

# MY NOTES

## THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!

Thank you for joining us today. This is a short note to let you know that we know what you are thinking: It is hot and cramped in this room. We want to acknowledge with you that yes, the front room is full, the kids rooms are full, and it can get warm. We are working on alleviating this right now by building our own building on the land just north of us (we must be out of this one by December 2016).

There is a lot that goes into the process of Element having a permanent home, but we hope that today you are first drawn to Jesus before you are overwhelmed by anything else. If it gets too hot, we may hand out popsicles to help you cool off and give you a sugar rush. If you would like a service that has open seats (and is cooler), you are invited to our 8:15am service. Please understand that all of these “challenges” are because of our love for Jesus, people, and growth that has come quickly. These are good things. We hope you will stay as we work to make more room for you to be part of the good thing Jesus is doing here. If you would like more information about our building process or how you can participate, you can visit: [www.elementroots.org](http://www.elementroots.org).

- The Element Team

Week 21

# ACTS

## The Perceived Worst of Us

### TODAY'S VERSES:

#### Acts 8:1-3

Acts 7:58

1 Timothy 1:12-16

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

Romans 8:1

2 Corinthians 5:21

### UPCOMING @ ELEMENT

#### Youth BBQ

Don't forget to pick up your BBQ lunch between 10a-1p today to help send youth to camp!

#### Volunteers Needed

We need your help in many areas including:

- Bringing refreshments
- Greeting
- Communion setup
- eKids! classrooms

For more info, email: [connect@ourelement.org](mailto:connect@ourelement.org)





## Guidance That Leads Us

A Heritage That  
Informs Us

Worship That  
Reminds Us

Preaching That  
Changes Us

Generosity That  
Defines Us

Compassion That Is  
Bigger Than Us

Truth That  
Challenges Us

Community That  
Encourages Us

Membership That  
Accounts For Us

Accountability That  
Exposes Us

A Hope That Heals Us

A Joy In Our Identity

A Lifestyle of Mission

Leadership That Grows  
Through Mistakes

A Peace That  
Speaks For Us

A Theology That  
Informs Us

A Calling That Kills Us

## Week 21 – Acts 8:1-3

### The Perceived Worst of Us

We are in our series in the book of Acts, this is week 21. Today we get to the beginnings of “what happens next,” how the church starts to go forward after one of their most beloved members, Stephen, dies. There are so many pieces to this that it will take us a few weeks to get through...we will put it together, as they say, “piece by piece.” Today we will look at a guy named Saul of Tarsus, who later becomes the Apostle Paul.

**Do you know anyone who has ever changed their name?**

**What was it, what was it changed to, and why did they do it?**

Part of what we are doing through the series in Acts is looking at characteristics of the early church and what we as a church are supposed to strive for by the grace of God. There is an idea that runs through the books of Acts, other than being a witness; it is the idea that God can (and does) offer His grace to us and can redeem ANY life no matter how bad or hard hearted a person may seem.

**Read Acts 8:1-3.**

**Who is the worst person you know or have heard about?**

**If you are willing, share what you think is the worst in you?**

**Do you think that person, or you, will ever change?**

Two weeks ago we saw the execution of Stephen; this week we look at the man who orchestrated the event, a “young man named Saul.”

**Does Saul look like a good guy?**

We are tempted to call Saul a horrible individual, but in reality the actions he took came from his wrongful understanding of God. He was trying to protect the Jewish faith. On Sunday we learned that Saul was religious, zealous, and spiritual, but his downfall was that he made his life about himself and not about God.

**Where do you make life about you?**

Once Paul was saved, he was forever changed. He acknowledges his brokenness and he even goes as far as saying, “I am the chief of sinners,” or the worst of the worst.

**Read 1 Timothy 1:12.**

**What comes to mind when you think of the transformation of Paul?**

**Where in your life do you have false pride?**

**What about false humility?**

Paul is able to understand that he is the worst of the worst not because of what he was doing, but because of his pride. Paul, because of his circumstances, understands more fully than (probably) anyone outside of Christ what the Gospel is. In coming to trust Jesus, he understands that he is not defined by his sins, mistakes, or failures; he is now defined by Jesus’ grace and righteousness. Paul understands that he will never be good enough or pleasing enough for God; he understands that only Christ made it possible to be “good.”

**What is your understanding of the Gospel?**

Paul can’t think of what a terrible sinner he is without immediately becoming filled with joy at knowing that he is also saved by God’s grace. For us, if we think we understand the Gospel because we see how wicked we are/were (the worst of sinners), and become depressed and never tell other people about Jesus, we have never understood the Gospel. The Gospel enables us to have joy because our God has found us and now we get to live in, and tell of, His great goodness.

**Does your life speak of the goodness of God?**