

### 3. Transformed

*Acts 9:20-21 NLT - 20 And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!" 21 All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem?" they asked. "And didn't he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?"*

Saul had a unique mix of talents and traits which he used to zealously serve God. Before his encountering Jesus, he used them to persecute the church, but after they were employed to spread the Good News. Saul's transformation was evidenced by the reaction in the synagogues.

*How would you compare the person you were before encountering Jesus with the person you are today?*

*1 Corinthians 12:12 NLT - 12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.*

God made us all unique, and that uniqueness is needed in the body of Christ to make it whole. You don't have to be like anyone else to serve in God's plan. He made you the way you are, and He will use you if you let Him.

#### **WRAP-UP**

Saul was always zealous for God. Before He recognized Jesus as Messiah, he used the power and authority of the Jewish leaders to persecute the Lord's followers. But once he encountered Jesus, his eyes were open, and the Spirit empowered him to use his unique talents and gifts to disrupt the prevailing world view, and preach the Good News of Jesus the Messiah.

#### **MEMORY VERSE**

*All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem?" Acts 9:21 NLT*

#### **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

*Challenge – Invite Jesus to disrupt your life this week and be ready to take a detour when He presents it.*

## **Disrupt Me!** Beautiful Disruption #4

### **INTRODUCTION**

In our sermon series, a Beautiful Disruption, we are considering how the presence of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers of the early church created a disruption when the Kingdom of God collided with the Kingdom of this world. When the church displayed radical hospitality, generosity and goodness, the world took notice. One of the best examples of a beautiful disruption was in the life of Saul of Tarsus, also known as Paul. Saul was zealous for the faith of his fathers and saw Jesus and His followers as heresy and a threat, but after his encounter with the risen Jesus on the Damascus Road, his life underwent a beautiful disruption.

### **Ice Breaker**

Have you ever taken a detour from your planned route and discovered something unexpectedly wonderful? If so, share your experience.

### **Key Passage**

*John 20:21-22 NLT - 21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.*

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Encountering Jesus**

Saul is first mentioned in Acts 7 as the young man who received the coats of those who stoned Stephen for his declaration of faith in Jesus. In chapter 8 we see how he responded to what he had seen.

*Acts 8:1 NLT - 1 Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria.*

*Acts 9:1-2 NLT - 1 Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. 2 He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them--both men and women--back to Jerusalem in chains.*

*How would you describe Saul based on these verses, what traits did he display? Do you know of anyone today with similar traits?*

On the road to Damascus Saul had a dramatic encounter with the resurrected Jesus and the course of his life was radically disrupted from that point on.

*Acts 9:3-6, 8 NLT - 3 As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" 5 "Who are you, lord?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! 6 Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ... 8 Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus.*

*Saul had been blind to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah the Jews were waiting for. And now he was physically blind as well. When God sent Ananias to Paul three days later, his physical and his spiritual sight was restored. What else did Saul receive that that time (v.17)? What do you remember about your first encounter with Jesus?*

*Acts 9:17-18 NLT - 17 So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized.*

## **2. New Identity**

Paul had impeccable credentials in terms of his Jewish religious training and his secular education. But now as he saw clearly that Jesus was the Messiah, he was going to use them to enlighten everyone he could to what God had revealed to him.

*Ephesians 1:9-10 NLT - 9 God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. 10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ--everything in heaven and on earth.*

*What now empowered Saul and under what authority did he operate? How was his power and authority different before he encountered Jesus?*

While some things about Saul did change, some things didn't. Over the course of his Epistles, Paul (Saul's commonly used Greek name) could demonstrate times of anger and powerful condemnation.

*2 Corinthians 10:9-13 NLT - 9 I'm not trying to frighten you by my letters. 10 For some say, "Paul's letters are demanding and forceful, but in person he is weak, and his speeches are worthless!" 11 Those people should realize that our actions when we arrive in person will be as forceful as what we say in our letters from far away. 12 Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant! 13 We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you.*

*How did Paul describe his own reputation to the church at Corinth? What parts of Paul's personality seem unchanged? How can those traits now be used for God's purposes and for His glory? If Paul had not encountered Jesus and been filled with the Holy Spirit, how do you think he would have used his natural talents and personality traits?*

God has created each one of us uniquely and we have a purpose in His plan. We don't need to change our personality, but to bring it under the authority of God and allow the Holy Spirit to use us for good. As we yield to the Spirit, we receive the fruit of the Spirit and its expression in our lives can temper our rough edges.

*Which of the fruit of the Spirit would you ask God to grow in you now love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.?*