

They heard not the voice

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[0 : 00] Will you turn with me now as we carry in worship to the book of Acts chapter 22 at verse 9. The book of Acts chapter 22 at verse 9.

And they that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid. But they hear not the voice of him that speak to me.

It was. But they hear not the voice of him that speak to me. You know, it is strange.

There sir. It could be linked there. Teller travelers on the road. Sharing the same journey.

And with the same purpose. But it turned out to mean very little to some. It is still hard.

[1 : 17] Two people going together to church. They sit in the same pew. Join in the same singing. Bow in the same prayer.

And hear the same sermon. To one. It is just another service. Another hour in church. But it means little more than that.

To the other. It is us light from the dead.

Why should it be nothing to one? And everything to the other. You see, that is what happened to Paul.

And his fellow travelers. And Paul never ceased to ponder. On a strange act. He mentored it several times.

[2 : 35] We all took the same road from Jerusalem. We all went on a same mission to the mountains.

We were all bound for the same destination. To one, love. It was just a day's journey.

To the other, it was the beginning of all things. The beginning of a new life.

A new existence. A new destiny. What should have made the difference? What could have made the difference? Between Paul and his fellow travelers?

What did he tell us himself? What he said? That was a turning point. Up to that moment. There is everything in common. But there is not the rise of him that stayed to me.

[3 : 43] That was the great divide between them. That was where that really parted. company completely. They shared such a lot. They shared such a lot. But there is not the rise of him that stayed to me.

That was where that really parted company completely. They shared such a lot. They shared such a lot. That they heard not the rise of him that stayed to me.

Now let us ponderate for a minute a bit. For this journey of Paul from Jerusalem to Damascus is perhaps the greatest, the second greatest journey ever undertaken on this earth.

The first being the journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem to die. Next to that in its impact on the human story, on human history, there was a journey of Saul from Jerusalem to Damascus.

Now let us then try and sort out in the simplest way possible. The difference really between Paul or Saul that day and his fellow child.

[5 : 17] He heard a voice. Well, let me put it like this. First, they heard a noise. He heard a voice.

Different? Yes. It is clear that they all heard something out of the ordinary. To them it was like a clap of thunder.

Perhaps a deafening peel of thunder. But to Paul it was our voice.

The thunder cleared up into a voice that spoke to him directly and by noon.

And singled them out from his fellow travelers. And dealt with him as if he was the only man on the road that day.

[6 : 26] They heard not the voice of him that spoke to me. Strange.

They all heard a noise. In the heart of it Paul heard a still, small voice speaking to him by name.

Saul, Saul. And it spoke to him in his mother's tongue. It was intelligible not only to his mind but to his heart.

For if you want to reach a fellow's heart, speak to him in the language of his youth.

The tongue that was heard spoken at his mother's knees. The language of home and of worship.

[7 : 33] Stirring up memories that were sacred. Reviving things that he thought had gone.

This voice touched him deeply. It spoke in his mother tongue. And it also questioned him.

You see, he not only stirred his heart but it tricked his conscience by asking him a challenging question.

Saul, Saul, Saul, why? Persecute his own knees. A voice to his conscience. Searching.

His motive. Questioning his reasons. Asking him why he was trying to escape from himself as well as from the one who is speaking to him.

[8 : 49] For Saul had been sick of you short weeks before at a strange scene. The death of a disciple of Jesus, Stephen.

And Paul took part in a stone. He held the clothes of a young man that stoned him. To show that he was in full agreement with it.

And then he went back home. But he could not get rid of it. It followed him. He was in the grip of something that he couldn't shake off.

And that was perhaps what spared him to go to Damascus. To persecute the disciples of Jesus. To drown the voice of conscience within him.

Like a wolf. That artistic blood. He sprang on a Christian for just to drown the voice within him.

[10 : 01] He was in the grip of something or somebody and he couldn't shake it off. And now here is somebody from the unseen. Asking him.

To consider why. Why are you persecuting me? To be me. The voice then was intelligible.

It was a voice that could be understood. And felt. A voice that hurt. It hurt. For it questioned him deeply within. Now that is what made the difference. Between one person in church and another.

To one it is only the familiar noise. Of a servant. Pretty meaningless. Yes, you'll be amazed. But you'll be amazed. For it questioned him deeply within. For it questioned him deeply within. Now that is what made the difference. The difference. Between one person in church and another. To one it is only the familiar noise.

Of a servant. Pretty meaningless. Yes, you'll be amazed how meaningless. It doesn't call them by name.

[11 : 03] It doesn't stir that heart. To one person in church and another. To one it is only the familiar noise. Of a servant. Pretty meaningless. Yes, you'll be amazed how meaningless.

It doesn't call them by name. It doesn't stir that heart. It does not trick their consciences.

It doesn't concern them deeply. They come and go. And forget about it. But to somebody.

It's a voice. It's somebody speaking clearly and intelligibly. There's no mistaking what he's saying.

It's his mother tongue.

It stirs deeply. And it stirs the moral consciousness with a friend.

[12 : 04] That makes a difference. To one it was a noise. To the other it was a voice. Let me carry on though.

There was no assistance too. They saw a light. But saw, saw a sea.

And they that were with me saw a deep light. And they were afraid.

They saw as either a flash of lightning. A flash of lightning. Of unusual brilliance.

Brighter than the sun at noonday. Too brilliant to look at.

[13 : 08] But as Paul says. But hearing no man. Seeing no man he said.

That was all. A flash. An outburst of lightning. Brilliant.

Yes blinding. Yes blinding. Yes. But as Paul saw in the light. So clearly that he could never forget it.

And it was imprinted upon his consciousness forever. He saw a face. In the midst of it all. At the heart of it all. There was a personal transaction.

Someone stooped over him. As he lay prostrate in the dust. And introduced himself.

[14 : 12] Saying. I am Jesus. Whom thou persecutest. The two met face to face.

And Paul never, never could forget. That it was a personal transaction. Between himself and another.

Have I, he said. Not seen the Lord. He never doubted it. It was engraven on his consciousness.

So that death. Could not eradicate it. He couldn't forget. The majesty.
Of that face. For Jesus told him. That he was sinning. Against him.

[15:17] And Paul. So was. Put out of it. Who art thou Lord? Who art thou Lord?

I am Jesus. And he added again. Whom thou persecutest. So is against me. The difference. The quarrel.

Is between me and you. We have to settle it. Alone. Don't think for a moment. That it's these.

Persecuted Christians. Who are a scattered neck shafts before the wind.

Don't think. It's them. You are after. No, no. It's against me. You saw me. You met me. That day.

When you saw the light in Steven's face. And I never let you go. Had a hold of you.

From that day till now. And here I am. I must settle this matter. With you now. And Paul looked. Into the face. Of the one he had wronged. Against thee, thee only. Have I sinned and cried. And I never let you go. I had a hold of you.

[16:26] From that day till now. And here I am. I must settle this matter. With you now. And Paul looked. Into the face. Of the one he had wronged. Against thee, thee only. Have I sinned and cried. And there was wondrous grace in it too.

I am. He said. Jesus. Ah. That was the name of the one. Who went to the cross to die.

That's the name. That Saul didn't like. Because. It stood for grace.

And not. For his own goodness. It meant the shedding of blood. For the forgiveness of the sinner.

And he didn't like it.

And now. From the outburst of glory. Jesus. Introduces himself. As the Christ of Calvary.

[17:42] And Paul thought. That he had put Calvary behind him. He wanted to forget. Something that offended his pride. And Paul thought. That he had put Calvary behind him.

He wanted to forget. Something that offended his pride. Scandalized his pharisaic hypocrisy. But the cross met him.

On the road. Stopped him. And the one who died in Calvary. Introduced himself and said. I am Jesus.

And there was wonderful compassion in it too. For he said to him. So. It is hard.

Hard for me. To be persecuted like this. Oh no. It is hard for you. To kick.

[18:43] Against the prick. You know the prick was. The stick. That the mule driver had. With a nail at the end. And when the team.

Of mules was lagging behind. He just. Pronged them. With the nail. With the nail. And when they kicked back. The nail went deeper. Into the flesh.

They hurt themselves. That's a figure. That Jesus uses. And he said. Paul. It is hard for you to go and kick him.

Against my. Gold. Gold. Christ had him. Brightled. Since that day. That Stephen died. And Paul was kicking. Kicking. Against it.

And the Lord said to him. Son. It is hard for you. It hurts. You are wronging. Your own soul. Friend. It is hard for you. It hurts. You are wronging.

[19:41] Your own soul. You are wronging. You are wronging. Your own soul. Friend. You are wronging. You are wronging. You are wronging. Friend. There saw a light.

But he saw a place. And that is what makes church. And the service. And the sermon.

Different. You've got an introduction. From Jesus. To himself. It's a personal religion you get.

It's in a passion. You get it. That day. And all the transformation. You go back to that spot and say. Why? He told me. Who he was. He unveiled his countenance to me.

I met him face to face. And that is imprinted. On your soul eternally. You met your savior. That's what makes it different. There is one thing else I wish to say it is this. They all felt a strange thing to our friends. They and served in reality.

[20:42] What Ö And thenmaster said thousand in that place.

And he Vildo■, he cried out and gave me, you are wrong. Um, what kind of human is that. There is one thing else I wish to say it is this. They all felt a strange power. But Saul felt a hand gripping him. Power, yes, for they all fell from their horses. They all, they that were with me, they all fell to the ground, he says elsewhere. They all fell to the ground.

It was mysterious, wasn't it? They were accustomed to riding strong in the saddle. But they, some or other, they lost control. They fell off their horses by the roadside. It was mysterious. They must have been puzzled what it was.

But Saul felt a warm, tight clasp. Somebody gripped. And he afterwards spoke about it and said, I was apprehended of Christ Jesus.

[22 : 25] He was arrested. The strong hand of the law gripped him.

He gripped him. And from that day, he felt his life in that grip. It never let him go.

That's what made the difference. To others, it was a power that fell them, humbled them, put them in the dark.

But to Paul, it was a hand that called on him and lifted him up. Took hold of him first. Took hold of him first.

In its purpose. The voice said to him, Saul, I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister and a witness.

[23 : 42] Mind you, mind you, nothing haphazard, nothing accidental about it. A divine purpose, gripped him, tight.

And then, he was gripped by omniscient. To the gentles, unto whom now I send thee.

There was no love evading. There was no love evading. The blueprint of that mission. Everything had been marked out already.

And he was gripped by a passion within. To surrender his will.

To yield his life. To devote and consecrate his whole ambition.

[24 : 48] To fulfill the purpose that gripped him that day. Listen. That I may apprehend.

That for which also I was apprehended of Christ Jesus. That was his ambition. I follow after. That I may apprehend.

That for which I was apprehended. Friend. That meant. Harvey's own peace. In his worth.

actor That was a matter of a student who moved on. And neither I understood himself. And other people sustain the strength of death world. Paul felt a hand going around him. Taking hold of him.

And keeping Him. In his purpose. In its mission. In his own passion. To redeem man. And from that moment he said.

[25 : 49] I am the bond slave of Jesus Christ. The bond slave. I count all things but none.

That I may win his approval is well done at the last. That made a difference. There is no doubt at all that you and I may be humbled under the gospel.

We may for a moment fall from a perch and are struck down.

But nothing grips us. Nothing grips us. And we are not held fast by the encircling power of a Savior.

That makes a difference. Saul was. Now if I can take it back to the after day.

[27 : 04] These fellow travelers went home. And no doubt their friends asked them, how did it go with you? And they said, well it was a strange journey riding off.

We are caught in a terrible storm. A thunderstorm. And there was a brilliant flash of lightning. We never saw anything like it before. As a matter of fact.

We were terribly afraid. We fell off our horses. And we were there by the roadside. Terrifying. It didn't last long. But oh it was really a frightening experience.

Yes. And it faded out. Just up from the start. That's all. The years rolled and twenty years after Paul sprung in a distinguished company before the Roman governor Pestes and King Agrippa.

And he was being put on his defense. He told his story simply, sincerely.

[28 : 19] Then he looked Agrippa in the eye and said, Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. It was as heavenly then as it was twenty years before.

Just as heavenly. He knew eternity had bent down at that time. Heaven came to earth. The Divine Lord had caught that day.

The Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto me in a way.

What a strange testament. The Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto me in a way.

That a Christian made. Made. Made for eternity. Well, friend. Far be from me.

[29 : 24] To set myself on a pinnacle. And say I am different. But I do know.

That there are some in this little congregation. And they are different. Because they heard a voice speaking to them personally.

And they were introduced to a Savior. And they felt his hand gripping their lives. Unholy and fast.

Holy and fast. And they are different ever since. And ever shall be. That's a Christian. And fellow travelers come and go.

They claim the label of a church and a denomination. They go to a service.

[30 : 31] But it all fades out. They have never met a Savior face to face. And they are not content. And they are not content. Till you hear him speaking to you. Introducing himself. And taking hold of you.

In his divine purpose. As your Lord and your Savior. Let us pray. Lord Jesus. Speak thy word tonight. Let each of us. Hear his own name. And let thy voice stir.

Heart and mind and conscience. And all in the light of the gospel.

May we see the face. Of our Savior. mind and conscience. And oh, in the light of the gospel, may we see the face of our Savior.

[31 : 34] And when we are helpless in the dust, may we feel his hand gripping us and taking us up and using us for his divine service. Lord Jesus, take us and make us what thou hast have us been. For thy name's sake. Amen.