

"and you will be told what you must do"

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[0 : 00] The meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O my Lord.! And you will be told what you must do.

! And it often meets resistance. It stands as a cornerstone for our faith. And as humans, as sinners, we often, often, our first response to being told what to do is to rebel.

[illegible]

He fell to the ground and he heard that voice say to him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

And that was a divine encounter. And it left Saul blind. It left him vulnerable.

[2 : 52] And in desperate need of direction. It was then that Jesus said to him, get up, go into the city and you will be told what you must do.

And Saul's response to that was obedience. Now you might find that would be unusual from a man that used to oppose Jesus, so be it.

But he obeyed. And despite his fear and his confusion, he followed that directive that was given to him.

And that act of submission, that act of obedience marked the beginning of his transformation from a persecutor to an apostle.

And he started that journey to being an apostle right there as a blind man.

[4 : 0 6] And he later became one of the most significant contributors in the New Testament. And I just want you to think about things as you're sitting there listening to me today.

And think about the times in your lives when you've been told what you have to do. So how do we think to yourself?

How often have we resisted? How often have we questioned or ignored such guidance?
How often have we resisted?

And it's basically within our nature to resist being controlled. We also resist being directed by others.

We can't help it. It's within us. We might not be strongly argumentative, but deep down, we don't like being told what to do. And you know this, it's probably one of the biggest reasons why there's so many unbelievers in this world.

[5 : 23] In my experience, when people tell me that the reason they don't go to church, it's because they don't like being told what to do.

Do you see anybody telling you what to do today? No. It's a personal relationship. Yet when we encounter the presence of the Lord, our hearts are transformed.

We're compelled to obey. And we need to tell others why we obey and how Jesus is working in our lives.

I've got the easy job here. I've got to tell you. You've got to go home and tell your friends and family. That's the tough job.

Saul's story is testament to the transformative power of divine instruction.

[6 : 43] And the willingness to submit to God's will. God's will. Now, if we have a think about that, and we think about it in slightly a different tact, if we think of an actor in film or on stage or whatever, there's a danger for any actor when they take on a central character in a film or a TV show that's really popular for them to get locked into that role.

So let's think about that. If you can think about that, I can think of one, and that would be Daniel Radcliffe. Now, you may know him as Harry Potter in those films.

But how many of you have ever seen him in quite a few stage roles and film awards that he's actually won out with that role? How many of you can think of Sean, not Sean Connery, Roger Moore in James Bond?

He was locked in that role. He found it very difficult to get out for him. And those of us that have been around for a wee while will have experienced occasions when people won't let us forget, will they?

They won't let us forget who we were and what we did when we were younger. I've got to think about that.

[8 : 20] And I wonder what Saul would have been thinking once he'd been transformed by that encounter on the road to Damascus by Jesus.

I wonder what he was thinking. And as I said to you before, notorious for hating Jesus' followers. People were really scared of him. They ran away from him.

Fearing, quite rightly, for their lives. But he was totally transformed. his perspective on Jesus had done a 180 degree turn.

A Yui, as we used to call it. And he wanted to be with the folks that followed Jesus rather than exterminate them.

But how was he going to get other people's perspectives changed? That's the important thing.

[9 : 26] Was it down to him? Or was it down to something only God could do? Well, it didn't happen in isolation, did it?

It is transformation. Saul's conversion. If we remember, there was a central figure there called Ananias.

And he played a crucial role in Saul's journey. Despite his fear, his hesitation, Ananias obeyed God's command to go to Saul.

He wasn't too happy about doing this because Saul had quite a reputation. But Ananias listened to God and he obeyed. And through Ananias, Saul regained his sight.

And he was filled with the Holy Spirit. And that obedience to God's instruction became a catalyst for Saul's mission and his ministry for the rest of his life.

[10 : 43] And I want you to think about folks in your lives that you might know today. I want you to think about folk that you know that will never change or you think will never change.

They might include folks folks that are in prison. They might be folk you know at work.

Your boss is always making your life difficult. He takes all the credit. If you were a young person, it might be that bully at school who's been bullying you for the last six months.

Or it might be folks in your lives that you wish would believe. And no matter what you say, you still don't want to believe.

And you've just got to keep praying. You've got to keep praying for that breakthrough. And as we're thinking of these people, how might God be wanting to change our perspectives on these people or their situations?

[12 : 10] Are we willing to let our perspectives on these folks be changed? Remember, Saul's life was really radically transformed.

people couldn't help but notice. Ananias had a vision from God that started him on the journey to that changed perspective of Saul.

And then a personal encounter where he clearly saw the Holy Spirit at work in Saul's life. how has encountering Jesus changed us?

How's our encounter with Jesus changed us and how we live? can people see a difference in us as we're walking down the street, as we're interacting with family, as we're going about our daily lives?

Are people changing their perspective perspective on who Jesus is through their encounters with us?

[13 : 34] That's really important. And like Ananias, we really have a role there, don't we, to play. We've got a huge role to play in helping people encounter Jesus and understand it, make sense of it.

my question to you today is, who is God calling you to engage with, to draw them closer to Him?

Have a think of it. just as we're finishing this wee chat, and the theme today, as you know, is you will be told what you must do.

I hope it's challenged you. I hope it's challenged you to have a good think and reflect on your own willingness to obey divine instruction.

Saul's transformation from persecutor to apostle, that's the big lesson that I got out of the reading today.

[14 : 55] It's a reminder of the transformative power of listening and obeying God's word. And as we go home today, as we get on with life, hope, and I really pray that we're all open to hearing God's voice and following his directives.

Trust through obedience peace and we too can experience profound transformation and purpose of our lives.

Amen.