

Looking for the Light

a devotional from
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Monday, March 23, 2020

by Sarah Chancellor-Watson

Read:

Acts 9:1-20 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

9 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 5 He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. 10 Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." 11 The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; 16 I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." 17 So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

Reflect:

The conversion of Saul, the persecutor of Christians, to Paul, one of the greatest apostles of Christ, remains one of the most profound and significant stories of the New Testament. In this one moment of the life of this one man we see (a literal) shining example of the power of Christ's grace and love in a person's life. Paul is proof that anyone can change, that anyone can be brought from the darkness into the light. Paul spent the rest of his life writing about and trying convey to others his overwhelming experience with the Divine. Just what this grace and love meant for him and what it means for the Church.

In his letter to the Romans he will write these words about the powerful love he's experienced in Christ Jesus, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

While we may feel separated from one another and maybe even from God right now, my hope and prayer for everyone reading and engaging with these daily devotionals is that together we can seek out and find the light in the darkness of the days that we are living through. So tell me friends, what is giving you life right now? Where is light that gives you hope? Where do you see God today?

Pray:

God who made us all,

Our healers are exhausted. God.

Give rest to those who care for the sick.

Our children are bored, God.

Grant extra creativity to their caregivers.

Our friends are lonely, God.

Help us reach out.

Our pastors are doing the best they can, God.

Help them to know it is enough.

Our workers are jobless, God.

Grant us the collective will to take care of them.

Our fellow parents are losing their minds, God.

Bring unexpected play and joy and dance parties to all in need.

Our grocery workers are absorbing everyone's anxiety, God. Protect them from us.

Our elderly are even more isolated God.

Comfort them.

We haven't done this before and we are scared, God.

I don't even know what else to pray for. Amen.

Prayer written by Nadia Bolz-Weber

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