

EMPOWER

21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

GOD MOVES

Acts 10:1 – 11:18 (ESV)

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Jon Field, Lead Pastor

MESSAGE NOTES

... those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

– Acts 4:4 (ESV)

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. – 1 Timothy 2:3 – 4 (NIV)

Powerful Ways God Moves Us with His Grace:

- **God moves us past religious tradition into a living relationship**

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 seaside." 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 (ESV)

- **God moves us past our barriers into a life of sharing Christ**

The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. 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. Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. – Acts 10:9 – 18 (ESV)

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them ..." And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. – Acts 10:19 – 23 (ESV)

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- **God moves us past our sin through forgiveness**

And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house ..." So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him. As for the word that He sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all that He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree, but God raised Him on the third day and made Him to appear ...

– Acts 10:30 – 40 (ESV)

"To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name." – Acts 10:43 (ESV)

- **God moves us past our emptiness through His Spirit**

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" – Acts 10:44 – 47 (ESV)

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." – Acts 11:1 – 3 (ESV)

"And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction... If then God gave the same gift to them as He gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

– Acts 11:12 – 17 (ESV)

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Discussion Starter: What is the strangest food you have ever eaten?
- How does the story of the centurion display God moving people past religious tradition and into a living relationship with Christ?
- What was one of your biggest learning points from Acts 4 and why?
- What are some of the barriers that sometimes keep us from sharing Christ? In Acts what were some of the barriers keeping some of the Jewish Christians from sharing Christ with the Romans?
- Like Jonah in the Old Testament, why was Peter reluctant to share Christ with the people of Joppa?
- Read Acts 5:9 – 16. What was the significance of Peter’s vision for himself (seeing the vision three times), and what is the significance for all of us?
- Read Acts 10:34 – 36. What does the Bible mean when it says, *“God shows no partiality”*?
- Cornelius, the centurion, was very religious and had many religious traditions, but he did not know Christ personally. How is it possible to be “religious” but not know God? What does that look like in our world?
- Pastor Jon said, *“Jesus is the only way to God, and without Him people ultimately have nothing no matter how much they have, and with Him they have everything they need.”* Why do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- Pray for your friends and family who you are trying to reach for Christ. Ask God who He may want you to be inviting to Easter this year and pray for them.