3 Blinded

Can you think of something that has happened to you that has changed your whole life? It could be the death of a loved one, a divorce in your family, a parent’s new job, or a new baby joining your family. How would your life have been different if that event had not occurred? Today we’ll hear how one event changed not only one man’s life, but the history of the entire Christian church.

Saul had joined the efforts of the priests with strong determination in his heart. A zealous Pharisee himself, he had sought to put an end to the spreading of the gospel by persecuting the followers of Jesus. He had even asked the high priest for letters of permission to go as far north as Damascus to search for Jesus’ followers. His intent was to bring them back to Jerusalem and throw them into prison. With the letters of permission from the high priest granted, Saul and his attendants were now making preparations for the journey.

The next morning they left. In addition to Saul’s servants, a company of soldiers went with him. It would take several days to get to Damascus. Saul made use of every mile. He and the soldiers searched for believers in Jesus at all the synagogues in towns along the way.
On the last day of their journey, a blinding light flashed across the sky. Saul heard a voice from heaven and fell down to the ground. The men who were accompanying him shouted, “Look! What’s happening to Saul?”

The light was now streaming down all around Saul and a voice was speaking to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked with fear in his voice.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do” (Acts 9:4-6).
Even though the men who were with Saul could hear the voice, they couldn’t see anyone. But Saul recognized that the glorious Being who appeared to him on the road to Damascus was Jesus himself. He remembered the witness of Stephen, the martyr, who had spoken with courage and conviction about Jesus. Saul now believed that Jesus was the
promised Messiah who had come into the world to redeem us.

Jesus continued speaking to Saul: “Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:16-18).

Saul struggled to his feet, realizing he could not see. Rushing to his side, the servants helped him stand. They led the blinded Saul down through the green, fertile land he had been admiring just moments before but couldn’t see now. He was headed straight for the very people he had come to murder. But now he was coming to join his gifts and talents with, not against, theirs as together they
would serve God and tell others about His love.

Arriving in Damascus, Saul prayed and fasted for three days. As a result of his earnest prayers the heart of Saul was transformed by God’s grace and he became a believer fully consecrated to the service of Christ, his Master.

During those days Jesus spoke in a vision to a disciple named Ananias and asked him to meet with Saul and pray for him that he may regain his sight. Ananias was afraid. He had heard about Saul’s zeal to persecute Jesus’ followers. Yet Jesus reassured him that Saul’s conversion was sincere.

“Go!” Jesus said to him. “This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Obedient to the instructions received from the heavenly messenger, Ananias went to meet Saul. As he placed his hands on him, Ananias said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9:10-17).

As soon as he finished speaking Saul’s eyes were opened and he could see. Saul’s conversion story tells of God’s amazing power to change lives. This account also beautifully illustrates God’s desire to cooperate with anyone who is willing to reach out to others for Jesus.
Start at the first “E” and read every other letter to reveal the Bible verse that tells us to use our gifts for His glory. The X’s in the turn-around circle are only placeholders and are not part of the verse.

```
S E M A R C O H F O S F U Y O
O I
U N D I L T U S O V H A S R I
S E
E C W A H R A G T S E D V O E G
U W O A Y R T D F S I O G F R E
H T
A S V L E U R F E H C T E I I
A
X V
E T R H E E S R O S T A D S E F V
X
O X
```