

## “CROSS ROADS: WHEN YOUR PAST IS A ROAD BLOCK”

**Introduction:** The crossroad is a time of \_\_\_\_\_.

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV) “This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the cross roads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.’”

- Two directions at the crossroads
  1. G \_\_\_\_\_ Way
  2. W \_\_\_\_\_ Way

Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

- Road block #1. My \_\_\_\_\_.

### THE LIFE OF PAUL – THE PAST

Acts 7:58 (NLT) “<sup>58</sup> They dragged him [Stephen] out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul.”

Acts 8:1 (NLT) “<sup>1</sup> Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen.”

Acts 8:3 (NLT) “<sup>3</sup> But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.”

Acts 9:1 (NLT) “<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord’s followers.” Took copy off of here.

Acts 26:10-11 (NLT) “<sup>10</sup> Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. <sup>11</sup> Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities.

### THE LIFE OF PAUL – THE CONVERSION

Acts 9:3-19 (NLT) “<sup>3</sup> As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?”

<sup>5</sup> “Who are you, lord?” Saul asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! <sup>6</sup> Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” <sup>7</sup> The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone’s voice but saw no one! <sup>8</sup> Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. <sup>9</sup> He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink. <sup>10</sup> Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord!” he replied.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord said, “Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. <sup>12</sup> I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again.” <sup>13</sup> “But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I’ve heard many

people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believer in Jerusalem! <sup>14</sup> And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name.” <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said, “Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.” <sup>17</sup> So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup> Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. <sup>19</sup> Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength. Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days.

- Two more accounts of Paul’s conversion are in chapters 22 and 26.

Acts 9:26 (NLT) “When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with believers, but they were all afraid of him. They thought he was only pretending to be a believer!”

- Metamorphous means a real \_\_\_\_\_.
- Saul was the \_\_\_\_\_. Paul was the \_\_\_\_\_.

### **THE LIFE OF PAUL – THE MISSIONARY**

Acts 9: 20-21 (NLT) <sup>20</sup> And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!” <sup>21</sup> All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem?” they asked. “And didn’t he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?”

### **CONCLUSION: The Season of Advent and Christmas**

I Timothy 1: 15-16 (NLT) <sup>15</sup> This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them all. <sup>16</sup> But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.”

- I will pray for and invite the following to Christmas services:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_