

INTRODUCTION

In Acts 10, we see a turning point in the early church. Peter, a devout Jew, is challenged in his understanding of who belongs to God. Through a vision and a clear leading from the Lord, Peter is sent to the home of Cornelius – a Roman centurion living in Caesarea. By cultural and political standards, Cornelius would have been seen as an outsider, even an enemy. Yet God was already at work in his life, preparing him to receive the message of Jesus.

At the same time, God was working on Peter. In a vision, God challenged Peter’s understanding of what was “clean” and “unclean,” showing him that he could no longer reject people based on old assumptions. When Peter arrives at Cornelius’ house, he says that God has shown him not to call anyone impure or unclean. This moment didn’t just change Peter’s thinking; it opened the door for the gospel to reach people he once would have avoided.

This story is not just about Peter and Cornelius, but it also speaks to us today. We still tend to sort people into categories. Some feel easy to welcome, while others make us uncomfortable. We may not say it out loud, but we can build quiet walls based on someone’s past, their lifestyle, or their difference. When we do that, we limit what God wants to do through us. The truth is, God is still drawing people from every background, and He often uses us to reach them.

So the question is not whether God is at work, it’s whether we are willing to join Him. This week, ask God to show you any barriers in your heart and give you the courage to move toward someone you might normally avoid. The same grace that reached you is the same grace God wants to extend through you.

GETTING STARTED

1. When you enter a new environment (church, job, neighborhood), what makes you feel welcomed or unwelcome?
2. Have you ever had a first impression of someone that turned out to be completely wrong? What changed your perspective?

LET’S GET PERSONAL

1. Think about a time when you felt like you didn’t belong. What made that experience difficult?
2. In what ways have you allowed culture, background, or personal bias to shape how you see people?
3. What “walls” (emotional, spiritual, or relational) might God be asking you to tear down so you can better reflect His heart?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. How can we make our church or small group more welcoming to someone who might feel like they don't belong?
2. As you close out this time, pray together and ask God to reveal any barriers in your heart, give you His love for others, and the courage to be a bridge for the gospel this week.
3. ***Want to dig deeper?*** Take a look at the following passages: Acts 10:28; Matthew 8:5-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Ephesians 2:13; Luke 15:7.

RENEW YOUR MIND

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." – **Acts 10:28**