

# Readings

## Scripture

<sup>23</sup> When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, <sup>25</sup> but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

<sup>26</sup> And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup> And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. <sup>30</sup> And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

<sup>31</sup> So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

- Acts 9:23-31 (*English Standard Version*)

## Reflection

"In spite of the fact that the early church had seen God do many great things, it undoubtedly thought this way about Paul. The early Christians thought, 'This one is lost. There is no way God will bring Paul into the kingdom. He is a persecutor, an enemy, an opponent. There is no hope for him.' When Paul tried to join the church, they gave him the cold shoulder (Acts 9:26). They said, 'We can't trust this man. He will be spying on us and then use his knowledge to annihilate the church.' It took Barnabas to reason, 'God saved me; maybe he can save Paul too.' He went close to Paul and befriended him at great danger to himself."

Roger Nicole, *Our Sovereign Saviour*, (p. 168–169)

"It was Barnabas who brought Paul to the apostles and related a story which he himself was prepared to believe and which, if true, would fully rehabilitate Paul in the minds of the Christian leaders. In particular, he told how Paul had spoken out boldly on behalf of Jesus and thereby placed his own safety at risk."

I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (p. 185)

"The metaphor of a building is very appropriate, because the church is the temple and house of God, and every one of the faithful is also a temple. The two things that follow, that they lived in the fear of God and that they were encouraged by the Holy Spirit, are parts of that building up. Therefore, though the churches had peace, they did not get drunk with pleasures and earthly joy but trusted in God's help and were made bolder to glorify him."

J. I. Packer, *Crossway Classic Commentaries*, Acts 9:31

# Sermon Outline

**Growing Through Adversity**  
Acts 9:23-31

*The Acts of the Apostles*  
Mike Pettengill

**The Jews strive to kill the newest ally of the disciples...** (Acts 9:23-25)

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**Way made straight by the son of encouragement...** (Acts 9:26-27)

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**Sent away for the good of the gospel...** (Acts 9:28-30)

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**Building up and multiplying the church...** (Acts 9:31)

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**Reflection Questions** (*taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- If Saul was a devout Hellenistic Jew, born in Tarsus, and a member of the Pharisees, why would the Jews have plotted to kill him?
- If the disciples were afraid of Saul (v. 26), why would they help him escape (v. 25)?
- Think of the special relationship between the Son of Encouragement (Acts 4:36) and Saul. Is there another disciple who would consider you a special encourager?
- Saul "preached boldly" even as a new convert (v. 27). What classification of Christians should be preaching boldly?
- Saul preached boldly to the Greek speaking Jews (Hellenists) who desired to kill him (v. 28-29). Does this type of bold evangelism still exist today, or is it a thing of the past?
- What does it take to build up and multiply the church today?