

GATHER 10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Week of April 28, 2024

This week's discussion questions are based on the First Reading found at Acts of the Apostles 9:26-31, on the Second Reading found at 1 John 3:18-24 and on the Gospel found at John 15:1-8

- # The First Reading talks of Saul's (aka Paul) conversion. As a result, Barnabas takes Paul, brings him to the Apostles, and declares what has happened in such a way that Paul is embraced by the Apostles. To follow Barnabas' example, how can we improve in recognizing the 'outsider'?
- # Paul wanted to join with the Apostles. How would you interact with someone who claims to be a disciple of Christ but *does not want* to join a local congregation? What truths would you speak to help them see the church as Paul sees it? Is/are there any argument(s) you would make in favor of formal church membership? What is/are they?
- # The final paragraph of the First Reading outlines how, with the conversion of Paul, the "program" of persecution that he was orchestrating seems to have come to a halt. There was still persecution but it was no longer a systematic organized effort. The church multiplied too, as the people of God walked in fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. What do you think it means to "walk in fear of the Lord?"
- # To summarize the Second Reading, St. John says to "walk the walk, not just to talk the talk." Where do you fit on a continuum between walkers and talkers?
- # St. John makes following God sound so simple: believe in Jesus and love one another. Are there ways you tend to overcomplicate or add to what it means to glorify and enjoy God? How so?
- # The Gospel says "He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does (bear fruit) he prunes so that it bears more fruit." Have there been times when you had "dead wood" that needed to be pruned? Was it painful to have it "removed?" Did it lead to growth? How?

Prayer Intentions