

**Go Forth in Unity**  
**Unity in the Midst of Diversity**  
Sunday, October 10, 2021

**Acts 9: 20-28 NIV**

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" <sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. <sup>23</sup> After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. <sup>25</sup> But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. <sup>26</sup> When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

**1. Inclusive**

Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles.  
Galatians 3:28 You are all one in Christ Jesus.  
James 2:1 Believers must not show favoritism.

**2. Focuses on Fulfilling Purpose**

Acts 11: 22-23 When he saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad.  
Acts 11: 25-26 Barnabas looked for Saul and brought him to Antioch to teach great numbers of people.  
Acts 13:47 I have made you a light for the Gentiles to bring salvation to them.

**3. Cooperates in Separation**

Acts 15: 39-41 They had a sharp disagreement and parted company.  
2 Timothy 4:11 "Get Mark he is helpful to me and my ministry."  
Revelation 7: 9-10 There was a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people

**Conclusion:** It was through the unity of the Spirit Barnabas included Paul among the apostles. It was in honoring Paul's giftings, Barnabas brought Paul to co-minister in Antioch. It was love for the Gospel and the lost that that led to separate yet united ministries. God works His purposes in the midst of diversity. The Gospel advances mightily when hearts remain unified in purpose through the Spirit.

**LIFE GROUP LESSON**  
**Unity in the Midst of Diversity**  
Week of October 10th – October 16, 2021

**Ice Breaker:** Have you encountered a group that had great diversity yet was unified? How does that work? How does that feel?

**Read Acts 9: 20-28.**

1. Immediately following Saul's conversion what does he do? (v.20)
2. How did people respond? (v.21) How do Christians tend to respond today to similar transformations? Why is that?
3. Despite reactions, was God's favor with Saul? (v. 22)
4. What did the Jews think of Saul's transformation and expressed revelation? (v.23) Why do you think Jews were so upset with Saul?
5. How did the disciples in Jerusalem respond to Saul's arrival? (v.26)
6. Who welcomed Saul? (v.27). Why?
7. Who did Barnabas connect Saul with? Why was this important?
8. What were the early disciples and Jews hung up on? Was their behavior inclusive or exclusive? What do we learn in Galatians 3:28?
9. Read James 2: 1-4. What is the lesson for us?
10. When Barnabas heard about Greeks receiving the Gospel how did he respond and who did he involve? Read Acts 11: 22-26.
11. Why would Barnabas seek out Paul to help minister in Antioch?
12. Read Acts 13:47. What did Barnabas understand about Paul and their ministry together?
13. Read Acts 15: 36-41. Why did Saul and Barnabas disagree? Was one right and one wrong? Can both be right and serving God faithfully?
14. Can people be in strong disagreement and still be united in purpose? How? How did Saul and Barnabas resolve the disagreement?
15. What happened because they went in different directions? Does God work in our separation for His glory and purposes? Can separation at times be a good thing? How so?
16. How would the Church expand if there were no room for diversity?
17. Read 2 Timothy 4:11. Who does Paul later call for help? What does this show us about how God works through our diversity?

**Point to ponder:** Barnabas included Saul as a brother in Christ. He saw the value in Paul's gifts and joyfully served alongside him for the sake of the Gospel. Their later disagreement did not mean division in the faith. They remained united to the Gospel message and in love for one another as brothers. They modeled unity in the midst of diversity.