

Rat Trap

Acts 9:20–31; 11:19–30

March 3, 2024



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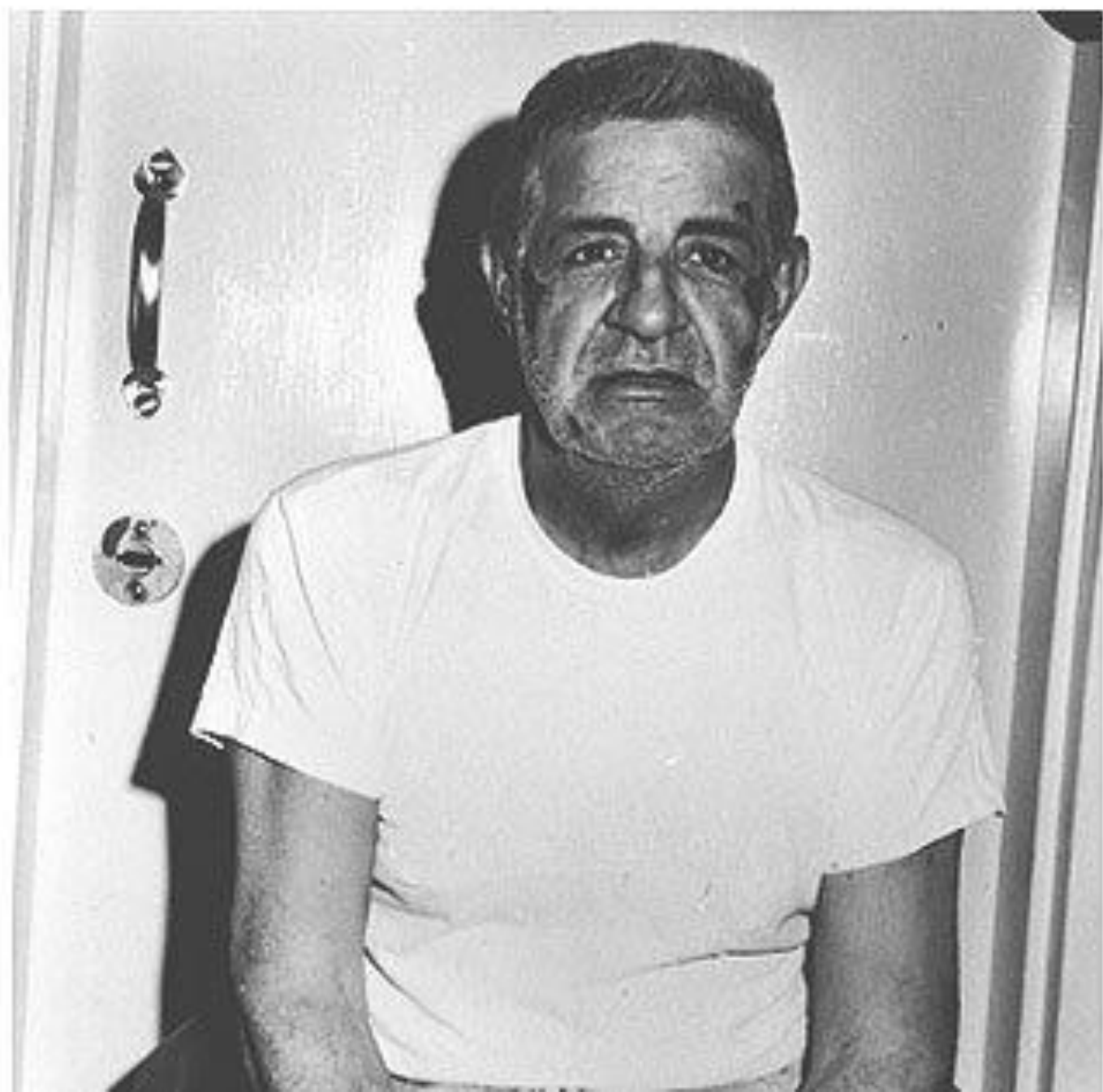
















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BARNABAS

A dramatic scene of a boxing ring. A single spotlight from the top left corner illuminates a small wooden stool positioned in the corner of the ring, where the ropes meet the wall. The rest of the ring and the background are in deep shadow, creating a high-contrast, moody atmosphere. The ropes of the ring are visible, stretching across the frame.

EVERYONE NEEDS SOMEONE IN THEIR CORNER

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Acts 9:20-25 (ESV): “Immediately [Saul] 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 8:1 (ESV): “Saul approved of [Stephen’s] execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”



Acts 9:1 (ESV): “But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”



Acts 9:3-6 (ESV): “Suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ 5 And he said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’”



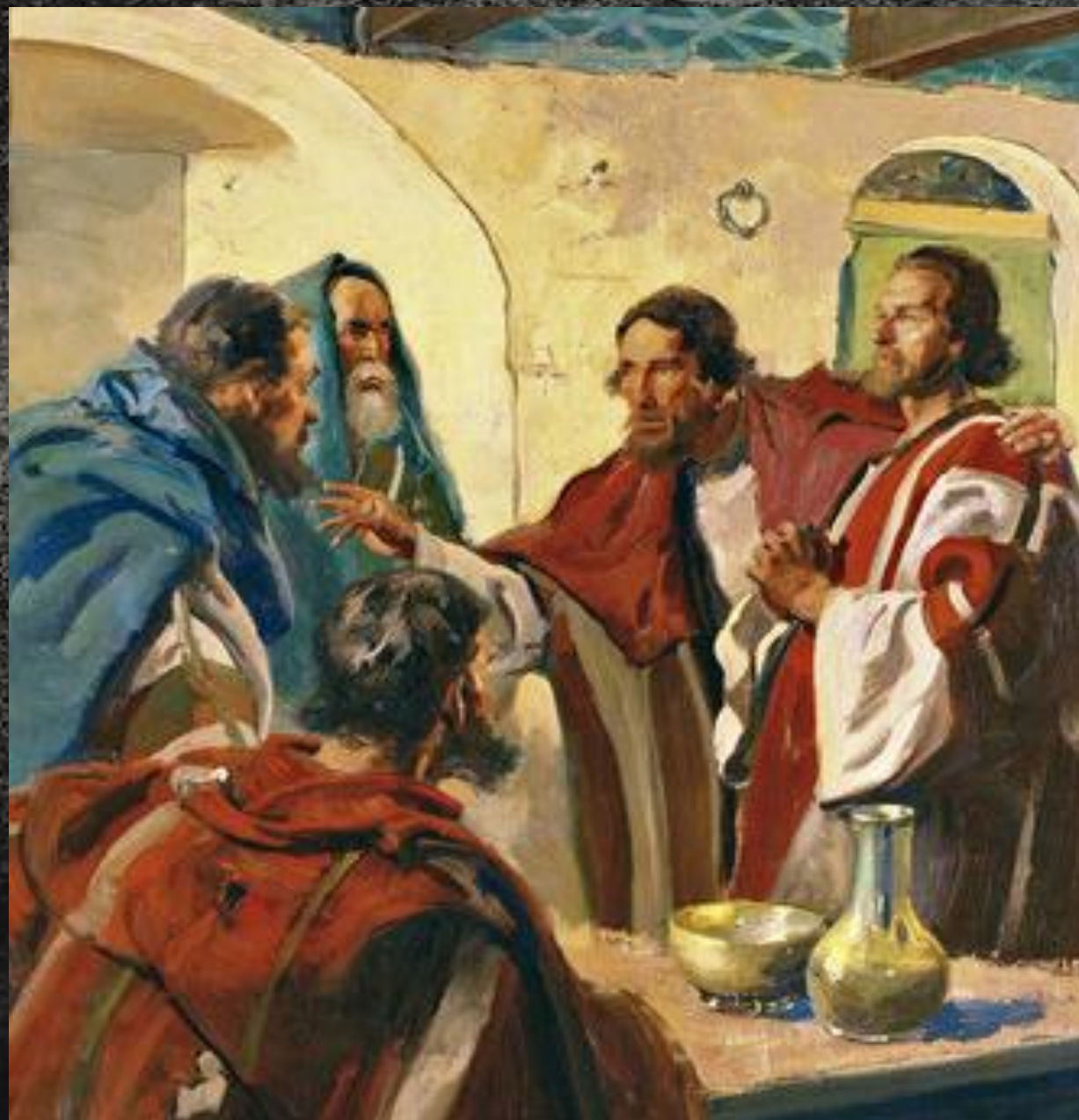


Acts 9:26-30 (ESV): And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord,..."



“...who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. 30 And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.





Acts 9:31 (ESV): “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.”



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Main Point

SMARTS

DON'T WIN

HEARTS.





“GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob not of the philosophers and of the learned. Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace.”

(From Blaise Pascal's *Memorial*, November 23, 1654)



“We know truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart, and it is in this last way that we know first principles; and reason, which has no part in it, tries in vain to impugn them. The sceptics, who have only this for their object, labour to no purpose.”

(From Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*, thought 282)



**“The heart has its reasons, which reason
does not know.”**

(From Blaise Pascal’s *Pensées*, thought 423)



Romans 14:1 (ESV): “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”



2 Timothy 2:14 (ESV): “Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.”



1 Peter 1:22 (ESV): “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.”



Acts 11:25-30 (ESV): “So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. 27 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch....”



“...28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). 29 So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. 30 And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.”





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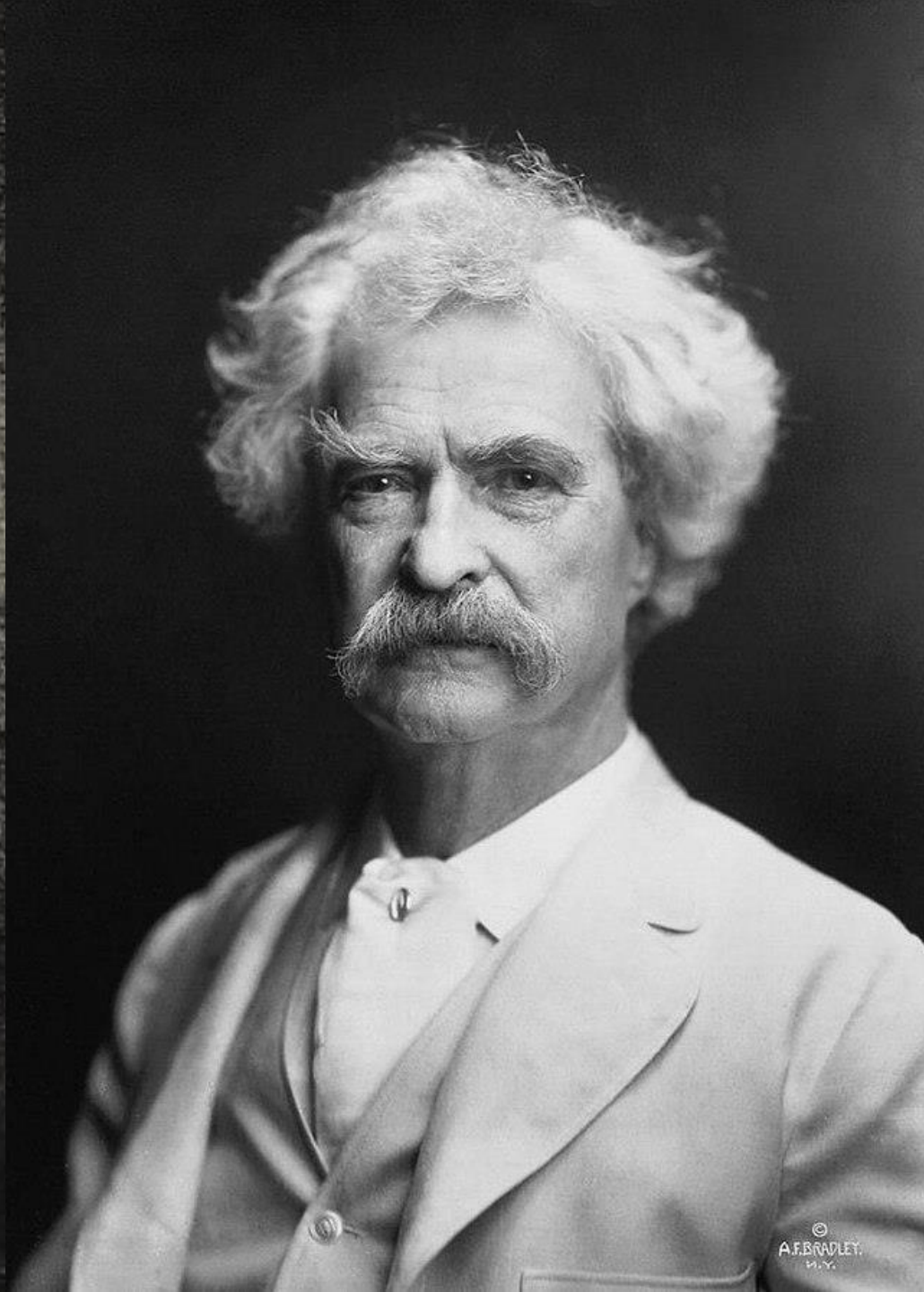
Application DON'T

BEAT 'EM;

JOIN 'EM.







“She was perhaps the only entirely unselfish person whose name has a place in profane history. No vestige or suggestion of self-seeking can be found in any word or deed of hers....[S]he was offered rewards and honors, but she refused them all, and would take nothing.”



(From the “Translator’s Preface” of Mark Twain’s
Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc)

“She was gentle and winning and affectionate, she loved her home and friends and her village life; she was miserable in the presence of pain and suffering; she was full of compassion: on the field of her most splendid victory she forgot her triumphs to hold in her lap the head of a dying enemy and comfort his passing spirit with pitying words; in an age when it was common to slaughter prisoners she stood dauntless between hers and harm, and saved them alive; she was forgiving, generous, unselfish, magnanimous;...”



“...she was pure from all spot or stain of baseness. And always she was a girl; and dear and worshipful, as is meet for that estate: when she fell wounded, the first time, she was frightened, and cried when she saw her blood gushing from her breast; but she was Joan of Arc! and when presently she found that her generals were sounding the retreat, she staggered to her feet and led the assault again and took that place by storm. There is no blemish in that rounded and beautiful character.”



(From Mark Twain's essay "Saint Joan of Arc" in the December 1904 issue of *Harper's Magazine*)



1 John 4:19-20 (ESV): “We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar.”



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A dramatic scene of a boxing ring. A single wooden stool stands in the center of the ring, which is enclosed by ropes. A bright spotlight shines down on the stool from the upper left, creating a strong contrast with the dark background of the ring and the audience area.

NEXT WEEK: ACTS 12:42-52; 15:1-12