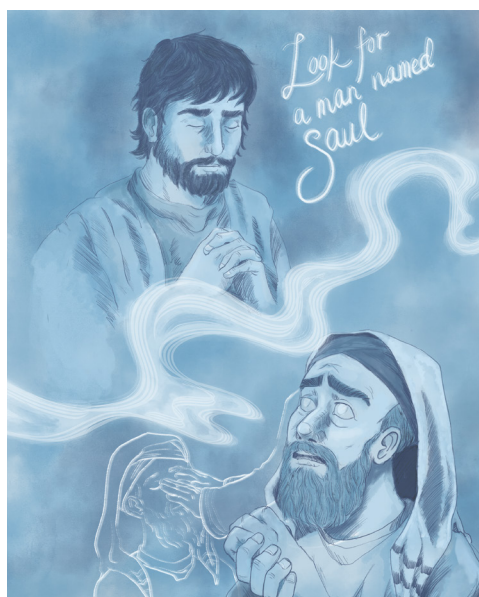


Acts 9:1-6,(7-20)

A change of perspective

This is the well-known story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul. Saul is on his way to Damascus to persecute followers of Jesus. On the way, he is felled by a blinding light and Jesus asks why he is persecuting him. Meanwhile, God speaks to a faithful follower, Ananias, who, despite his misgivings, goes to Saul, greets him as a brother and lays hands upon him. Saul's sight is restored and he is baptized.

Read this week's passage:



EXPLORE

an outdoor space with a camera. Take close-up pictures or alternative unusual perspectives of nature or the built environment so you can see the beauty in things you would not otherwise notice. Thank God for changing your perspective.

LOOK



at these illusion sculptures by the artist Michael Murphy that play with the idea of perspective. What is something that you have come to see differently? (E.g. a person, place or activity you now appreciate or understand better.)

WATCH



this video of the story of Saul and Ananias. Why do you think God chose these two men?

Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:



Living Scripture

'But... Lord, I have heard from many about this man...' Acts 9:13

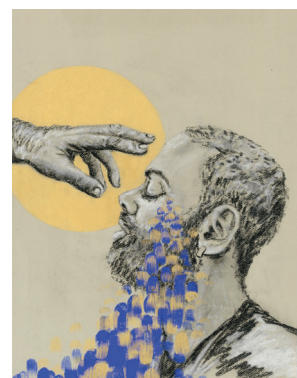
It can be very hard to change your mind. Research shows deep convictions become part of our identity, and our minds perceive ideological challenge as a personal attack. What strong opinions do you hold? Can you imagine joining the 'other side'? It might feel like betraying yourself or your family.

Changing your mind not only requires humility to consider another point of view and admit you were wrong, but it might cause disruption in your community. Those we saw as enemies might become friends, and those we saw as allies may now stand against us. That is deeply disorienting and frightening. We prayerfully remember those who have converted to Christianity and experienced family rejection and persecution.

It is no small thing to change your mind, but it is not impossible as Saul and Ananias show us. Who do you know who has changed their mind? Do you respect them for it? What good has come of it? For both Saul and Ananias, it was the voice of Jesus that provoked a change of heart. Today, are we humbly listening out for the voice of Jesus, and allowing him to guide us, even if that path seems new or unexpected?

First impressions

- What new insights about the conversion of Paul does this artwork offer us?
- How did both men change from their encounters with God and through meeting each other?
- What situations or circumstances in your life would benefit from a new vision or change of perspective?



Pray

Almighty God, we thank you for going ahead of us, for laying the path before us, lighting the way for us. Guide us to change our hearts and draw us closer to you. Amen.



a Möbius strip. Cut a long strip of paper. On one side, write a prayer thanking God for never changing. On the other side, write a prayer asking God to bring change in some area. Give the strip a half twist and join the ends together, to make a prayer loop.