



July 8

Passage: Acts 8 & 9

It's HumpDaaayyyy! I hope this week has been decent for you so far, and I hope the rest of it is even better! Before we do our actual "assigned" reading for today I want to give us a quick run-through of what happened between where we left off and where we are today in the story:

We left off with the church growing in HUGE numbers, remember like 3,000 people in one day!? Then Peter continues to speak boldly about the Lord, and he even does miracles, like healing people, through the power of the Holy Spirit! Then Peter and John get in trouble for telling people about Jesus, but the church continues to grow! We even read at the end of Acts 4 that they were one in heart and mind and shared all their things with everybody. How sweet, right? But then chapter 5 starts with Ananias and Sapphira, the husband and wife duo who lied to the Lord and kept back some of the money they said they gave- and the Lord struck them dead- BAM!- one right after the other. But more miracles occurred, more healings, and more preaching, and the church kept growing. But opposition arose- there were some haters- and then our beloved Stephen (one of the early church leaders who was "full of God's grace and power" Acts 6:8) was taken in and stoned... and this is where we meet today's main player- SAUL.

Whew- that was a fast recap! Now let's dig in, starting with Acts 8:1-3, keeping in mind that the person being killed was Stephen.

READ & DIG:

READ Acts 8:1-3, and Acts 9:1-2

Saul was a cruel dude! In his defense, he really thought he was doing the "religious" thing to do. All these crazies who were following "the Way" (Christians) were really messing with his religion, and they needed to be stopped... or so he thought.

READ Acts 9:3-9

Called out! Jesus appeared to Saul and confronted him, right in front of his companions! This was such an awesome encounter is literally left Saul blinded for three days.

READ Acts 9:10-14

The Lord was preparing Ananias (not the dead guy from chapter 5) to meet with Saul- and this terrified the guy! He knew about Saul's reputation, and he was probably afraid for his own life. And he tried telling the Lord that, but...

{Notice something really cool in v. 11- The Lord tells Ananias that Saul is praying. And if you notice the end of v. 9 it says he didn't eat or drink anything for 3 days. I'm thinking he spent those 3 days in a mode of fasting and praying!}

READ Acts 9:15-19

Ananias submits to the Lord's direction and meets with Saul, even calling him "brother"! Saul is filled with the Holy Spirit, receives his sight, and begins one of the most- if not THE most- influential missionary journeys in all of Christendom!

APPLY AND GO

I realize I've given you a lot today, and I hope you're enjoying it as much as I am! I'm going to challenge you to continue to read Saul's story as you close out your devo today. So our "apply and go" really becomes more of a "keep reading"- READ Acts 9:20-31