Acts Lesson 32 Handout

Born in 5AD in Tarsus
15-20AD Studied under Gamiliel Jerusalem
31AD – Pharisee
32AD – Watched Stephen’s stoning
33-34AD Persecuted the church
34 Conversion on Road to Damascus
35-37 Arabia and stays 3 years.
37-38 – Returns to Damascus – exits city safely –
Goes to Jerusalem – Gets sent to Tarsus for safety.
Acts 11:19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.
20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.
21 The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

22 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.
24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.
25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,

Phil 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

1 Timothy 1:12–13
12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.
13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

1 Corinthians 15:9–10
9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

Gal 1:13-24 “But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles...

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It’s one of those seasons. You know, the one when every one else’s life is full of exciting things; God is using them mightily to heal the broken-hearted, or teach the Word, or sing soul-stirring worship songs, or feed the hungry all over the world.

Every one else but you.

With you, nothing happens. Nada. As though God lost His voice. And you know better, but it sure feels like it.

And every time you try to do something, there just isn’t any grace flowing, and you know it. It’s like God put you on the shelf for now.
It isn’t very comfortable. It’s itchy, and lonely, and quiet, up there on the shelf. It feels purposeless. Empty. Dusty.

So you look around, and you see the people all around you, mightily used of God.

And you notice how tired she looks, that woman over there, the one who rocks those babies dying of AIDS. So you begin to pray for her. And while in His presence, you find out that she really could use a friend. So you reach out to her, and let her know that you are available to talk. And she thanks you and smiles.

And then you see the man who delivers the milk, the one to whom all the kids run because he always laughs, and he always takes time to listen to them. And then, for the first time, you see it, that sadness behind the laughter, and you wonder what’s going on at home. And you begin to pray for him. And over the next few months, the sadness leaves that place deep in his face.

And you can’t help but hear the yelling down the street, the doors being slammed, the lock on the door, the yelling back and forth, the kids screaming at night, and your heart aches for them. So you get on your knees, pleading with God for mercy.

And your times in His Presence, they grow longer and longer. And the feeling that you are left out, it grows dimmer and dimmer.

Because in the process of being with Him, and loving the woman who rocks the dying babies, and caring for the man who listens to the children, and the family hanging on by a thread, you lose yourself in Him.

You find your joy in Him.
And the time on the shelf, it opens your eyes to what matters. It teaches you to live well. It leads you to compassion. And the time on the shelf, it leads to knowing Him more.

And then, one day, just like that, He calls you to hop off the shelf and go do stuff. Day in and day out. And you find that these times on the shelf, they prepared you for the Now. They infused you with His Presence.

And then you understand the shelf. And the shelf, it is beautiful. The shelf, it grew you all up. The shelf, it is necessary.

Job 1:6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”
8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied.

10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.

11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

4 while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat."

6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.
7 The angel of the **LORD** came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.”
8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

Acts 11:26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.
27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.
28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)
29 The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.
30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.