

Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 29, 2018

Acts 9:26-31

You are in Jerusalem, being able to speak to our Lord, desiring to become a disciple, but having to debate with the Hellenists who are trying to kill you. You speak out boldly in the name of Jesus but get sent away. The Apostles don't believe that you are who you say you are. This is what Saul felt as he tried to remain faithful in being one of God's disciples yet was sent on his way to Tarsus. Tarsus city is thought to be in present day Turkey, now called the city of Cukurova. It is located on the Tarsus River about 12 miles from the Mediterranean Coast. Despite his challenges, it worked out for Saul. Jesus is said to have called him "Saul of Tarsus." Never give up. When times look bleak, always put your faith in God as Saul did. The church throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria were at peace. It was being built up by fear in the Lord. With the consolidation of the Holy Spirit the church grew in numbers. With the Holy Spirit living in us, we can grow our church by numbers. Imagine the possibilities if we never give up. Make the choice to become a disciple today.

I John 3:18-24

God is greater than our own hearts and he knows everything. Aren't we fortunate that he is and that he does?

Jesus (our Father): "Love one another."

Us (the children): "Why?"

Jesus (our Father): "Because I said so."

Does this sound like you at home with your children? Do you have memories of your parents saying this to you? If we keep God's commandments, we know that God will remain in us forever, because he says so. Just as we know what is best for our children and our Parent's know what is best for us, Jesus knows best by giving us his Spirit; a little piece of him lives inside each of us. As long as we believe in him and have confidence in what God tells us is true, we shall live an everlasting life.

We are fortunate for that too. Choose to follow Christ today. He already lives inside of you. Let his light shine and be a disciple for him.

John 15: 1-8

Have any of you taken care of plants in your yard? Have you noticed the buds starting to form on the trees and bushes? Have you pruned all of the dead branches off your plants yet? God

does this for us constantly. God wants us to think of ourselves as branches growing on his vine. He is the vine grower. He watches over us, takes care of us and helps to trim off all of our branches that are not in bloom. He prunes us so that we will bear more fruit and grow even more healthy branches that will also bloom. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own, we are nothing without Christ. We have to remember to feed ourselves with the Holy Spirit so that we may grow in Christ. God wants us to bear much fruit and to become one of his disciples. As our church moves towards this very mission of becoming one of Christ's disciples, remember, without growing our faith in God, we will not thrive. Our branches will die without Jesus. Let's follow the Lord and become one of his disciples today. Let's help ourselves and others grow and bloom in the Holy Spirit.

Disciple:

- a personal follower of Jesus during his life, especially one of the twelve apostles.
- A follower or student of a teacher, leader, or philosopher.

Latin *discipulus* "learner" from *discere* "learn"

A Disciple of Jesus is a worshiper, a servant, and a witness.

Disciple (noun)- someone who adheres to the teachings of another.

One of God's disciples,

Lydia Schillinger