

# Teach: GO! No matter your past

## Intro

Our theme this year is GO FIRST! Last year we learned how to REACH the lost, the broken and the hurting. This year we will build upon that foundation to become people of great faith and boldness. During these coming weeks we will learn about how the Apostles went first.

KEY THEME VERSE: **Matthew 28:19**, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”*

We will continue this week learning from the Apostles who went FIRST after they received the Great Commission and were filled with the Holy Spirit. This week, we will learn about the Apostle Paul's GO!

## 1. Before he was saved:

The Apostle Paul was not a disciple of Christ during Jesus' life. It was only after Jesus' death and resurrection that the apostle Paul was saved on the road to Damascus. He was known as Saul (Hebrew name) and Paul (Greek name) throughout the New Testament.

- Saul was super religious, judgemental, and full of himself.
  - **Philippians 3:4-6**, “...though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: **5** circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; **6** concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”
- Saul was a persecutor of Jesus and all those who followed Him. (1 Corinthians 15:9, Galatians 1:13)
  - Paul publicly mocked, ridiculed, and made fun of Jesus.
  - Paul believed Jesus was a liar, a fraud, a sinner.
  - Anyone who followed Jesus deserved prison and death, just as Jesus deserved death.
- He approved of the stoning of Stephen.
  - **Acts 8:1-3**, “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they

were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. **2** And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him. **3** As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.”

## 2. A Life Changed:

On his way to Damascus to carry more men and women to prison and even death, Jesus saves Saul:

**Acts 9:1-5**, “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2** and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. **3** As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. **4** Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” **5** And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads.”

- Saul is then led to go into the city to meet with Ananias who baptized and heals Saul (Acts 9:10-18)
  - Saul is healed and receives the Holy Spirit:
    - **Acts 9:17-18**, “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” **18** Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.”

## 3. Checkered Past Can Make the Best Preachers

Saul is saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and sent into ministry to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- **1 Timothy 1:12-13**, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, **13** although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.”
- The Apostle Paul knew that Jesus had saved him, changed him, and enabled him to finally live a life full of God given destiny.
- His identity had changed. He now knew that he was a son of God and had an important mission from Jesus.
  - He did not allow his past to keep him from what God wanted him to do. He

understood that he was the chief of all sinners and yet had been forgiven and saved by Jesus Christ.

- Now, his life had a clear mandate to seek and save the lost - just as he had been!

## 4. Your Sinful Past Doesn't Disqualify You from God's Forgiveness!

You might see yourself as:

- A nice person
- A religious person
- A good person on the outside
  - But the truth is: we have all sinned by rebelling against God.
    - We may be a secret sinner inside (secretly lusting, angry, bitter, critical, lazy, hater, apathetic) or on the outside as well. Sin is sin.
- You may be a blasphemer: someone who makes a mockery of Jesus by the way you live.
- You may be a bully: someone who is against everyone who doesn't believe exactly like you do.
- You may be an unbeliever and a Bible rejecter: someone who only likes and believes the parts that you like of the Bible.

If so, then you are a mess:

- Don't lie to yourself. Don't believe the lie that maybe you are not really that bad of a sinner.
  - **Romans 3:23**, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."
- It's time to get truly saved!
- It is time to accept the love and forgiveness of God.
- Trust Him to forgive you and all your sins. Once you have surrendered your sins to Him, do not let them hold you back from what God wants you to do!

**Leaders Note:** Lead them in the Salvation Prayer

## Ask

- What stands out to you about Paul's life?
- What inspires you about Paul's life?
- How have the sins of your past held you back?
- Why do you think the sins of the past want to come back into your memory?
  - What do you think Paul did when reminded of those old sins?
- What are some ways that you remind yourself that you're forgiven?

## Prayer

- Pray **2 Corinthians 5:17** over them: "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

- Pray for all the unsaved “Sauls” that surround us. Release the power of God to bring revelation of Jesus to every “Saul” that God wants to be saved. Ask for wisdom and revelation in how we can be an “Ananais” to the “Sauls” around us.
- Pray for the upcoming Reach Day (Street Evangelism) on Saturday 17 June.

## Action

On Saturday 17 June we have our Reach Day (Street Evangelism).