

STRETCH

Acts Session 6
Chapters 10-11



The missionary has to wait

“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.”

Acts 9:29-31

Peter breaks through to Gentiles

- Peter's Credentials (9:32-43)
- God's Guidance (10: 1-33)
- The Gospel Message (10:34-43)
- The Spirit's Confirmation (10:44-48)
- The legalist's reaction (11: 1-3)
- The leaders response (11:4-18)
- The gentile church grows (11:19-26)

Discussion

Read Acts 9:32-43,

- *What do the two narratives remind you of?*
- *What point do you think Luke is making?*

1) Peter's Credentials (9:32-43)

- v32-35 Mirrors the healing of the paralytic man in Mark 2:1-12
- v36-43 Mirrors the healing of Jairus' daughter in Mark 5:21-43
- Peter - “Tabitha Koum”
- Jesus - “Talitha Koum”
- Peter's delegated authority (Matthew 10) in full view

The stage is set...

“And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.” Acts 9:43

- Simon – a Jewish name
- Tanner – an unclean trade – pigs hides
- The perfect *halfway house*

Discussion

Read Acts 10 v 1-33

- *How does God bring peter and Cornelius together?*
- *Why do you think God went to such great lengths to do so?*

2) God's Guidance (10: 1-33)

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a **vision an angel of God** come in and say to him, "Cornelius." And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?"

And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. **Acts 10:1-8**

Cornelius

- Centurion – A Roman Soldier. Recruits had all sworn oaths of allegiance to the divine emperor.
- Yet he was devout and feared God - Gave alms , prayed at ninth hour (Acts 3:1)
- God gives him a vision - He calls him "Lord"
- God had been watching and responds to him
- God sets up the meeting as they go (v9)

Acts 10:10-16

And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Peter

- "Rise, Peter; kill and eat"
- "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is **common** or **unclean**"
- What God has made clean, do not call common.
- An end to "clean / unclean foods" (Mark 7:19 / Romans 14:14)

Why food?

What difference does the abolition of the food law make to God's mission to the gentiles?

"And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean." **Acts 10:28**

What Law?

- Not OT law, but Jewish custom
- Deut 23:3-4 & Neh 13:1-3 excluded gentiles from the assembly
- *rabbinic law* extended the separation so that it was unlawful to accept hospitality from a gentile
- Declaring all foods clean, made it possible for Peter to accept Gentile hospitality and vice versa

Peter puts it together:

Peter's vision + Cornelius' vision

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If God is declaring all foods to be clean, then he must be proclaiming all people as "clean" (v28)

3) Peter's Message (10:34-43)

Write down main points of Peters message:

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4) The Spirit's Confirmation (10:44-48)

- *Who does the Holy Spirit come upon, what point is being made? V44, 11v18*
- The Holy Spirit confirms their genuine conversion
- They are "baptized" as on the day of Pentecost (11:15,16)

5) The legalist's reaction (11: 1-3)

"Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them."

The circumcision group

- Believed people needed to convert to Judaism and obey the law, as well as believe in Jesus.
- Legalism says "Faith in Jesus is not enough"
 - a) To be saved or
 - b) To stay saved

Paul vs Circumcision group:

- **Philippians 3:2-3** "Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh"
- **Galatians 2:21** "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose."

Legalists will always react when people they deem us "un-holy" or "unworthy" are saved. It undermines their confidence in the flesh. It smells too strongly of grace.

6) The leaders response (11:4-18)

- Peter goes through the whole story again
- Repetition = "this is important"
- Highlights – this was God's doing
- Discerning leaders will not react, but listen and look for the hand of God in a situation, even if it appears un-orthodox.
- "they glorified God"!

7) The Gentile church grows (11:19-26)

Why does the church in Antioch grow?

Saul returns...

“So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 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. **Acts 11:25-26**

What is God saying to us?

- There are people close to God but not there yet – God fearing, but not yet believing
- We must not let prejudice get in the way – but be open to the leading of God
- When we see a breakthrough that is legitimate, the Holy Spirit will confirm it, some will resist it, but godly people will rejoice at it

Lessons we learn (Stott)

- There one church - God does not have favourites (10:34)
- Equality of all believers – no place for racism, nationalism (my country first), cultural snobbery, or sexism.
- The Spirit confirms conversion
- Even devout, religious people need saving faith in Jesus