the local church. It highlights the role of the church in providing healing, love, spiritual gifts, discipleship, baptism, the call of God, and evangelism in the believer's journey.

Scripture: Acts 9:8, Acts 9:17, Acts 9:19, Acts 9:20, Acts 9:26, Acts 22:14, Acts 26:15, Galatians 5:6

Topics: "Transformation through Community", "The Role of the Church in Discipleship"

Description

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Transcript

Turning to Acts chapter 9 here this morning. Acts chapter 9 and I want to continue on from where we were last week. Last week we dealt with the power of regeneration but this week I want to continue on the same chapter and the same verses dealing with the continuation.

That's why I said last week don't take it as a message in itself. What I'm going to deal with this morning is so very important. My message this morning, the importance of the local church, the importance of the local church.

Reading from Acts chapter 9 and verse 8. And Saul arose from the earth and when his eyes were opened he saw no man but they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus and he was three days without sight and neither did eat nor drink and there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias and he said behold I am here Lord and the Lord said unto him arise and go into the street which is called straight and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus for behold he prayeth and has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered Lord I have heard by many of this man how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name but the Lord said unto him go thy way for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake and Ananias went his way and entered into the

house and putting his hands on him said brother Saul the Lord even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest has sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales and he received sight forthwith and arose and was baptized and when he had received meat he was strengthened then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God but all that heard him were amazed and said is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem and came he hither not for that intent that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests but Saul increased them more in strength and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus proving that this is the very Christ let's pray here this morning father I do pray that you speak to us that you reveal to each one of us the absolute vital importance of the local church to all of those that are regenerate born again changed and indwelt by the Spirit of God father I do thank you God that you didn't leave Saul of Tarsus and his blindness and his loneliness and his isolation and the confusion of his thoughts my God you sent a man you sent a certain disciple you sent a born-again believer a brother in Christ to lay hands upon him my God and they say brother Saul my God what a miracle the body of Christ is thank you that you operate through the body that you place us in a body that you send good brothers and sisters on to us to minister healing to minister the spirit to minister the things of God and father I do thank you that you surrounded Saul of Tarsus with the right people at the right time to minister the right thing nor God to prepare him as a chosen vessel unto the Lord father speak to us this morning nor God make it beautiful the body of Christ that you have created that you raise up of your Holy Spirit we love you Lord Jesus and we acknowledge you as the head of this body we are submitted as individual members there is only one head of the Church of Jesus Christ and we acknowledge you as God as our Sovereign Lord as High King of the Church of Jesus Christ blessed be your name amen last week we dealt with the power of regeneration in the message last week as I finished that I left you looking at Saul in a state of blindness here this morning by the time I finish you're gonna see that his eyes are wide open to great revelations given by God last week when we finish we see Saul being led into Damascus blind and by the hand by the end of this message you're gonna see him leading men to Jesus Christ last week when we finish we seen him sitting alone in silence and isolation but by the end of this message we're gonna see him standing publicly preaching Jesus Christ last week we seen him sitting in frailty and weakness not even able to guide himself but this week right by the time I'm finished we're gonna see him in great strength and victory in spirit last week he was saved but this week he'll be saved sanctified spirit filled and separated to the ministry of preaching Christ and him crucified you see what is the difference between what I preached last week and what I'm gonna preach this week what is it that makes a difference he was a regenerate man where we left him last week but the man I'm gonna deal with here where we're gonna leave him today he is a very different man he was born again last week but he's not the man I'm gonna show you by the end of today what happened between the end of last week's message and what will be the end of this message what is it that makes the difference and this man called Saul of Tarsus you see there's certain things happen in all of our lives that move us from a certain place to another spiritual place from sitting alone in a home on that street called straight sitting there blind with many questions in the mind to moving you to a place where you have moved out boldly filled with the Spirit of God something happens in that short window of opportunity since we all need those seasons because it moves us we all need those experiences what am I saying happen in that short period of time what is it that took soul from a converted man radically saved to being on the high street preaching can I tell you this morning and this is my message the importance of the local church you see I believe in Acts chapter 9 the verses we just read the outstanding mark of it is Saul of Tarsus who was regenerate only God can save a man only the Spirit of God can change a person's heart only the Spirit of God can turn you from being a persecutor to a

witness who loves Jesus Christ only the Spirit of God can do that but what is it that makes the difference here I want to show you that one of the first things Christ done was to introduce Saul of Tarsus to a local church this was of utmost importance you see there was a persecution against the church in the book of Acts from the stoning of Stephen until the conversion of Saul of Tarsus there was a short period of unbelievable persecution every Christian was under threat every believer was in danger of their very life but after Saul's conversion after he becomes a regenerate man listen to what it says in here in Acts chapter 9 and 31 then when after Saul's conversion then had the church's rest throughout all of Judea and Galilee and Samaria that's three large regions to know what that tells me Saul of Tarsus was the driving force behind the persecution of churches across many times and many cities he was the main instrument the main vessel of persecution against the first revival and the first churches and the first leaders of the of the body of Christ this was the man that most radically opposed it and yet let that man get saved let him meet with the living Christ and you know what it says that all the churches had rest and were edified walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost and they were multiplied you see I believe that after Saul's conversion the most important thing we do see here is in being introduced to a thing called the church he persecuted it he saw it he saw its preachers die he persecuted the members of it he had an effect upon it and yet he never really knew what the body of Christ was or the local church you see I believe as he's on the way to Damascus letter in hand saying I am going to destroy the church every Christian in the city of Damascus I am gonna lead them to Jerusalem to be in prison do you know what was happening amongst the believers of Damascus I believe they were praying the church in Damascus was praying Paul didn't know that our soul didn't know that but that church says that man is coming to imprison us to persecute us so they began to pray but little could they have realized that very shortly he is going to join that church he is going to become a member of that church can I warn you here this morning that maybe someone who attacks you violently someone who hates you someone who would want to destroy your testimony may well get born again and join this church and in fact it could be vital for the trip for the future of Jesus Christ it goes on and when what we dealt with last week when Christ dealt with Saul the first thing he said to him was Saul Saul why persecute us thou me? Now Saul wasn't persecuting Jesus he'd never met Jesus he never heard the voice of Christ he never seen the face of Jesus but when Jesus said Saul why are you persecuting me you know what he's saying you touch Stephen you touch those men and women that's my church when you touch the church you touch me if you persecuted you persecuted me if you lie to it you've lied to me if you disturb it you've disturbed me if you divide it and cause disunity you have done that to me you know what Christ was beginning to reveal at the time of his conversion I am the head and there is a body on the earth and you know what I am joined to it I feel what it feels and he said again I am Jesus whom thou persecute us you know what he's beginning to reveal to Saul and on the day of his conversion I have a church and you've been touching that church but you know what I'm gonna make you a member of that church I am here to change your life the way you were you wouldn't have fitted in here you would have you would have killed a lot of them but when I finish with you you're gonna become a vital member of the body of Christ do you know what Saul responded Lord what will thou have me to do and the Lord said unto him arise go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do now listen carefully he has just met the living Christ a resurrected Christ heard his voice seen his glory he has been radically changed he believes this is the Messiah no he believes Jesus has risen from the dead he didn't believe that before but here he is a regenerate born-again man and you know what Christ says what do you want me to do you know what at this moment I'm not going to tell you here here the risen Christ revealed to you I'm not gonna tell you I want you to go into the city and I want you to wait there and you know what I am going to tell you once you're there what you must do that's the first step you know there's people got saved in this city they've never made the first step they are regenerate and they

have never made the first step of going to the place where Christ can now lead them and show them what he wants to do they're gazing into the sky saying Lord speak to me and nothing is coming to them they are sitting waiting they're blind they're alone they're isolated and they're in their hearts and they're looking for something to happen you need to make the first step here this morning I do have a message for you and it's going to involve a man called Ananias a simple disciple it says in Acts chapter 9 and verse 10 and there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias look at him he's not an apostle he's not a preacher he's not a pastor he's not a teacher we're not even told he's an elder we're told nothing about him a certain disciple which is at Damascus over in chapter 22 we read and one Ananias a devout man according to the law having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there you know who Ananias was he was from a Jewish family a Jewish background and you know what as far as the Jews go he was a devout man according to the law according to the law of God he was an upright he was a righteous man he was a holy man but he was more than that he was a born-again man who knew Jesus he was a member of a local church in the city of Damascus here tonight or here this morning it might be tonight by the time I'm finished but here in this message listen carefully the importance of the local church I have eight simple things here in the text that we have just read that show the importance of the local church at Damascus to Saul of Tarsus after he was regenerate God done the miracle in his heart but the Lord says I'm not going to speak to you I'm going to send someone to you and you've got to be in the right place for that I want you to take the first step go into that city and wait on me and you know how Christ is going to come to him next he's going to come working in the members of his body he has chosen life there are eight things here that happen all and six of them happen all in one day through one man one member of the body of Christ and two of them happen over a short period of time through the entire local church this was vital for Saul let me give them to you these eight things here this morning as we see the importance of the local church and the life of a new Christian a new regenerate believer called Saul of Tarsus number one the sovereign supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit I'm talking about nine supernatural gifts that are written about in 1 Corinthians 12 through to 14 and you know what those gifts are found in the local church the local body and the members of the local church look with me in chapter 9 verse 10 to him said the Lord in a vision Jesus came unexpectedly to Ananias and he said behold I am here Lord look at this instantaneous you know what he's not surprised that Christ would show my vision he's not surprised that Jesus is alive no not at all he's not surprised that Jesus would speak to him but you know what he's going to be very surprised that the message that Christ gives to him very very surprised Lord here I am and the Lord said unto him arise arise God is actually meeting here with with Ananias in a vision he comes to him and he says I want you to get up and I want you to get out of your house and I want you to go to Saul of Tarsus well Ananias had heard all about him you know what no way are you gonna get Ananias going to visit Saul with the knowledge he has he has heard from many that he's on his way to persecute he goes he's the greatest enemy of the body of Christ he hates me he'll kill me if he sees me so what does the Lord do the Lord has to bring a vision now what is a vision a vision is not one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit it's not a dream is not a gift of the Holy Spirit it is not it's not one of the nine gifts you know what a dream and a vision is it is a means by which God can operate his gifts all it is a dream or a vision is a means of communication and so Jesus appears to Ananias Jesus appeared it wasn't just a vision Jesus used the dream to speak to Ananias and to reveal factual information on to him I believe it was actually a word of knowledge not just a prophecy the gifts of the Spirit were operating here and he gave him facts he gave him a street name he gave him a house address he he told him who would be in that house he gave the name Saul of Tarsus remember the guy you've heard about Saul of Tarsus and you know what I'll tell you what he's doing he is praying and I'll tell you what else he's blind and I need you to go and lay hands on him so that he's going to see I'm telling you his physical condition his spiritual condition I'm telling you the address he's at and I'm

telling you what I want you to do since it was in a vision you know the difference between a dream and a vision a dream is at night when you're asleep a vision is when you're awake you get a vision when you have all your faculties your eyes are open you're there in whatever situation and you have a word from the Lord I mean a vision that is what a vision is you have you're awake all your faculties are there what does he say arise and go into the street which is called straight it's still there today in Damascus and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus for behold he prayeth and has seen in a vision a man named Ananas coming in and putting his hands on him that he might receive his sight do you see what happened here not only did God give this vision to Ananas but in the vision he says you know what I've given Saul a vision as well and I told Saul your name and I've told him what you're gonna do that you're gonna come to him and that you're gonna pray for him lay hands on him and his eyes are gonna be open so look at this you have a new Christian saved three days who has never been in the local church never been a member of a church and there he is in darkness and blindness and he's all alone with all of his thoughts but his life has changed and Christ gives him a vision says Saul don't worry this is the next step I'm sending a man to you why do you think Christ didn't heal him well why do you think Christ didn't just baptize him in the Holy Ghost why don't you just think that Christ on everything you know why Christ has a body a church members that he actually works through so here are two visions why did he get two visions one the soul said he's coming and he's gonna pray for you and why did he give it to Ananas and said look I I want you to do this here he is and you know what I've given him a vision saying what you're gonna do so Christ arranged it on both sides and he's trying to bring the happy couple together somewhere in the middle you see why does Christ give two visions to confirm it to verify it to make sure that both of their hearts are settled to establish it do you know when you know this is real the gifts of the Holy Spirit when they're supernatural and you know nobody could have planned this no man could do this no man could possibly arrange this it's gotta be Christ do you know the confidence that that brings since I'm telling you this is Saul's first encounter with the real body of Christ he is going to find out the gifts of the Spirit are real when Christ gives a word of knowledge it is very very real Ananas was neither surprised about the vision or Christ speaking but he was about the message master he persecuted the church don't you know God had to show this vision to him to settle his heart you realize that God uses gifts to settle your heart so that you'll have confidence God is in this it's not me it's not my imagination I am being led by the Spirit of God some of you here will not do certain things unless God speaks to you unless he operates through the gifts of the Holy Spirit you see Christ was commanding him to go and do this but he's a human being he is a normal guy with fears and prejudice and concerns oh if I have all these fears or worries God can never use me in the gifts of the Spirit God could never give me a vision because I've got doubts and concerns Ananas was terrified here oh Lord not me please not today Lord please not this man the greatest enemy of the church and you want me to go to him do you realize he's using a clay vessel a man with normal feelings and normal thoughts who's going hold on you're telling me the supernatural revelation you're giving me all these facts Lord there's some things you don't know you you really don't know you're making a big mistake here since I'm telling you the gifts operate through flesh and blood Saul of Tarsus is just about to find himself caught up into a dimension this doesn't happen amongst Pharisees it didn't happen in the temple in Jerusalem here are normal men and women receiving divine revelation to bring about the will of God and the purpose of God can I remind you who this new convert is he's only saved three days he's regenerate but you know what he is the one who's going to write 1 Corinthians chapter 12 through to chapter 14 he's going to be the one who writes more on the gifts of the Holy Spirit than any man in church history he is the man that's going to teach the church about the gifts but that wasn't the start of the gifts the gifts were already all operating way before Paul wrote it and 1 Corinthians chapter 12 oh I was on an ass and Saul to know that this was God you can't afford to be wrong if you're on an ass I do not want to be

going knocking on the door on that door saying hey it's all of Tarsus there I'm a Christian I'm a local believer I'm your welcoming party you don't want to make a mistake you know what I believe there is an assurance with the real gifts of the Spirit there is such either it's radically wrong or it's radically right there is no in-between and that's something remarkable the gifts of the Spirit are supernatural he will be at that address he will be in a state of blindness his heart will be open he is going to get healed when I go on to him you can have that assurance when it's the real gifts of the Holy Spirit do you realize that these gifts had to be supernatural to introduce Paul to the body of Christ look work could Christ have done all this side on the road yes he could have but he says you know what I want you to go into the city and then I'm gonna start my work through normal members of the body that's the first thing sovereign supernatural gifts when you come into the local church there is a realm in the church where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are revealed since they may not always operate when we think they should operate but I'll show you I can give hundreds of testimonies of the genuine operation of the gift that operated at the right time when I needed it thank God even here we read about healing as well maybe the gift of healing was in operation but secondly brotherly love this new three-day year old three-day Christian soul of Tarsus with a radical conversion is introduced to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ look with me in verse 17 an ananias went his way and he entered into the house and putting his hands upon him said brother Saul what a dynamite statement brother Saul you better be sure about that then over in chapter 22 verse 13 and it says again Paul testified he came unto me and stood and said unto me brother Saul do you realize Paul never forgot that sentence brother Saul it is the first time Saul is ever being called brother by another Christian he'd never heard that before here is a stranger that he's only seen in a vision and he's standing and he's put his hands on him and he says brother Saul brother Saul do you know the word brother means to be birthed out of the same womb it means we come from the same source we've had the same experience we are family now can you imagine Saul of Tarsus say three days and you're laying hands on him and saying brother brother I love you I love you you see Saul was introduced to the love of God in this house Christ had prepared him I'm sending a real brother to you I'm sending someone to you that's gonna embrace you you know where he was when Ananias came in he was blind he was alone he was quiet he was waiting he desperately needed the local body he desperately needed real Christians he desperately needed someone to stretch out their hand and say brother brother Saul be very careful with the love of God in your heart towards those that we meet along the way and laying hands on him it meant acceptance reception and the blessing of God he was not a part of the family of God with a common identity with a common identity since the local church is where new Christians experience the love of God remember what brother soup ministered there the other week and may continue with is this love of God where is it written about where did brother soup turn to when he wanted to preach on love charity love and action where did he turn to he turned to one Corinthians 13 and he began to read that beautiful chapter about charity the love of God in action who was it wrote that it was a man who's sitting in darkness and blindness with all of his thoughts had someone come and say brother Saul do you realize they never forgot that the first time a Christian said you are my brother because you met Christ and I met Christ and that makes this family this is a miracle it is a remarkable thing you know a little bit later three years later we read about Saul going up to Jerusalem and remember what I said here when the Lord says I want you to go to him what they say no way this man is after me do you realize if the love of God had not conquered that he would never have gone near Saul he wouldn't have tried to hand him a tract on the high street would you guys hey there's Saul of Tarsus as soup tries to grab Rory no no not him no Rory goes charging said I'll give him a gospel tract as soup tries to hide behind the street bin or something else since it is real what happens Ananias was scared of Saul of Tarsus but the love of God overcome it was a very very real thing but look at verse 26 and when Saul was come to Jerusalem he is three years later he has saved to join himself to the

disciples but they were all afraid of him and believed not that he was a disciple Ananias didn't initially believe us the Church of Jerusalem with its twelve Apostles didn't believe it they're scared so what did God do in Damascus he had to have an Ananias who had love in his heart who says I believe he's been changed and the Church in Jerusalem there had to be a Barnabas members Barnabas who no one believed that the Barnabas said I believe you'd been changed and he brought Saul to the Apostles and said you're changed you're born again yes yes I am you see the Bible says in Galatians 5 and 6 faith which worketh by love do you realize you need faith before that love operates you see how could he if he didn't have faith to believe he's been changed why would he go and show him love you see you've got to have faith out of real faith comes a real love towards those who don't deserve it I'm telling you this is what you find in the body of Christ brotherly love acceptance since we may be scared at times we may fail in our love but we must manifest the real brotherly love to every soul that comes in that door third of all divine healing I'm talking about a convert of three days who he's discovered gifts are real these gifts are supernatural this love is real I've been brought right in man I wonder what he's done about his letter that was given by the high priest it says there's your authority go and kill the Christians in Damascus go and imprison them here's soldiers to take with you I wonder what he done did it drop in the fireplace the day of his conversion or maybe when he's getting baptized in water it just floated down the river I don't know I really don't know but this third point divine healing he had never experienced healing before never seen anyone healed before he'd heard that the false Messiah healed people but he never experienced it but he is in the body of Christ he is being brought right into a real church verse 17 brother Saul the Lord Jesus even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest has sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and then in verse 18 and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scaled and he received his sight forthwith it was Ananias laying hands on him that brought that healing Christ said I want you to go and do it Christ also said to Saul I'm gonna do this for you here as hands are laid on his eyes are healed there is a miracle of healing do you realize Saul later as Paul the Apostle writes about healing and the gifts of healing and all of the various things that happen but you know where it began it began with him having his own eyes healed this is the third thing you realize there's gifts of healing in the church not just one gift many gifts there's also the prayer of faith to be prayed by the elders with the anointing of oil for those who are sick it's not my job to go to you when you're sick you are to call for the elders to anoint with oil the healing is the children's bread why didn't Christ heal him out on the road to Damascus outside the city why did Christ not heal him he had the power to he could answer Saul's prayers for three days he must have said Lord will you heal me very shortly I will but I'll send someone who's gonna pray for you and lay hands on you do you know Christ chooses to use men and women I can't heal neither can you heal but Christ actually chooses to use normal men and women a member of the body of Christ do you know what Christ has shown Saul there is a body the year to be reliant upon fourth of all being filled with the Holy Spirit again verse 17 and the Lord even Jesus has sent me that thou mightest be filled with the Holy Spirit of God since he not only got healed on this day he not only had an experience of the love of God and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as the hands are still upon him he is about to get filled with the Holy Spirit three days before he got born again to be born again or have the Spirit live in you is different than being filled with the Holy Spirit that word filled means you're so full nothing else can get in there you know what it means to be filled that you're filled the capacity you're actually full of the Holy Spirit of God you go I've got no room for anger I've got no room for bitterness bitterness God has poured in his Holy Spirit to me I mean I am overflowing with the Holy Spirit there is an experience where the Holy Spirit not only indwells you but he comes to fill you you see Saul had already met Christ he was born again he was already changed he was going in a different direction he was already called a brother as a member of the body of Christ he's already been healed but he has never ever been filled with the Holy Spirit of God can I ask you this

morning have you been filled with the Holy Spirit of God he was already a part of the body but had not experienced this dynamic work on the third day you have this all through the Acts look in Acts chapter 2 you have a hundred and twenty believers men women children they're all regenerate they're washed in the blood they're actually in communion with God but they have never been filled with the Holy Spirit of God but in Acts chapter 2 that's what happens they love Jesus they're in a prayer meeting they're walking with God but they get filled with the Holy Spirit of God and speak in tongues what about in Samaria and Acts chapter 8 we read of Philip the Evangelist he leads thousands of them to the Lord they're born again the joy of God is there miracles of healing surely they must have everything oh no there's more there is more Philip the Evangelist seen the entire city stirred for God but there's more it says the church in Jerusalem sent on Peter and John to lay hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit because none of them in that community had received the Spirit yet they were born again they had the joy of God they were seeing miracles but they weren't baptized in the Holy Spirit but you know what happened when Peter and John came down and began to lay hands on them as the hands were laid on them instantly they are filled with the Holy Spirit of God or what about in Acts chapter 10 and chapter 11 and Cornelius's house Peter is sent there remember an angel spoke to Cornelius send for Peter he's gonna preach to you so he sends messengers what happens just before Peter has a vision he's wide awake it's during the day he has a vision three men are coming to your house today I want you to go with them and I want you to they're Gentiles oh no master I won't go with them yes you will yes you will see why the gifts operate some of you are so prejudiced some of you's have prejudice and me I'm sure we have prejudice we don't let all realize there it could take a work of the Spirit of God to get you to go to someone with the gospel you say I can't go there I can't go to their house why not why not maybe the Lord will give you a vision or a dream and say I want you to go with them no Lord you don't understand I want you to go with them you see it's very very real and we know that when Peter went to Cornelius's house they believed the gospel and the Holy Spirit's poured out and they're filled with the Spirit or what about in Acts chapter 19 we read about 12 disciples who have been followers of John the Baptist message they believe but they haven't been filled with the Holy Spirit of God as Saul or Paul lays hands on them they're filled with the Holy Spirit of God what happened to Saul here he had a real experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit of God he didn't get it out on the highway it wasn't Christ personally done that Christ operated through the body through the church since I'm not confining it to that we knew that Paul brother Paul was at home nine nine thirty at night I'll never forget it I spoke to him in the morning he said brother keep I'm trying to be filled I'm saved three years whatever it was I'm praying I'm praying everyone's prayed for me I just smiled at him said just receive brother receive I went home had my dinner my heart smoked me and I went Candace I felt so bad I went I've left he got more for his face when I said just receive brother it's easy just receive honey and he went away cringing my heart smoked me do you know I refilled the Lord said go to your bookshelf get that little booklet give it to him tonight I refilled it was the Lord I went to him give brother Paul the little booklet receive without tarrying without waiting just receive I give it to him says I really believe the Lord one should read this he's been trying to get filled everyone had laid hands on him nothing had happened well that night about 930 at night I got a text I've just been filled with the Holy Spirit of God here in my house the Spirit of God filled me you don't need a person there but we are the body of Christ healing is in the midst of God's people there is a baptism in the Holy Spirit but there's also more point five the call of God the call of God this all happens on the same day it's remarkable in verse 15 as Ananias is standing there look what the Lord said but the Lord said unto him go thy way for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and Kings and the children of Israel he hasn't gone to see him yet and the Lord says I want to tell you he's a chosen vessel he is an elect vessel an elect instrument of my hand he's not just someone passing through I have chosen him he is a vessel I'm gonna use and you know what I'm gonna

send him to many Kings this won't happen for at least begin to happen for another 10 to 15 years now all these years he's gonna pass through this is before Ananias goes in the house do you know there's a great call on this young convert he's only saved three days and I'm telling you he's a chosen vessel to preach to Kings and not only the Jews to go and preach to Gentile nations this is a chosen call vessel who's gonna be used in the kingdom of God God revealed that do you know God can reveal that you know I was in a church of ministry once and it was very strange for a period of six years anyone who walked through the door that was going to join that ministry instantly I knew it I mean over a six-year period without fail there wasn't one person I thought would join who didn't and there wasn't one person who joined who I thought wouldn't and I mean I don't know that but for six years that happened without fail that there was a knowledge of that I don't know how I don't know how but it was amazing to watch the reality of that God or Christ revealed to Ananias the calling on this young convert only three days saved but then over in chapter 22 listen to what it says and he Ananias said speaking to Saul on that day the God of our fathers has chosen thee that thou shouldest know his will and see the just one and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth for thou shalt be a witness unto all men as he's nearly enhanced he's been healed he's been filled with the spirit and now with his hand still on him he has said God has chosen you God has chosen you do you think this was news that Saul didn't know do you think this convert of three days didn't know he was a chosen vessel listen again to what it says in chapter 26 remember there's three stories of this chapter 26 verse 15 and I said who art thou Lord this is Saul's conversion on the road when he's getting regenerate and he that is Christ said I am Jesus whom thou persecutest but rise stand upon thy feet for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou has seen and of the things which thou which which I will appear unto thee deliver me from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom thou I send thee do you realize the call of God is revealed in the church do you realize that the call of God to preach to minister to be a chosen vessel is upon your life God will use the church to confirm that he will literally use it you see it was Christ who called Saul on the on the day he was saved he said you're a chosen vessel I'm gonna show you I'm gonna use you that doesn't always happen but it did with Saul on the day he was born again you're gonna preach this gospel one of these days three days later as Ananas comes in he says do you know you're a chosen vessel Christ the same one who met with you has shown me that you're a chosen vessel what confirmation do you realize that in the life of Saul of Tarsus the church in Damascus as well as Antioch was used for his calling his preparation his commission and his separation and is sending out to the mission field since I'm showing you all these things in the local body six of them happened all on the same day but two of them would happen over the next period number six and verse 18 and it says he that is Saul arose and was baptized it's all about being baptized in water three days later when Ananas is there he gets up and goes and gets baptized in water over in chapter 22 verse 14 and it says and this is Ananas speaking to him after his healing after being filled with the Spirit after receiving the call of God he actually says to him and now why tarryest thou what are you waiting for do you hear me you've been filled with the spirit you've been healed you're regenerate you're born again and you know you're born again and you know Christ is real and alive what are you waiting for arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord you know what Ananas said hey get up let's go get you baptized in water I don't know whether they use the bath the pool outside or the river down the road I just don't know I wonder if they gathered the other disciples locally but they said hey hey Bojo get up let's go baptize you in water notice in our day there's a lot of things lacking baptism but not in the Bible true baptism only comes after you've repented you put faith in the blood of Christ you've separated yourself from sin and it's the response of a good conscience saying I know I'm born again I know that I'm regenerate I've seen a lot of people go through waters of baptism claiming a lot they've never stopped their sin they're still living out in that world you see this is the

man who would later write Romans chapter 6 the spiritual meaning of water baptism and yet here he is a certain normal disciple is putting them down into the world I baptize you into the death the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ many years later he's gonna ride on this he's gonna impact the churches but here he is submitting to water baptism he had already met Christ being changed called a brother healed filled with the spirit but no he was commanded urged instructed to rise up and to go be baptized in water have you been baptized in water since you were a generous since you've been born again have you responded with a good conscience to be baptized in water number seven just give me a couple of minutes and I'll finish verse 19 discipleship these next two things happened over a very short period of time verse 19 and when he that is so had received meat he'd been fasting for three days I assure you if some people only fasted we'd see more healing more fillings of the spirit more calls of God after three days of prayer and fasting soul of Tarsus had not touched food or water for three entire days he's there alone he's in blindness but it says after all this happens on that third day and when he had received me now you know you're a Christian disciple you're sitting with other believers and you're eaten and it goes on to say he was strengthened you know after a time of fasting come aside and be strengthened again so now entered into fellowship not just with Ananias he is part of the local church here in Damascus this is a remarkable thing he joined the local church that he came to destroy he had a letter to persecute them he had anger venom and hatred and now he is being received in by the love of Christ he is eaten with them he is being strengthened in the midst of them and it says then was sold certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus what is a disciple means a taught one a learner someone who whose whole heart says I want to learn I want to become like Jesus I want to learn the Word of God I want to know how to conduct myself in the church do you realize Saul became a disciple in the midst of other disciples it wasn't a 10-week course it wasn't a little book it wasn't an online video course it was none of those it was dwelling amongst real genuine believers this is spiritual growth don't tell me someone can be a Christian in this city I'm not a member of the body of Christ then I tell you what Saul made a mess of it I assure you if Saul a new convert he was a theologian he was a radically dedicated man I mean he was sold out he was really born again in a vision of Christ but he needed to be a member of the local church he needed to experience all these things in the local body he had a serve as a disciple if he's in Damascus he's part of that church in Damascus if he's in Jerusalem he's a part of that church in Jerusalem if he's in Antioch he's a member of the body of Antioch he would he never functioned apart from that local church but let me finish here on my last point eight points I said concerning the importance of the local church first 20 evangelism and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues when straightaway he is born again he's been healed he's been received into a local church he is a disciple he's been filled with the Spirit he's received the call of God straightway where did he do it out by himself no in a local body in a community he straightway preached Christ in the synagogue they went down to the local synagogue and he began to preach that Christ was the Son of God but all that heard him were amazed do you know when you get saved don't lose the moment do you know there's people who have known you for years and watched you now is a good time to tell them I got born again I'm changed you you give it seven days fine I'll take up the bat do you know people who knew Saul knew why he was there knew his character knew his commission they were amazed can you imagine the local synagogue hey Hannah guess who's preaching on Saturday the Sabbath guess who's coming who Saul of Tarsus from Jerusalem what's he gonna do he's gonna preach and then lead the crusade against the false teachers of the city man I can't wait with Galilee and then he gets there and he stands up man he's gonna give it to them he's gonna rip apart this Jesus of Nazareth and he stands up and he says on the basis of God's Word Jesus Christ is the Son of God the promised Messiah can you imagine the amazement the word amazed there means they're all struck their jaw hits the ground they are in shock their mind is confused they're dumbfounded they can't believe this since the

power of a new convert who's really met Christ you don't need all the arguments Saul didn't have all of them but he does know Jesus is the Son of God and what did they say is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem and came he not here with this intent that he might bring them bowing to the unto the chief priests in Jerusalem and it says but Saul increased more in strength that means dynamic power or better ability this eats the last point is Saul first stepped out to evangelize to tell men about Christ to prove from the written scriptures it says that he was proving that this is the very Christ and he confounded the Jews he knew all their arguments he used to use all their arguments he used to write out the best arguments against Christ now he is proving I can prove it to you I can show you I can stop your argument I've got an answer for you and you know what they were utterly confounded they were utterly confounded evangelism and listen this as I close I'm allowed three closes evangelism is never separated from the local church those who go on the high streets in I'm born again I can go preach and I don't need to be a member of the local church you're utterly deceived and it never happened in the Bible not with a Saul of Tarsus a holy spirit filled dynamically saved man you know what it was in the context of the disciples in Damascus never separate evangelism from the local church we're not looking for converts we're looking for disciples you see what's the difference there's a big difference a convert go I say say a prayer after me there you're a convert that is not a disciple someone learning growing walking with Jesus Christ would you leave a baby on the doorstep there it's got life it's a human it's got two eyes it's definitely got a mouth and it's absolutely got a belly it's got two little legs and it's got two little arms all its toes and all its fingers are there just leave it it's as much as human as you or I I mean what's it like him just leave it on the doorstep and let it make its own choices make its own way I don't want to force food on it when it doesn't want it since that is as ridiculous as to say that Saul three days born again can be left to make a loom because all he needs is Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit that's how foolish it is here this morning I'm preaching on the importance of the local church I told you I bring it from last week Saul sitting in a room alone blind alone isolated lost his occupation boom it blew up lost his comrades that were with him where did they go he's lost his old friends in Jerusalem I'll never walk back into that high priest again I'll never be able to look him in the eye again after this I have been born again how does he get from there to standing in a city proclaiming and proving Jesus Christ for a short period of time there was a local church made up of simple disciples who knew the reality of Christ and they knew the love of God and once they are convinced that he was a convert they said brother Saul brother Saul stand with me this morning thank you Lord Jesus Oh hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah blessed be your name this is an environment I know we don't look like much I know that but this is real this is the house of God this is the body of Christ we are the body of Jesus Christ let his spirit fall on us once again let's sing this as we close this gathering this morning hallelujah Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh we just pray for Paul and Sophie again this morning just as we we close father we do pray for Sophia Lord God just heal her hand just restore not little finger my God we pray for a quick healing of her finger in Jesus name just restore it make it whole and the mighty name of Jesus just settler Oh God let her mind and her body be at rest Oh God and Jesus mighty name and just for our brother Paul no God just quicken him Oh God just touch him and heal him my God even cause him to shake this thing off and the mighty name of Jesus we give you glory and honor and praise in Jesus

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