**Man Cannot Stop God**

*For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.****20****And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”****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?”****22****But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.*

***23****When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him,****24****but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him,****25****but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. (Acts 9:19b-25, ESV)*

 God will advance His plan successfully, even if human beings get in the way.

 Greetings in the Lord as we talk today about God’s Omnipotence (His quality of being All-Powerful). God is Almighty, All-Knowing, and All-Wise. His plans are for saving and freeing humanity, but not everyone accepts His ways and His *modus operandi*. God advanced the salvation that His Son won on the Cross through Paul the Apostle. People tried to murder Paul, but God’s work, even if it changes its means or location, does not stop. Today’s message is about this truth. Again, God will advance His plan, even if mankind tries to get in the way. Let’s go a little deeper…

 If mankind tries to be an obstacle in the way of God’s work, God will continue the work, He will complete it successfully, but through other means. The churches were astonished at what had happened to Paul the Apostle, since they saw just how much a man’s heart could change through God. At that time, the church was comprised of believing Jews. It was only natural that Paul the Apostle (still called Saul at this point) would follow Jesus’ model of ministry by going to the synagogues and preaching there before anywhere else. The problem with the church, unfortunately, was the contingent of unbelieving Jews, whose hearts had remained hard toward the Gospel. Influenced by their own unbelief and ultimately from the devil, these adversaries chose to assassinate Paul. However, the disciples of Christ lowered him in a basket through the wall. Think about this: the enemy (the devil) tried to stop God’s plan – but God still had work to do through the Apostle Paul. So, God did not allow His work to stop, but He provided another way for Paul to be freed and to continue His work.

 Sometimes we say that when a door closes, that God opens a window. When the leaders of the unbelieving Jewish community had finally rejected the Good News of Jesus, Paul the Apostle would go to the Gentiles, and because of that, the Armenian people would begin to believe in Christ eventually. When the apostles were being rejected (when they were sent out for ministry by Christ), for example, they were told to dust off their sandals and move on to the next location.

 God does not stop His work within and among us when a person becomes an obstacle to His work, or a situation does not initially work out to what He has planned. God has called us to come out of our psychological state of rejection and to focus on the next person, the next opportunity, or the next gathering. Perhaps your relative refused to listen to you, but another is going to accept the Gospel from your mouth. Perhaps you were not successful today in convincing your neighbor to turn to God, but tomorrow, (or one day), when hardship comes, he or she will remember what you said and turn.

 God is always working – our portion is to trust Him and to continue His work under His leading. My prayer is that we become aware of this reality, that God will cause His work to succeed, because His desire is the salvation of mankind.

 If mankind tries to be an obstacle in the way of God’s work, God will continue the work, He will complete it successfully, but through other means. God will advance His plan successfully, even if human beings get in the way. May the Lord bless us to be able to keep in stop with Him. Amen.