Encounters with Jesus

Verses: Acts 9:1-22

Questions:

1. V1-2. Also read Acts 7:54-60. What might have stirred up Paul’s feeling of inadequacy and anger when witnessing Stephen’s stoning?
2. V3-9. Why would Jesus say Paul was persecuting him? What might have surprised Paul most about his encounter with Jesus?
3. V10-19. Why would Ananias call Paul “Brother” who had harmed so many Christians? How might the act affect Paul’s faith in Jesus?
4. V20-22. Also read Philippians 3:8-9. Paul later on suffered for Christ for his entire life and yet he was in great joy. Why wouldn’t Paul encounter with Jesus bring him fear, jealousy, and hatred, as it did to some of his fellow Pharisee’s?
5. Share your encounters with Jesus. How does your experience help others encounter with Jesus and be changed by Him?

=== sermon notes ===

(slide 1) The struggles before encountering Jesus

Acts 9: 1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem

(slide 2) The shocking witness

Acts 7:58 Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

1. The witness of peace
   1. 54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”
2. The witness of the imitation of Jesus
   1. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.
3. The witness of closeness of the Lord
   1. Deu 4:7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

(slide 3) The sin living in me

Romans 7:19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Romans 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in my sinful nature[d] a slave to the law of sin.

1. Am I all right? Can I see the truth?
2. Paul knows he is not all right. He didn’t know why.

(slide 4) Encountering Jesus and his church

Acts 9:3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” 5 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. 6 “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

1. Persecuting church is to persecute Jesus
2. Jesus did not revenge instead wanted to use him
3. This is the truth encounter Paul needs to throw his life on
   1. Jesus loves his church and died from them
   2. He is the Messiah what the old book says so well
   3. Acts 22, 26
4. Many have seen but few believed

(slide 5) That you may see again

Acts 9:13 “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.. But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name ..” 17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

1. Paul was devout and “good” but blind and not right
   1. His life does not have gospel, good news, complete truth from God
2. The forgiveness not only Christ, but from the church- because of Christ
3. Paul knew he was blind, but now he can see
4. For those who come to believe in Jesus, need to realize we were blind
   1. “I am not right” “I can’t see”
   2. Then when you encounter Jesus, you can see

(slide 5) The conversion after encountering Jesus

Acts 9:19 Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. 20 At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. 21 All those who heard him were astonished.. 22 Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

1. At once
2. Paul did it not out of fear, but joy
3. I found him, my God who loves me and is near me

(slide 6) Christ my righteousness

Philippians 3:8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ

1. Even today Christian can struggle
   1. It is not about you, but him
   2. We are not right until the right of Christ is in us,
      1. Who freely gives so we can too
2. Luther
3. I have found, I can see, I am satisfied
4. The door is opened, let the witness and salvation come
   1. Revelation: saved by Blood of Jesus and the testimonies
5. Pastor Moses Hsu and the Iranian believer