

Ipswich International Church

# Daily Devotion



Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025

May 2025

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
18				1	2	3	4
19	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
22	26	27	28	29	30	31	1

## Introduction

This weeks theme is on being captured or caught?, within the Sunday message on 25<sup>th</sup> may, Pastor Simon spoke of how God wants to capture our hearts. However as was also highlighted there are things in this world that we can become caught up in, these can start out as good things or even harmless things but can become harmful and even a God in our lives. We can also be caught up in sinful things that begin as small but begin to snow ball.

One person within the new testament that was caught up in a righteous mission was Saul or as he became Paul. Throughout this week we are focusing on the Damascus road experience of Saul/ Paul and how he was transformed. As we journey through this I would encourage you to be thinking about both your own walk and those that do not yet know Christ.

We are called to be on mission with Christ because he wants to captivate the hearts of people, He wants to encounter people. But in being part of that mission we can unintentionally become a blockage to the mission working through us. This is either by being caught up in the wrong things and losing that passion and zeal for the gospel, or we can become caught up in holiness and forget to meet those that don't know Christ, where they are at.

Paul's Damascus road experience reminds us that even enemies of Christ become part of the mission and that no one is excluded from and encounter with God. We are also encourage by his letters in Philippians of what has become of us, as a result of being captivated by God in our relationships with Him.

For more context to this weeks devotional and to be reading it in line with the word spoken on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May, I would encourage you to where possible watch back the sermon. You can watch it back on our YouTube channel - [www.youtube.com/ipswichinternationalchurch](http://www.youtube.com/ipswichinternationalchurch)

God Bless

Pastor David Howe

## A New Rhythm of Fasting: Mark your Calendar

The Monthly Fast ends with a corporate prayer meeting in the Church Building in  
Barrack Corner, Ipswich IP1 2NB, at 7:30pm

**Wed, 4 – Fri, 6 June 2025**

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
22	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
23	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
24	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
27	30						

**Kairos Moment: A time to Pause & Reflect**

FRANKLIN GRAHAM

# GOD LOVES YOU TOUR LONDON

21 JUNE, 6 P.M.  
ExCeL LONDON

**FREE**

LIVE MUSIC AND A  
MESSAGE OF HOPE

MUSIC BY  
THE AFTERS,  
CECE WINANS, &  
MICHAEL W. SMITH

A MINISTRY OF  
**BILLY GRAHAM**  
Evangelistic Association UK  
*Always Good News.*

**GODLOVESYOUTOUR.ORG.UK**

©2025 BGEA

Sign up for your space and others on our free coaches.

Please sign up by **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025.**

[To sign up- CLICK HERE](#)

## The beginning



Acts 9:1-2 (NIV)

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.



Saul or as he became Paul was seen to be carrying out a righteous mission in the eyes of those within the Jewish community. He was given permission by leaders to go and seek out those who were part of the way.

We maybe familiar with this narrative of Saul and how he was persecuting followers of Christ. What this passage however draws us back to is that Saul was not someone we may expect the Holy Spirit to encounter. We could find it hard to believe that Christ would choose to captivate Sauls heart.

Paul in his defence and account to King Agrippa in Acts 26 says this of himself:

“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth...Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.”

Acts 26:9-11 (NIV)

This highlight's that Paul saw himself as someone opposed to Christ. He sought to destroy Christ disciples. It is a reminder to us all that we have all begun our journey in a place where we could be seen to be opposed to the things of God or it may be that others we know appear to be far off from God.



**Where did your journey of faith start? Where you someone that you can imagine the Holy Spirit encountering?**



Lord, I thank you for where you have bought me from. I thank you that you sought me out before I sought after you.

## The encounter



Acts 9:3-6 (NIV)

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”



We now come to the point of encounter for Saul the moment in which we see Saul being captivated by Christ. The first part of this scripture to reflect on is where the voice says “Saul, Saul,...” this brings a similarity to that of when God got the attention of Abraham (Gen 22:11), Jacob (Gen 46:2) and Moses (Exod. 3:4). In these moments in the Old Testament, it was God grabbing their attention and then changing their lives.

In this moment Saul would have recognised it was God grabbing his attention or so he would think. But his asking of who is speaking, shows that he is unclear of the voice. This is the moment that Saul meets the very one he is persecuting.

This then shows that firstly it is not through Sauls efforts that Christ comes to Him but Jesus has chosen to encounter Him. It also reveals that Christ sees each one of His followers as part of being one with Him. That we are part of Him, that we are in Him.

It also shows us that Christ is wanting to encounter everyone, even when they maybe doing things that are opposed to Him. Its shows that Christs heart for each of us it that He is wanting to captivate our hearts.



**Have you ever counted yourself out of an encounter with God?  
Have you ever thought of someone else as undeserving of  
Christ’s compassion.**



Lord, enable me to see with your eyes and compassion. Open my heart to encountering you even in moments of discounting myself and others.

## The transformation



Acts 9:7-9 (NIV)

The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So, they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.



The physical and spiritual outworking of the encounter between Saul and Christ is shown within today's passage. Saul has been visibly impacted by this encounter in terms of his sight and being unable to eat or drink.

William H. Willimon says- "The nature of the change is striking: Saul is helpless. He opens his eyes but cannot see... The one who was so active going to and fro, ...pursuing believers all the way to Damascus has now become passive, helpless, like a little child. Thus will Saul, the enemy, enter the kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

This encounter leaves Saul dependant on God and others, causing him to see his need to depend on God and in turn Christ. It would have also been seen by those with him. We have to remember that those with him were speechless, it would have been something difficult to comprehend but also the transformation of Saul would have been a witness to their own understanding and belief in God.

This then teaches us that when we encounter God and allow Him to captivate our hearts, we are reminded of our need of Him. We can see that it is not of our own accord that we live but just as a child we depend on the father. We are also transformed and should seek to live transformed so that those around us would be amazed by what God has done.



Lord, captivate my heart. Let me be transformed to have a deeper dependency on you and your Spirit. May it be a light to others.

---

<sup>1</sup> Willimon, William H., Interpretation; A bible commentary for teaching and preaching: Acts, 2010. Page. 76.

## The Gain of Christ



Philippians 3:7-9 (NIV)

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.



In this part of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, we can see just how big of a transformation there has been. He has gone from desiring to wipe out those who followed Christ to now seeing it as a complete loss in comparison to what he has gained in Christ. His desire and passion has shifted and he recognises that it is not what he does that makes him righteous or who he stands for. But that it is His faith and belief in Christ that makes him righteous.

This then causes a sobering reflection and thought for ourselves as believers. What happens when we have been truly captivated by God as we see with Paul? Are we looking to the past what we have come from and seeing that as a garbage in comparison to what we have gained in Christ? What do we do in those moments that it is difficult in the faith, when tough times come. Do we look back at what has been wishing for an easy life?

These are questions to ask of ourselves but we also have to see how far Christ has bought us. We have to be seeking to encounter Christ in the moments when life is difficult, when our faith can begin to waver because He will lead us into great levels of faith and remind us of who we are in Him.



**What have you gained in your walk with Christ?**



Lord, I thank you that in you I have become one with you. That the things of old have passed away but you have led me into new places.

## I want to know Christ.



Philippians 3:10-12 (NIV)

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.



What does it mean to know Christ? This is a question that many of us may ponder. Here Paul is making the declaration that he wants to know Christ. What is note-able is that Paul is not looking to know just the good bits of Christ. He says that he also wants to participate in his sufferings, to be like him in His death. This doesn't sound very attractive for wanting to know Christ but Paul is saying that in order for us to really know Christ it's to know every area of Him.

This doesn't mean we punish ourselves or seek out to suffer but that when suffering comes, we are continuing to press on and press in. There are moments in which we can see how captivated we are by God and those moments are the times when its easy to walk away or see the suffering as greater than the rewards. When we have been captivated by God then we endure those places of suffering. If we think of our brothers and sisters in persecuted countries, they follow Christ and press on him even to the point of facing death.

This is because they know the value of following Christ, they will encounter Him but have also been captivated by Him that He is life.

**? How are you pressing on to take hold of all that Christ has for you?**



Lord, captivate my heart. May I know your leading and guiding even in moments of suffering, that I would take hold of the prize that is you.



## **Called heavenward in Christ.**



Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.



Paul can be seen to slightly repeat himself in this moment, however he is emphasising that we are to be looking forward and not backward. At the beginning of the week we saw just where Paul started out from as Saul. Now we read that he is pressing on toward the goal. He is pressing on towards the promise of heaven and that because of Christ we are heaven bound.

He is also demonstrating that he is still moving forward trying to take hold of all that Christ has for him. This is an encouragement to us that we have not failed when we haven't taken hold of everything in Christ. But we are to continually journey towards taking hold of more and more of Christ.

This comes through living a life captivated by him through continual encounter as we have reflected on over the last few weeks. It is also remembering that it is in Christ that we have been called heavenward, that our destination is heaven, but it is also something we can attain now. As we live a life that is captivated by Christ, we can be looking to the heavenly places and be believing that what we read in Revelation 4 of the Elders bowing down in worship is something that we can experience here and now in our own walks and life.

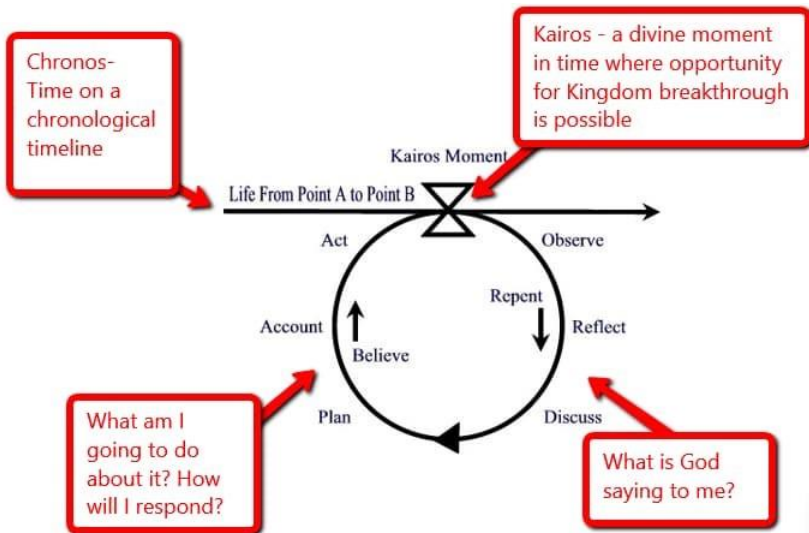


**How is your focus on heavenly things? Are you looking with natural eyes or looking with a heavenly perspective?**



Lord, I thank you that I am called heaven ward and that you have called me to see heavenly things in the here and now.

## Pause. Reflect. Process



It's time to pause, reflect, process and act on your week's Kairos moment(s).

This week, \_\_\_\_\_

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.



## October 2024 Vision

For months, God has been revealing things to me during worship, though I didn't fully understand them until Sunday morning when everything came together with clarity for Ipswich International Church.

I often sense a mighty Angel of the Lord over the platform, leading an army of smaller angels who move among the congregation, delivering God's instructions. The angel's tasks include comforting broken hearts and grief, and grounding people to the Holy Spirit's healing. Next, releasing provision, where those in need receive from God's abundance, often through others in the congregation. Then, sharing Truth and securing us firmly in Jesus to ensure we remain steady and secure. Lastly, I saw a covering of protection, like the angel's garments stretched over the people, symbolising peace and sanctification.

**God is preparing Ipswich International Church for what is to come—not just superficially but in deep wholeness.** This preparation is corporate, requiring unity. **"What you have now is one tenth of what I have planned for you to take hold of,"** he says. He is expanding His people's influence in Ipswich and beyond, calling them to replant stakes in new ground.

The church is being established as an epicentre of provision, both physical and spiritual, to release life. God's people must be whole to display His glory in the places He is calling them to.

A member of the Church submitted this vision via email, and it has been condensed for clarity and brevity. We have prayed about it and looked at how God has been leading us over the past few years. We believe it is truly from Him. Now, we share it clearly for everyone. Each of us has a place in what God is saying. Let's seek Him together, trust His plan, and walk forward with faith and unity.



# Our Priorities

