

Last Week's Sermon Summary

『The Conversion of Saul』

Pastor Takashi Inoue

Acts 9:3-9, 15-19 、 Luke 10:1-9

❶ **【Change in the light of God】** Paul, whose original name was Saul, belonged to the Pharisees, a strict group of Jews who learned the Law from a famous teacher named Gamaliel and faithfully followed his teachings. For Paul, the teachings of Christianity were unacceptable. The fact that there was a prophet named Jesus who claimed to be God, and that any sinner could be forgiven for his sins and accepted into the kingdom of God if he believed in Jesus, even if he could not keep the Law, were blasphemous teachings and heresies of Judaism, which he could never forgive. He persecuted the Christians with great zeal.

On his way to Damascus, he was suddenly illuminated by a light from heaven, fell to the ground, and heard the voice of Christ. Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me" (Acts 9:4). When Paul asks who you are, he is told, "I am Jesus whom you persecute. Get up and go into the city. Rise up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (Ibid. 9:5-6). He opened his eyes, but he could not see anything. For the next three days, he was blind and unable to eat. From this point on, Paul was totally helpless and silent. His entire sense of righteousness collapsed, and his very self was shattered. Pastor Yasuo Enomoto said, "If there is something hard in our hearts, if our self is not melted away, it is because the light of Christ is not shining on us, like a pillar of frost not shining on the sun. God gave Saul, who was furious, one such holy experience." He said. In order to be

made an instrument of God, a vessel to let God in, one's self must be broken. To do this, we must let the living light from God shine into our hearts.

❷ **【On the Ananias' Calling】** The person who was inevitably indispensable for Paul's birth was Ananias. He had already been called as a Christian and was living in Damascus at this time. In a vision, God tells Ananias, "Stand up and go to the street called 'Straight Street. Go to the street called 'Straight Street' and visit a man from Tarsus named Saul, who is in the house of Judas. Now he is praying." (Acts 9:11) But when Ananias complained to the Lord about what terrible evil he had done to the Christians, the Lord said, "Go. That man is a vessel whom I have chosen to carry My name to the Gentiles and to kings, and to the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). So Ananias took courage and went out and baptized him. God's plan requires the dedication and faithfulness of those who have been called to be Christians before us in order for it to bear fruit. Ananias was called first so that Saul could be born as Paul. The meaning of our prior calling as Christians is also for the salvation of someone else.

❸ **【About the Calling】** Paul says in his letter, "God, who chose me from my mother's womb and called me by grace, according to his will, showed me his Son so that I might preach his gospel to the Gentiles" (Galatians 1:15-16), and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Before you were born from your mother's womb Before you were born from your mother's womb, I sanctified you and set you up as a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).

Since God foreknows everything, He chooses "some" in advance to do 7

Weekly Report

The United Church of Christ in Japan

Miyakojima Church

Mission Established December 1, 1957

Church Established December 2, 2001

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《Moses and the Burning Bush》

Miyakojima Church's 2025 Mission Policy

Motto : "Let's prepare for the construction of the church "

Scripture : " The toil of those who build houses is in vain, unless the Lord Himself builds them " (Psalm 127:1)

Goals for FY2024

- 1 Observe worship services every week and aim for an average of 27 people to attend services.
- 2 We invite one person to worship in one year.
- 3 We value the fellowship of believers.
- 4 Make concrete preparations for the construction of the church.