

**PASTOR: Leandro Montoya**

**TITLE: “A New Identity: From Who I Was to Who I Am in Christ”**

**TEXT: Acts 9:20–31**

**DATE: 3/1/2026**

---

## **INTRODUCTION – Who Are You Really?**

### **Key Thought (for screen):**

👉 *We build our identity on careers, titles, money, and past mistakes — but God calls us to build our identity in Christ.*

We live in a world obsessed with image and identity:

- What we drive
- Where we work
- What degree we have
- What we accomplished
- What mistakes we made

But none of those things define us in eternity.

**Paul is the perfect example of a man who had to completely change his identity.**

He was known for his past...

But God called him into a future.

---

## **CONTEXT & HISTORY – Who Was Saul (Paul)?**

Before Acts 9:

- Saul was a **Pharisee**
- Trained under **Gamaliel** (Acts 22:3)
- He **hunted Christians**
- He approved of **Stephen’s execution** (Acts 7:58; 8:1)
- He believed he was serving God by persecuting believers

**Then Saul meets Jesus on the road to Damascus.**

And everything changes.

This passage shows us **what happens right after Saul is saved.**

---

## **EXPOSITORY WALK-THROUGH ACTS 9:20–31**

---

### **1 A New Message – Immediate Change**

#### **📖 Acts 9:20 (ESV)**

“And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’”

#### **Screen Notes:**

- Saul didn’t delay obedience

- He preached the same Jesus he once opposed
- Real conversion leads to real change

 **Application:**

When Jesus changes you, you don't hide it.  
You testify. You speak. You live different.

---

**2 A New Reputation – People Struggle to Believe You've Changed**

 **Acts 9:21**

“And all who heard him were amazed and said, ‘Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?’”

**Screen Notes:**

- People remembered Saul's past
- They struggled to believe his transformation
- Your past will try to follow you

 **Application:**

People may remind you of who you *were*...  
But Jesus defines who you *are now*.

---

**3 A New Power – Strength Comes from Christ, Not Your Past**

 **Acts 9:22**

“But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.”

**Screen Notes:**

- Saul grew stronger in faith
- His authority came from truth
- His power came from Christ

 **Application:**

Your strength doesn't come from your reputation.  
It comes from knowing Jesus.

---

**4 A New Threat – Obedience Brings Opposition**

 **Acts 9:23–25**

“When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.”

**Screen Notes:**

- The hunter becomes the hunted
- Obedience brought danger

- God still protected him

 **Application:**

Following Christ doesn't remove hardship.  
It gives you protection *through* hardship.

---

**5 A New Family – The Church Learns to Trust**

 **Acts 9:26–27**

“And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord...”

**Screen Notes:**

- Even believers doubted Saul
- Barnabas became his bridge
- God uses people to restore trust

 **Application:**

Sometimes God sends a “Barnabas” into your life to vouch for your transformation.

---

**6 A New Boldness – Living Without Fear**

 **Acts 9:28–29**

“So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him.”

**Screen Notes:**

- Saul didn't water down truth
- He boldly lived his new identity
- Courage flows from identity in Christ

 **Application:**

When you know who you are in Christ, you stop being afraid of who you were.

---

**7 A New Season – God Uses the Church to Protect You**

 **Acts 9:30–31**

“And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.”

**Screen Notes:**

- God removed Saul for preparation
- Protection is not rejection
- Growth takes time

## 👉 Application:

Sometimes God hides you to prepare you.

---

## IDENTITY IN CHRIST – PAUL’S OWN WORDS

Paul later writes about his identity:

### 📖 Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

### 📖 2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

### 📖 Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...”

👉 Paul wrote this because people constantly tried to remind him of who he used to be.

---

## CORE MESSAGE – IDENTITY SHIFT

### Screen Summary:

✗ The world says:

- You are your career
- You are your past
- You are your mistakes
- You are your achievements

✅ God says:

- You are My child
  - You are forgiven
  - You are called
  - You are redeemed
  - You are made for more
- 

## APPLICATION – God Is Not Done With You

Some people say:

- “When I retire, I’ll serve God.”
- “When my life is stable, I’ll serve God.”
- “When I fix my past, I’ll serve God.”

**No. The time is now.**

- 👉 God is not done with you.
- 👉 God is calling you now.
- 👉 God wants you to know your identity in HIM today.

We are all called:

- Some to campuses
- Some to business
- Some to hospitality
- Some to worship
- Some to mentor
- Some to serve the broken
- Some to reach online

But **everyone is called to build their identity in Christ.**

---

## **CLOSING INVITATION**

**Screen Line:**

👉 *Today is the day to stop living your own identity and receive your identity in Christ.*

📖 **2 Corinthians 6:2**

“Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”