

## Sermon Notes

*Your grace is not in vain! (Acts 9:1-9)*

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### LUKE'S FORESHADOWING OF FORGIVENESS

#### **Zachariah**

*And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, **to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins**, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luk 1:76-79 ESV)*

#### **John the Baptist**

*And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **Bear fruits in keeping with repentance**. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. (Luk 3:3, 8 ESV)*

#### **Jesus' Commission of Forgiveness**

*Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, (Luk 24:45 ESV) and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, **and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem**. You are witnesses of these things. (Luk 24:44-48 ESV)*

#### **Peter's Sermon at Pentecost**

*Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins**, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Act 2:37-39 ESV)*

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### **THE CONVERSION OF SAUL**

1 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8 Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. (Act 9:1-9 ESV)

### **PAUL'S PARALLEL ACCOUNT**

12 "In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles--to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, **that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.**'

19 "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, **that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.** (Act 26:12-20 ESV)

### **DO NOT RECEIVE YOUR GRACE IN VAIN**

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, **we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.** (2Co 5:20 - 6:1 ESV)

### **Questions for discussion**

- Are you receiving God's grace in vain? How are you performing "deeds in keeping with your repentance" today?
- If you did not have a transformative "Road to Damascus" moment, can you now look back and see God's grace working in your life over the long term? Where/how, exactly?
- Who in your circle of influence needs to receive "knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of their sins"? Where can you be an ambassador for Christ? Make plans to do so now.