***Acts 9:10-18 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” 11So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.” 13Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” 15But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” 17And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit .” 18Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.***

Today, we’re in Damascus, Syria and we meet an amazing example of trust, obedience, and praise – Ananias. It’s been about 3 ½ years since Jesus ascended to heaven. Saul, soon to be called Paul, was traveling the road to Damascus three days ago, eagerly anticipating persecuting Christians, when he arrived. Instead, he encountered Jesus, was struck blind, and now waits in the house of Judas. No doubt he’s praying in desperation and deep sorrow. He knows the Christ he denied is the Christ he’s encountered. He committed terrible sin, holding the coats while a crowd stoned Stephen, persecuting innocent people, and denying the Truth of Jesus Christ. Now, here he is, three days in darkness, pleading for the Light of healing and deliverance.

Verses 10 *Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”*There was a certain learner – Ananias. Jesus called him by name! He answers – Here I am, Lord! Don’t let the personal knowledge of Jesus be lost on us. Jesus knows His disciple by name and Ananias knows Jesus’ voice. John 10:27 - *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.* Jesus knows us, and we hear Him. My friends, if that doesn’t encourage you this morning, I don’t know what will! The Son of God knows your name, my name!

Verse 11 *So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.* Jesus gives three assignments. Arise. Go. Inquire. Not confusing. Jesus gives us assignments. Go. Make disciples. Baptize. Teach. Not confusing. We hear. We know His voice. He knows us. Do we follow? Jesus names a street called Straight and it’s still there today!

Verse 12 *And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.* Jesus gave Saul a vision and named names! Ananias, my disciple, my faithful child, will be along soon so you might receive your sight.

Verses 13-14 *Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.* Ananias knows of Saul. This could cost him everything. Saul’s done much harm by worldly authority. Some say this points to doubt. No, it’s honesty between disciple and Lord. Jesus knows Ananias’ name and his heart. Jesus never promises we’ll never be in danger. He promises we’ll never be alone.

Verses 15-16 *But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.* Jesus repeats – Go. Saul is the vessel to bear My name. We are vessels to bear Jesus’ name. A chosen vessel – chosen by Christ, with perfect knowledge of our fears, weaknesses, imperfections, and pasts. Jesus knows and chooses us anyway. Why? Because He knows we’ll show up and we’ll give our whole heart. Jesus knows Ananias will obey despite the fear.

Verses 17 *And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”* Ananias trusts Jesus and puts that trust into action. He obeys. Don’t miss that he calls Saul brother. Jesus has called Saul His. He is a child of the Most-High God. Who Jesus accepts Ananias will not reject. How often we reject the one Christ has accepted. Jesus tells us to Go. Make. Baptize. Teach. Trust is arising. Obedience entering the house. Imagine Saul’s joy when he hears Ananias, the man in his vision, is standing at the door.

Verse 18 *Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.* Trust. Obedience. Imagine the praise when he receives his sight – not just physical but spiritual sight. He understands Who Jesus is and, no doubt, places his trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He sees clearly for the first time, and he is baptized.

Jesus called on Ananias, a true disciple, one that wouldn’t just hear, but follow, even when things looked dark, even when storms assailed, even when violent men walked in authority just outside the door. What does our walk look like? Do we trust and obey and start on our way? Is praise on our lips even as the world seeks to harm? This week, let’s continue to make 2023 a year to Trust, Obey, and Praise. May our eager answer to the call of our Savior be Here I am, Lord. Send me.