

*Witness Unhindered:*  
 “Grace Changes Everything”  
 Acts 9: 11–31

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*Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:*

*“We must not lag behind the king in some kind of unwarranted pessimism as though his first coming and present reign do not make a difference. We must not run ahead of the king in some kind of unwarranted triumphalism as though we’re going to make utopia here before he comes again. We keep in step with the king.” – David Jones*

*“Membership in a local church means joining your imperfect self to many other imperfect selves to form an imperfect community that, through Jesus, embarks on a journey toward a better future . . . together.” – Scott Sauls*

*“The Christian community is both a sign and a promise of God’s coming liberation. We are the presence of God’s liberating kingdom in a broken world. We are the place where liberation can be found, offering a home for exiled people. We are to welcome the broken people to a community of broken people. We are the community among whom liberation is a present reality – the jubilee people who live with new economic and social relationships. We are the light of the world, a city on a hill. The challenge for us is to articulate Jesus’ message of liberation in a way that connects with people’s experiences and offers a place of liberation in the Christian community.” – Tim Chester*

*Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:*

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- How are you battling the pessimism associated with Jesus’ not-yet kingdom? In what areas of your life do you want to be more “in step with the King”? What areas or relationships provide that sense of being in step with the king?
- Where do you want to see the power of the Holy Spirit transform and enable your life, the life of our church, and the furtherance of the Kingdom of God? What aspects of mission terrify you to the point of absolutely needing the power of the Holy Spirit?
- What is the difference between grace and “karma”? In what circumstances or relationships are you tempted to revert back to a “karma” mindset or relational style?
- One of the fruits of God’s grace clicking and driving Paul’s life was a new reverence for God:
  - How does reverence for God become abstract and impersonal for you?
  - When have you experienced real intimacy with God through prayer?
  - Where would you like to grow in intimacy with God?
- The second fruit of grace in Paul’s life was a new relationship to the church:
  - What is being a part of the church like for you? What is helpful? What is not so helpful?
  - What is a time you have sensed the welcome of the church like Ananias offered to Paul?
- The third fruit of grace in Paul’s life was a new sense of responsibility for the world:
  - Where are you tempted to flee from the world or to be absorbed in it?
  - How would you like to grow in having your vocation testify that Jesus is the Christ?