

The Long Reach of the Gospel

(Acts 9:1-22)

Introduction

As far back in time as I can remember, I have heard the idiom, “the long arm of the law.” The indication was that law enforcement had a great deal of influence and the ability to reach beyond normal means to bring to justice a criminal or law-breaker.

The idiom, “the long arm of the law” seems to have appeared in the early 1800s (1826) in England in a book by George Lewis Smyth.

The first recorded use of the idiom in America was in the Milwaukee Commercial Herald, July 8, 1844 in the following article.

‘Taking a drop too much.’ — A Mr Neville, of western New York, has married a Miss Amanda Drop, while having another wife. The long arm of the law dropped down on him, and walked him off to prison for bigamy.

During the same period was also an idiom “make a long arm,” which meant to reach out to a great distance. For example the long arm of coincidence was a common phrase.

The idea was “long arm” meant the extent of one’s reach.

Contextualize sermon text (Acts 9). This passage informs us of the long arm of the gospel or, as the message is titled THE LONG REACH OF THE GOSPEL.

Contextualize this sermon in the Acts Sermon Series.

I. At Odds With Jesus (v. 1-2)

Principle: No one is beyond the reach of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- A) Death of Stephen (8:1a)
- B) Ravaging the church (8:1b-3)
- C) Requesting insight (9:1-2)

Illustration: Several years ago, I began praying for a neighbor, that God would do a work in his heart and life. He was a successful business man, had a beautiful home, and a picture perfect family.

He was not interested in true spirituality. He seemed to only have a casual concern for God in his life.

We moved. Time passed. We grew apart. Honestly, I quit praying.

I learned a few years ago, that God did a work in his life. I was blessed. However, I didn't think it would happen.

Application: How have you quit praying or? How do you think cant come to Jesus?

II. Pursued By Jesus (v. 3-9)

Principle: Before you sought God, He sought you. Before you pursued God, He pursued you. Before you love God, He loved you.

- A) Words of his victims (7:54-60)
- B) Intervention of God (9:3-6)
- C) Breaking of His will (9:7-9)

III. Changed By Jesus

Principle: Jesus is the ONLY way to heaven.

- A) Sight (9:10-18a)
(Saul's blindness and subsequent sight was to demonstrate to Saul his real condition.)
- B) Baptism (9:18b-19)
- C) Proclamation (9:20-22)

Conclusion

Who has God place on your heart today?
Has God spoken to your heart today?