

How The Lord Used Ananias

Acts 9:1-17 – Acts 22:12-16

One of the most humbling truths that is revealed in the Bible, in my opinion, is that God uses ordinary men and women, even unbelievers, to accomplish His purposes.

In this study we shall consider one man who was wonderfully used by the Lord – Ananias – who had the privilege to be called by God to seek out and lead Saul into the fullness of a life in Christ.

We read of Ananias only twice in the New Testament (Acts 9:10-17; 22:12-16), and he is presented as the type of Christian whom God can use. So let's read today's scriptures.

Acts 9:1-17

¹Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. ¹⁰In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹²In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." ¹³"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest

all who call on your name.”¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 22:12-16

¹² “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.¹³ He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.¹⁴ “Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.¹⁵ You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.¹⁶ And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

I want us to consider the following points:

1. The person God uses in this way must be a member of the Body of Christ

God works through Christians, through those who, by the miracle of the new birth and by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, have been made members of His Church, which is His body.

John 3:3 says;³ *Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.*

In Acts 9:4 the Lord clearly told Saul that in persecuting Christians he had been persecuting the Lord Himself, because believers are members of the body of Christ. He is the Head, and they are members of the body – and so the disciples of the Lord and the Lord Himself are one.

During His earthly ministry Jesus had an earthly body, and He lived and worked through that; but now His body is the Church, and from heaven He, the Head, works through the individual members of that body. Ananias was a member of that body, and if you and I are to be used by the Lord the same must be true of us.

2. The person God uses may be a very unlikely person

God reached Naaman through “a little maid” (2 Kings 5:2 KJV). When God wanted to lead Saul into the assurance of salvation, He used Ananias. But who was Ananias? He is described in Acts 9:10, not as an apostle, not as an outstanding man, but as “a disciple”.

God delights to use ordinary people and this should be a great encouragement to all of us.

Just look at what it says in 1 Corinthians 1:26-28; ²⁶ *Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.* ²⁷ *But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.* ²⁸ *God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,*

We may be a very ordinary members of a church, but the Lord wants to use you as He used Ananias. He finds great joy and pleasure in it.

3. The person God uses must be living a devout life

In Acts 22:12 we read that Ananias was devout and highly respected. This means that his conduct was blameless and there was no unreality or insincerity about his testimony.

Ananias was one who showed forth the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in his actions and in his words. Titus 2:10 says; ¹⁰ *and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.*

God will use only those people whose lives are consistent and glorifying to Him. I have to ask, Is yours?

4. The person God uses must be utterly at His disposal

Some Christians are not available to the Lord. If God should tell them to go to their neighbor and invite them to attend church they would not be willing to do it.

If He should tell them to leave their secular job and go to another place as a missionary, they would be unwilling to obey. If He should tell them to give a certain amount of 'their' money to His work, they would not be prepared to do this. If He would tell them to give more of their time to the church, they would say I know your not talking to me Lord, I do so much already, call on someone else.

Ananias, however, was completely at God's disposal. How do we know this? Verse 10 tells us that he was living in such close touch with His Lord that he could hear Him speaking to him. If you go back and read through verses 10-14, you're going to notice the note of intimacy in this conversation between Ananias and the Lord.

Ananias was on speaking terms with God. Are we? Then again, Ananias was willing to obey the Lord. It is true he asked the Lord some questions, but immediately the Lord emphasized that his job was simply to "go" and, Ananias "went". There was instant obedience.

Sometimes to obey God means to incur the disapproval of men and even our families at times. How completely Ananias trusted and obeyed God! If only we would do the same.

5. The person God uses must be full of Christ-like affection

When Ananias went to Saul he did not say, 'You scoundrel! You persecutor of the Church! You have done much evil!'. Notice that he just put his arm round Saul and said, "Brother Saul..." – no doubt there were tears in his voice and compassion in his heart when he said these words!

Here is a great test: when another Christian has harmed and hurt you, are you able to go to him and say, "Brother..."? Your answer to that question will determine whether God can or cannot use you.

6. The person God uses must be well-informed

We can infer this from verses 13 and 14.

Daniel 11:32 says; ³² *With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.*

Esther 1:13 says; ¹³ *Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times.*

Ananias would have done the same thing to be well-informed. He would have consulted with fellow believers or scriptural teachers, like the disciples.

However, in 2 Timothy 2:15 we learn that we must know how to take our Bible and use it in pointing people to Christ. It says; ¹⁵ *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

Do you know your way about your Bible? Can you turn to the verses which show why we need a Savior?....why Jesus Christ is the Savior we need?....why He is the only Savior?....how and when and on what conditions He saves, keeps and satisfies....?

1 Peter 3:15 says; ¹⁵ *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*

7. The person God uses must be able to lead others into blessing

On the very threshold of his new life Ananias led Saul into the fullness of spiritual blessing, because he showed him how to be “filled with the Holy Spirit” (verse 17).

Ananias was obviously in the enjoyment of this himself and knew how imperative it is for any Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit if he is to serve God effectively. This is why he immediately advised Saul of this.

We have read this many times in our study of Acts. We can never lead others into blessings which we have not experienced ourselves.