

5. Becoming a Christian means inclusion into God's family. Reflect on the two quotes by Julie Canlis from the sermon outline.

6. What are you doing (or what should you be doing) to remember and practice being a missionary (see the Spurgeon quote in the sermon outline)?

7. Looking back over this week's sermon and study, what one thing is most important for you to remember and apply?

### **Missional Application**

God calls us to lead people to a personal encounter with Jesus.

### **Christ Connection**

Jesus turned Paul's world upside down by appearing to him on the road to Damascus. He discovered that he had been opposing God and his plan.

Jesus was the Messiah (the Christ) he had been waiting for.

Everything changed for him on that day.

### **The God Who Sends (Part 2)**

"5 Necessary Elements of Authentic Christian Conversion" (Part 2)

Acts 9:1-22

### **5 Necessary Elements of Authentic Christian Conversion**

#### **1. A personal encounter with Jesus**

#### **2. A humble surrender to God.**

"[I don't] use the phrases 'decided for Christ' or 'committed to Christ,' though decision and commitment are certainly involved. ...Conversion is, at the root, not a decision, nor a commitment, but a surrender to the supreme authority of Jesus." (Roy Clemens)

An authentic Christian knows he helped kill his Redeemer. If you really get that, you either despair for yourself or you surrender and follow, living in his forgiveness and under leadership.

#### **3. A reevaluation of everything in light of Christ.**

Paul had a whole new perspective on Scripture. Same Bible. Same authority in his life. But all of a sudden he could see what had been there all along.

The Bible says that when we become Christians we move from darkness to light and from the dominion/rule of darkness and Satan to the rule of Christ and his kingdom. (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 5:8-10).

The acid test of inauthenticity is lacking a new way of thinking about life.

Authentic conversion ought to cause us to reevaluate how we feel about immigration and immigrants, racism and race relations, sexuality and gender issues, injustice and systemic poverty.

This is a church filled with people who fail to live up to what we believe, coming alongside each other to help each other do what we believe.

"A woman has a right to do whatever she wants with her own body." Contained in that declaration is the idea of ownership.

Andrea Palpant Dille: "As abortion advocates rightly decry abuse against women as a violent infringement on the body, they fail to see the clear double standard: that Roe enables women to legally practice an equally violent infringement on the unborn. ...In any abortion case, a mother's bodily ownership leads to a child's isolation and death."

...It's worth noting that some scholars see close parallels between the 1857 Dred Scott decision—which left slaves as the legal property of their owners—and Roe, which left unborn children as the legal property of their mothers.

...If 'owning yourself' is clearly the wrong vision, the right one is intensely unintuitive and almost jarring to consider: **We're called to stewardship, not ownership.**

#### 4. Inclusion in a new family

It's because we are "in Christ that persecuting believers and the church (his body) is persecuting Jesus.

"When you are united to Christ, you are put into a family. There are no 'only children' in the kingdom." (Julie Canlis)

"Growing up, I, like most children at the time, had to go to church. I am eternally grateful to my parents for not making this an option, because as a child, I didn't know that church is like being in a family—you can't opt out. If you opt out of family, you grow up not knowing yourself. You have to learn the family dynamics, go to the family reunions, eat the traditional family foods, and endure some of the family craziness." (Julie Canlis)

#### 5. A redefined purpose in life

"Every Christian is either a missionary or an impostor." (Charles Spurgeon)

### Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Acts 9:1-22. How would you define surrendering to Christ?
3. The Bible speaks of conversion as passage from darkness to light. What do Acts 26:15-18, Colossians 1:13, and Ephesians 5:8-10 say about darkness and light?
4. Sometimes, as believers, it's hard to understand how not-yet-believers justify certain actions and ideas. How does understanding the "dominion of darkness" help you have more compassion and patience when discussing these kinds of issues?

### Family Discussion Questions

1. Saul was persecuting believers, so why did Jesus say he was persecuting him?
2. Believers are included in a new family. Read and discuss the two quotes above by Julie Canlis.