

**SESSION OBJECTIVE:**

To understand that Jesus' power helps us do hard things.

Two Kinds of Fear

Acts chapter 9 is one of the most well-known stories in the New Testament, and includes not one, but two great examples of Jesus' power enabling someone to do something difficult. It features a man named Saul, "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1) who is suddenly ambushed by a bright light on an old country road in Damascus. That bright light? Jesus. He questions Saul, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me" (Acts 9:4). Saul responds, "Who are you Lord?" (Acts 9:5). The men with Saul didn't see anything, but could hear Jesus speaking. Blind, Saul got up and the men took him into Damascus. This sets up the first type of fear.

A FEAR OF AN UNKNOWN FATE

To be blind is not a simple thing, especially in the ancient world. Blindness is never easy, but at least in the modern world we have technological advancements that can serve to help in ways that were unfathomable in the ancient world. For Saul, this time would have been pretty scary. Saul was a decorated Pharisee, an up and coming superstar in the religious world, and now as a blind man, how would he continue his career? How would he support himself? Would he have to depend on those around him forever? And secondly, was the voice that blinded him really Jesus? The same Jesus who had followers that he had been persecuting? If Jesus could blind him that easily on a road in the middle of nowhere, what else could He do? And beyond that, how did He do it? Wasn't Jesus dead? In his lowly state, he had to trust first the men that he was with on the road, and next, a man named Ananias that came to him while he was praying. There are times in your life where you will have to trust God, not fully knowing where He is leading you. It could be through a career change, a move, or some other significant decision.

A FEAR OF A KNOWN THREAT

Saul is not the only one in need of Jesus' power to hard things. Ananias was a disciple of Jesus in Damascus, and the Lord spoke to him in a vision: "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight" (Acts 9:11-12). This is a potentially difficult task for a couple of reasons.

1. It requires a kind of healing prayer that will result in a blind man being able to see.
2. Saul is a known enemy, and if he regains his sight, Ananias will be identified by him and possibly killed as a result.

Yet, by faith, Ananias does as Christ commands Him, and Saul, "regained his sight, and then he rose, and was baptized, and taking food he was strengthened" (Acts 9:18). Sometimes, you will be called to do something that presents very known challenges to you that might be scary. Rather than considering the, "what ifs," focus on the character of Jesus. Following Jesus is difficult, but it is also Jesus that enables us to do those difficult things. It doesn't require much courage; only faith.

Questions:

1. Icebreaker: Has Christ ever empowered you to do something difficult? What was it?
2. Why is it important for the kids to learn this lesson?
3. Do you think Saul was scared? Do you think Ananias was scared? Why or why not?
4. Would you rather have courage or faith? Why?

MEMORY VERSE: PHILIPPIANS 4:13

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."