

## But Lord...

Acts 9:10-19.

Sunday morning, March 21, 2010.

### I. Ananias' hesitation.

#### A. Ananias is commissioned to bring healing to Saul.

##### 1. The instructions could not have been clearer:

Go to the street called straight; to the house of Judas; to the person called Saul of Tarsus.

##### 2. The purpose of Ananias' going could not be any clearer either:

To lay hands on him so that his sight would be restored.

##### 3. Even the reason is clearly spelled out:

Saul is praying

#### B. Ananias hesitates....

##### 1. Lord I have heard from many about this man.

Presumably those who escaped the persecution in Jerusalem and were scattered everywhere Ch. 8:1. Many of these refugees making their way to Damascus which had a large Jewish population.

Ananias was not going on the word of one man here; he was not buying into mere rumor, but he had his facts confirmed by many witnesses.

##### 2. Ananias knows and believes on good grounds that this man is a grave danger because of what he has done to the Lord's people in Jerusalem.

##### 3. Furthermore, word had reached Damascus that Saul had received authority from the chief priests to bring both men and women (vs 2) who believed in Jesus back to Jerusalem in chains.

##### 4. It seemed such a good thing that Saul had been struck with blindness. Now he would not be able to carry out his murderous plans. And now the Lord wants to restore this man's eyesight? It all seemed contrary to sound judgment, and hence the hesitation on Ananias' part.

### II. Reasons for hesitation and doubt in believers' lives.

#### A. Our fallen natures do not hesitate to question the Lord's word and wisdom.

We see it in the first sin of Adam and Eve in the garden. Eve did not hesitate to call into question the wisdom of what God had said. She declared herself willing to weigh other options and to consider other viewpoints.

##### 1. Consider here the arrogance of fallen human nature; to consider itself intellectually independent; to say to the Lord as it were, "Let me see if what You have said is right..."

##### 2. If we had all the facts, as the Lord does, we would see and believe that the Lord's ways and wisdom are always right and good. Since we know and see in part it is for us to believe that the Lord is right because He is the Lord.

##### 3. Eve had already fallen into sin once she went that far.

- She had removed herself out from under the Lord's protection and was on her own, and being on her own she was no match for the wiles of the devil.

- She had separated herself from the Lord's favor and fellowship by being willing to listen to other viewpoints. That she was deceived and plunged

human history into the misery of sin was the natural outcome of this.

- B. Our fallen natures have an inflated view of our own wisdom.  
We do not hesitate to put our own wisdom over against the wisdom of the Lord  
We do not hesitate to question the wisdom of the Lord.  
We do not shrink away from holding our own opinions apart from the Lord.  
We are opinionated from the day we are born and not afraid to put them forward  
and fight for them. “I think...” and “I want...”

- C. If the above two reasons are sinful ones, there is a good and godly reason for  
believers to entertain hesitation and doubt:  
There are at all times at least four voices in the hearts of believers; voices which  
are competing for our attention:
  1. There is the voice of our sinful natures in so far as they have not been  
mortified as yet.
  2. There is the voice of our regenerate natures, born and sustained by the Spirit  
of God.
  3. There is the voice of the Spirit of God who dwells in our hearts, having made  
our hearts His temple, and bearing witness in our hearts by the word of God.
  4. There is the voice of the suggestions of Satan as he tempted David to number  
Israel, and caused Peter to rebuke the Lord over going to Jerusalem to suffer  
and die.
  5. Beside these we may have to cope with the voices of the fallen and/or  
regenerate natures of other people around us. And the Lord or Satan giving  
their counsel through other people around us.

Given this fact it is a good and godly thing for believers to hesitate and  
sometimes even to doubt as they seek to discern and do the will of the Lord. It is  
generally not the better part of wisdom to give ourselves headlong to the first  
impulse that comes along.

- D. As such it is not necessary for us to be too hard on Ananias. Given the array of  
voices in our hearts it is the better part of wisdom to seek clarification and  
additional information on the part of the Lord.

### III. Helping our infirmities.

- A. The Lord knows our hearts and two things ought to be of comfort to us:
  1. That the Lord is not unsympathetic to the feelings of our infirmities, and the  
often resulting hesitation and doubt.
  2. That the Lord has sent His Spirit to us in the capacity of a helper, literally  
one who comes alongside us to help.
- B. The Lord does not rebuke Ananias. Rather He is the One who comes alongside  
him in his hesitation and doubt, and He gives him the additional insight and  
information as to what is going on.

### IV. A beautiful response.

- A. Ananias at once obeys without further hesitation and he goes to Saul.
- B. Note his greeting of confidence, “Brother Saul...” Ananias was not speaking  
here of a fellow Jew, but of one who had become his brother in Christ.
- C. Be slow to write anyone off as a reprobate.