

# VOYAGER

*Experiences That Shape Our Faith*

**About the Series:** Experiences are powerful and can shape our Christian faith. But experiences should not be what defines our faith. Rather, it should serve to strengthen our faith and affirm what we already know to be the facts of our faith as recorded in the Scriptures. In this sermon series, we explore the journeys of Apostle Paul and how encountering life-changing experiences can teach valuable life lessons to voyagers like us who are on a journey called life.

## Part 1

### Perceiving People

Acts 9:10-30, 11:19-30, 12:25 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

#### DISCUSS

Three biblical principles for how we are to perceive the people we meet and encounter every day.

#### **Expectantly see a person's potential in the master plan of God (v. 9:10-25)**

- What was Saul's (Paul's) life before his radical encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus? Whom did God use to minister to him?
- What was God's plan for his life? Why would God choose Saul, who had a terrible reputation, to fulfill the work of the Great Commission?
- Do you know of a person who has a bad background and reputation, but God called him/her to serve Him by spreading the gospel?

- When you encounter someone, do you see him/her as a sinner in need of a Savior? Do you see him/her as God sees His precious child whom He has great plans for?
- As a Christian, what unique role do you see yourself playing in God's Kingdom as His chosen vessel to reach out to the lost?

#### **Lovingly focus on a person's present actions rather than their past (v. 9:26-30)**

- Why did the disciples doubt Saul's true conversion to Christianity?
- Who was Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37)? What important role did Barnabas do for Saul during this time when others doubted his sincerity?
- Why is it important that you should focus on someone's present actions and not on his past transgressions?
- How can a person have a clean slate and a true life change just like Saul?
- If you are going to focus on how people are living in the present, how are you living your life in the present? Do you rest on the laurels of your past spiritual accomplishments? Or are you actively living for the Lord in the present?

#### **Graciously give a person the benefit of the doubt (v. 11:19-26, 12:25)**

- How did Christianity scatter across the Roman world?
- Why did the Jerusalem Church send Barnabas to Antioch? Why is it impressive that Barnabas got Saul to help him in the ministry in Antioch?
- Have you given a person the benefit of the doubt, instead of judging a person because of his/her circumstances?
- How would it help someone if they were given the benefit of the doubt like Barnabas did to Saul? On the other hand, how would it bless you if you were given the chance to shine for the Lord in spite of your past and shortcomings?

**REFLECT**

The church should be a place where broken and sinful people are given a second chance and an opportunity to shine for Jesus, because we should reflect the heart of God. How should it encourage you that God sees you as worth saving, given you at least one spiritual gift to serve the body of Christ, He looks how you are faithfully living your life for him in the present and keeps giving you the benefit of the doubt by His grace. Being a recipient of His grace and lovingkindness, how should you look upon others?

**PRAY**

Heavenly Father, it is amazing how you look at me, a sinner. You didn't only send Your Son Jesus Christ to save me from my sin, but graciously gave me opportunities to grow in You, to serve You. You gave me life experiences to reach out to certain people with the Gospel message. May I look upon others with love, grace, and mercy as You do. Lord God, please bless my life's journey and allow me to see You working not only in my life but in others as well. In Jesus' name. Amen.