

Seeing God at Work and Liking it

Acts 10:23-48

March 8, 2020

Acts Series: Taking the Message of Jesus' Kingdom Everywhere

Acts 10 The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along.²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence.

²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean."²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor.'³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.'³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹ "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross,⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said,⁴⁷ "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.¹

¹ The New International Version. (2011): Zondervan.

1. Arriving

Acts 10:23-29

But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." Verse 26

A. Great Anticipation

Acts 10:23-26

Cornelius has an insatiable hunger and thirst for God

Peter is oddly respected

Cornelius has included his 'near and dear ones'

B. Gentle Introduction

Acts 10:27-29

I'm not supposed to be here

Why am I here? Peter starts as a listener not a teller

2. Reviewing

Acts 10:30-43

I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism Verse 34
the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all Verse 36

A. Cornelius's Story

Acts 10:30-33

God told me to get you

Cornelius' story repeated for the third time

B. Jesus' Ministry

Acts 10:34-38

From unclean food to 'Gentiles for Jesus'

Acts 10:34 reflects the truth of Acts 1:8

Favouritism προσωπολήμπτης (*prosōpolēmpētēs*) A Greek noun used only this one time in the NT. It means to show favour, partiality or greater respect. Translated: NIV, NLT, Favoritism; ESV, NASB, NKJV, Partiality; KJV, Respector of Persons. The Jewish folks looked down on all non-Jews as 'unclean' and unworthy. The Romans had levels of favor or status. Their way to get ahead was to climb over others leading to abuse and abusers. God's way is utterly remarkable as his favor and welcome is extended to all.

Peace in Jesus Christ, Lord, Healer, Commissioner, Judge, Forgiver

"everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins" (43)

C. Peter's Story

Acts 10:39-43

Bringing the message of Jesus everywhere (Acts 1:8)

Ministry is about Jesus not authority or privilege

3. Confirming

Acts 10:44-48

*Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water.
They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. Verse 47*

A. Cornelius gets it

Acts 10:44

Cornelius' search for God leads to Jesus

There is no more conversation from Cornelius

B. The 'Circumcised' Believers

Acts 10:45

Astonished at what they clearly see happening

They have become witness to Jesus' saving power

C. The Holy Spirit

Acts 10:45, 46

Immediate and overt way to confirm Cornelius is a believer

A 'Gentile Pentecost' of sorts

D. Peter Gets it

Acts 10:47, 48

Challenge: Can anyone object to their being baptized?

Peter stays with Cornelius for several days

How do we see God at work and support it?

Support

Conduct an honest search

Respond to the message of Jesus

Recognize the Presence and work of the Holy Spirit in a life

Connect with God's people

Avoid

Content testing only– this comes so easy and it has some value

Paternalism – unless you really are the parent

What do we do?

Communicating the content with our experience

Affirming, encouraging and building faith

Welcoming new believers in every way we can imagine

Study Questions

For your personal study or with family, a friend, mentor or Life Group

Beginning:

1. What insight, idea, question or principle from Sunday's message did you find most helpful, eye opening or troubling?
2. What are barriers we often see that make it difficult for new people to fit into any kind of group or organization?

Learning:

3. The thinking regarding fairness and favoritism goes deep into Israel's history. Check Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 10:17; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Psalm 82:2; Isaiah 56:7 Malachi 2:9. However it seems this was applied internally and not universally. Yet in today's passage the application is made toward all people. Check further in Romans 9:6-33; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; James 2:1-13.
4. In Peter's earlier message he quotes plenty of Scripture like in Acts 2:14-35. In this message there are no direct quotes. Yet it is full of biblical ideas. Compare today's passage with Deuteronomy 10:17-18; Psalms 15:1-2; 107:20; Isaiah 52:7; 61:1. What does this tell us about how Peter crafts his message depending on those who he is speaking to?
5. Note how Peter understands the Lordship of Jesus in Acts 2:36 in Jerusalem and then in Acts 10:36 in Caesar's city Caesarea. Jesus is Lord in both cases but neither city would be likely to agree. How does this affect how we see the Lordship of Jesus in Edmonton?
6. In Acts 2:8, 9 Pentecost was the ability to speak in languages which could be understood by those present from those different language groups (called 'xenolalia'). There is no indication in the NT this ever happened again. The 'glossalalia' in Acts 10:46 and 19:6 is more likely to have been the phenomenon described in 1 Corinthians 12-14, which required interpretation. Paul indicates this is not bestowed on all members of the church (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30). In Acts it appears that *tongues/glossalalia* did not always accompany the gift of the Spirit.²

Applying:

7. How have you experienced God responding when you have been fully intent on seeking him?
8. How could you use this Acts 10 to introduce a person to Jesus?

Praying:

10. Who created the hunger and thirst in Cornelius? What kind of hunger or thirst for God have you experienced?
11. Pray for someone who is 'near and dear' that you might have an opportunity like Cornelius had with his 'near and dear' people

² Edited by PT from Peterson, D. G. (2009). *The Acts of the Apostles* (p. 340) Eerdmans.