

A MESSAGE IN THE NIGHT

Lesson 76 → Acts 9:10-19

It seemed a strange request from the Lord, but Ananias obeyed.

It was dark in the small room. Ananias moved uneasily on his narrow bed. What had awakened him? Then he heard it again; his name was being called. He listened closely, raising himself up on his elbows. There it was again! Suddenly, Ananias understood. “I am here, Lord,” he answered.

The reply made Ananias sit up straighter in disbelief.

“Ananias, I want you to get up and go over to the street called Straight. There’s a man over there at the house of Judas. His name is Saul; he is from the city of Tarsus. He’s blind, and he has seen a vision of a man called Ananias coming to pray for him so that he can see again. He is praying.”

At first, Ananias was afraid. “But Lord,” he said, “I know of

this Saul. He is a wicked man. He is coming to Damascus to put those who serve You, in jail. He has permission to put everyone in jail who believes in Jesus.”

“I know that, Ananias, but I have called him and chosen him to be My helper and servant. I will show him how many hard things he will have to suffer for Me. Go on your way, Ananias.”

Wondering about this unusual request, Ananias got ready and left his house. Through the streets of Damascus he went, turning this way and that until he came to the very narrow street called Straight. As he walked, he thought about what he had heard. To think that God had changed Saul of Tarsus! For weeks the Christians of Damascus had



I AM WILLING TO DO WHAT JESUS SAYS.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. — Isaiah 1:19

heard about how Saul was taking people from their houses in different cities and putting them in jail—even causing them to be killed. Just the other night, they had heard he was coming to Damascus with letters giving him the power to arrest people here too.

Then, about three days ago, they had heard a strange story. When Saul was getting close to the city, he had fallen to the ground—and a light brighter than the brightest sunlight had shown around him and the people traveling with him. A Voice had spoken to him. When Saul could stand up again, he was blind and had to be led by the hand.

Ananias shook his head as he walked. So that story really was true. Hadn't the Lord said to him that Saul was blind? Could it really be that Saul was now a Christian? As he reached the house of Judas, Ananias knocked softly. The

door opened immediately, almost as though he were expected. Then, as he was let into the house, he asked where to find the man called Saul.

Entering quietly into the room, Ananias saw the man who was well known throughout Israel. Ananias could tell he was blind. Even so, as he looked more closely, Ananias could see a look of peace on Saul's face.

In his mind, Ananias could hear the Voice of the Lord saying, "I have chosen him . . . he must suffer for Me." A great love for this man filled his heart. "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me. He is making you well."

As he laid his hands on Saul's head, the air was suddenly charged. Saul turned to him and in a wondering voice said, "I can see again!" Ananias' arms dropped around Saul's shoulders. Together they prayed and thanked God for

the wonderful things He had done for Saul.

Later, as Ananias left the house where Saul was staying, he thought of how he had made excuses to the Lord about going to pray for Saul. "Thank you, Lord," he said, "for being so patient and for helping me to obey You. I am so glad You let me help Saul. He used to be the Christians' worst enemy, and now he is our friend and brother."

You may never have thought about Ananias as a hero of the Bible. Maybe you don't even remember hearing about him before, but we can learn an important lesson through his example. He was willing, and he was obedient. He did what God told him, even though it seemed like a strange—even dangerous—request. We may not always understand the things God asks us to do for Him, but if we are willing and obedient, God will use us.

HEARING GOD

CAN YOU HELP?

Fill in the missing letters in the circles on the file cards. Next write the circled letters on the matching numbered lines on the MEMO. Read the memo and write the number of the file cards for which your response is yes.

9 GIV○
whatever time I have to help the church grow.

8 S○NG
a special song for Sunday school.

7 CLE○N
up the church.

6 H○ND
out invitations to church activities.

5 TEL○
a friend about the Lord.

4 PL○Y
an instrument.

3 ○RING
someone to church.

2 HE○P
my Sunday school teacher.

1 ○ISIT
the sick.

MEMO:

I am _____ for _____

7 1 4 8 5 6 3 2 9