



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

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Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

3rd Sunday of Easter: Christ disrupts Saul's plan

Disruptions are moments that change the course of history. Some disruptions are historical, like the European discovery of the new world or the first use of nuclear weapons. These disruptions changed the world in ways that we cannot overestimate. Some disruptions happen in science, like Copernicus's model of the solar system, Newton's understanding of physics, or Einstein's theory of relativity. Each new disruptive discovery changed the way humanity understood the world. Some disruptions are personal, like the moment you met your partner, the birth of a child, retirement, or the death of close relative.

Disruptions change everything. In business, disruptive innovation has been a buzzword for a few decades. Disruptive innovation changes the market. They make established products obsolete. One of the most glaring examples of disruption in business happened within my lifetime. In my lifetime I watched the rise and fall of what was one of the biggest companies in America: Blockbuster.

Founded in 1985, Blockbuster experienced a boom in the 1990s when they seemed to open up a store (or two or more) in every town in America. At its peak in 2004, Blockbuster operated over 9000 stores and employed over 84,000 people. Six years later Blockbuster declared for bankruptcy. In 2014 the last 300 company-owned stores were closed. Today there is one Blockbuster store in Bend, Oregon.

What happened? Like most disruptions, you can't point to one moment. Even the historical disruptions like the nuclear bomb happen within the context of a global war, scientific advances, and preparing for the coming rivalry with the USSR. The rise of Blockbuster happened because of changing technology, changing family culture, the rise of the young consumer, and the disruptive idea to maintain huge volume over the network of franchises. The fall of Blockbuster also happened within the context of changing technology, the rise of the internet and mobile devices, and the fateful decision to not purchase a small company called Netflix for \$50 million in 2000 (today Netflix is a \$30 billion company – and itself in trouble because of disruptive ideas from its competitors).

All of this is to say – disruption happens with great ideas AND in a wider context of cultural and historical factors. Paul's disruption happened

on the road to Damascus. His world changed when he encountered the risen Christ and has the disruptive idea that Jesus IS the Messiah.

It happened in a moment – but it also happened within the context of his Jewish upbringing and Roman citizenship. It also happened when others welcomed him with hospitality. Paul's life was disrupted, and in turn he disrupted the entire known world by the same idea: That Jesus is the Christ and that salvation was available to those who believed and walked in the Way of Christ.

This disruption though, only happened because Ananias was also disruptive. He embraced the idea that he could welcome a known enemy with hospitality. When Ananias calls Saul "Brother," his world is shattered. No longer enemy, but brother, Saul is then healed, taught, and guided into his new life. Saul is baptized in the name of Jesus and becomes a part of the very community he sought to punish.

The voice of the Resurrected Christ, combined with the mutual vulnerability of both Saul and Ananias, leads to an overwhelming disruption. Life will never be the same for either of them, and life will never be the same for any of us. Churches today can be disruptive. We can disrupt communities, families, and lives by showing what the Resurrected Christ looks like in our midst. Embrace the Way of Christ, and everything can change.

