

Love each other like the members of your family. (Romans 12:10a)

The Church Grows – Acts 9:26-31

Prepare to Wonder

Today's story takes place after Saul's (Paul's) conversion. The text says that Paul tries to join the other disciples when he arrives in Jerusalem, but they are afraid of him. They doubt Paul's desire to become a disciple of Jesus. Up until Paul's blinding experience on the road to Damascus, he was an enemy of Christianity and a persecutor of those who practiced the faith.

The disciples see Paul as a persecutor, not a believer. They do not trust that Paul has changed. Barnabas brings Paul to the apostles and serves as a witness to Paul's conversion story. After this, Paul is accepted in Jerusalem and begins to preach in the name of the Lord.

It's hard to trust that people who have hurt us can change. How can we trust their intentions when we have been harmed? This was the struggle of Jesus' followers in the story. However, Paul proved his faith and was supported by a witness, Barnabas. There are times when it is not right to trust someone again, but there are also times when we can witness change. In these moments of conversion, we can see God at work and can be a witness for those who need our love.

After Paul's conversion, the church grew and people came to know the God of transformation through the Spirit. We can trust in God that people can change and that we can find ways to be part of God's transformative love.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This week reflect on the different ways to show love. Journal about the ways you love people in your life. Are there other ways you are called to love? Is there someone you need to stand up for, like Barnabas did? Is there someone like Paul you are called to protect? Is there someone you need to share God's love with, as Paul shared God's love through speaking? Challenge yourself to love in different situations.