



THE POWER AND THE WISDOM OF GOD  
UNIT 32 • SESSION 3

# WELCOMED BY **THE GOSPEL**

MAIN POINT

**The Holy Spirit unites all believers.**

## **ACTS 10:34-43 • GOD ACCEPTS ALL PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL**

**34** Peter began to speak: “Now I truly understand that God doesn’t show favoritism, **35** but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. **36** He sent the message to the Israelites, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. **37** You know the events that took place throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John preached: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the devil, because God was with him. **39** We ourselves are witnesses of everything he did in both the Judean country and in Jerusalem, and yet they killed him by hanging him on a tree. **40** God raised up this man on the third day and caused him to be seen, **41** not by all the people, but by us whom God appointed as witnesses, 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 appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead. **43** All the prophets testify about him that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.”

## **ACTS 10:44-48 • THE SPIRIT’S PRESENCE UNITES PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL**

**44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message. **45** The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. **46** For they heard them speaking in tongues and declaring the greatness of God. Then Peter responded, **47** “Can anyone withhold water and prevent these people from being baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” **48** He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for a few days.

## **ACTS 11:1-3,15-18 • THE CHURCH CELEBRATES WHEN PEOPLE BELIEVE THE GOSPEL**

**1** The apostles and the brothers and sisters who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. **2** When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, **3** saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” . . . **15** “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us at the beginning. **16** I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ **17** If, then, God gave them the same gift that he also gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God?” **18** When they heard this they became silent. And they glorified God, saying, “So then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles.”

## 1. GOD ACCEPTS ALL PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

### READ ACTS 10:34-43

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACCEPTING PEOPLE AND EXCUSING SIN?

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HOW DOES PETER SAY ALL PEOPLE CAN BE FORGIVEN? WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

## 2. THE SPIRIT'S PRESENCE UNITES PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

### READ ACTS 10:44-48

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WHAT DID CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION DO TO THE BOUNDARY LINES PEOPLE HAD PUT IN PLACE BETWEEN GENTILES AND JEWS?

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WHAT OTHER REQUIREMENTS BESIDES BELIEVING IN CHRIST DO WE SOMETIMES PLACE ON PEOPLE BEFORE WE ACCEPT THEM INTO OUR FAITH FAMILY?



## BIG QUESTION

### DID GOD SHOW FAVORITISM TO THE JEWS?

The Israelites were God's chosen people, but we can misunderstand what this means. And maybe their misunderstanding led to prejudiced ideas as well. God chose the Hebrew people to bring about the birth of His Son and to offer salvation to the world. But this didn't mean He chose only them for salvation. In fact, many non-Israelites are even included in the genealogy of Jesus (like Tamar and Ruth)! In reading the Gospels, we see the attitude of favoritism and elitism was rampant among religious leaders. But salvation is for all people. God offered it first to the Jewish people, and then He used them to spread the gospel to the rest of the nations. Does God choose certain people to accomplish certain tasks? Yes. But all His children are His favorites!

## READ ACTS 11:1-3,15-18

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WHAT ATTITUDE DO YOU SEE IN VERSES 2-3? HOW DOES THIS ATTITUDE SHOW UP IN THE CHURCH TODAY?

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WHAT SOMETIMES KEEPS US FROM CELEBRATING WHEN SOMEONE ACCEPTS CHRIST?



ESSENTIAL  
DOCTRINE

### REPENTANCE

Repentance is a response to God's gracious call to salvation. It includes a genuine sorrow for our sin (Luke 5:1-11), a turning away from our sin toward Christ (Acts 26:15-20), and a life that reflects lasting change and transformation (Ps. 119:57-60). It is the human counterpart to God's work of regeneration; in other words, it's the human side of our conversion.



HEAD



**DO YOU HAVE A SUPERIOR MENTALITY TOWARD OTHER CULTURES OR ETHNICITIES THAT YOU NEED TO REPENT OF? EXPLAIN.**

HEART



**FAITH IN CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY TO EXPERIENCE FORGIVENESS. HOW HAVE YOU ADDED TO THE GOSPEL AND TRIED TO EARN FORGIVENESS BY OTHER MEANS?**

HANDS



**PETER'S OBEDIENCE LED TO THE SALVATION OF CORNELIUS AND EVERYONE PRESENT IN HIS HOME. WHERE DO YOU NEED TO BE OBEDIENT?**



## CHRIST CONNECTION

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Peter learned that God does not show favoritism but calls His people to proclaim the message of Jesus's death and resurrection to all people, to celebrate His work in their lives, and to welcome believers into His family, regardless of their ethnicity.



## DAILY DEVOTIONS

THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?

DAY 01

## 2 COR. 5:14-21

Imagine that you suddenly found out the cure for all disease. You'd likely run and tell everyone, especially those who could take that cure to heal others. The truth is that you have something far more important. You know the truth of the gospel. You have knowledge that could save someone's soul from an eternity separated from God. You've been brought into God's family, and you know how to lead others there as well. This is why these verses say we've been given the "ministry of reconciliation" (v. 18). We are Christ's ambassadors, sent out to bring people to Him. Because we know Jesus, we should want others to know Him as well.

**WHY DO WE OFTEN FORGET OUR MAIN ROLE: TO LEAD OTHERS TO CHRIST? WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?**

**HOW CAN YOU LIVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU ARE CHRIST'S AMBASSADOR?**

**Pray:** Praise God for saving you. Then ask Him to show you how you can live in such a way that others want to know Him.

DAY 02

## ROMANS 10:9-13

WHY DO WE COMPLICATE THE WAY TO SALVATION?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CONFESS JESUS AS LORD?

If someone asked you about salvation, what would you say? Would you be able to explain how to receive it? Sometimes we complicate it; we attach a lot of rules and hoops for people to jump through. People can often feel like they need to get their lives cleaned up before coming to Christ. But this isn't true at all. God continues to clean us up after we come to Him, but the act of coming to Him is quite easy. These verses tell us to confess Jesus as Lord and to believe in our hearts that He was raised from the dead. That's it. Salvation doesn't require a specific prayer; it's more of the posture of our hearts. We simply call out to Jesus and believe in who He is and in what He did. And anyone who calls on Christ will be saved.

**Pray:** Thank God for making a way for you to be saved. Ask Him for courage to share the way with others.

DAY 03

## LUKE 15:1-7

When Cornelius came to saving faith in Christ, the early church rejoiced. But there were some people who criticized Peter for baptizing Gentiles. They couldn't believe he would even eat dinner with them because it was against their customs. Jesus was often criticized for hanging out with sinners too. But He compared it to finding a lost sheep. A good shepherd would leave ninety-nine sheep in a field to go and find even one who was lost. We've all been the lost sheep. And heaven rejoices when even one of us is found!

DO YOU REJOICE WHEN OTHERS COME TO KNOW CHRIST? WHY OR WHY NOT?

WHAT DO YOU LEARN ABOUT GOD THAT HE LEAVES THE NINETY-NINE TO FIND THE ONE WHO IS LOST?

**Pray:** Thank God for finding you when you were lost. Praise Him for caring, and commit to rejoicing when others are found.

DAY 04

## LUKE 15:11-24

HOW DOES THE FATHER IN THE PARABLE RESEMBLE GOD THE FATHER?

WHEN HAVE YOU WANDERED AWAY LIKE THE LOST SON? HOW DID IT FEEL TO RETURN TO GOD?

Imagine being a child and wandering away from your parents in a huge crowd. You would want nothing more than to be found. In this parable, the younger son wandered away. He literally moved away and squandered his inheritance, but he also wandered away in his relationship with his father. When the son came home, he likely expected his father to be unwelcoming. He even rehearsed a speech where he begged to work as a servant. But the father met him on the road. The father ran to him, hugged him, and brought him home. Notice the father made the first move before the son repented. God does the same for us.

**Pray:** Thank God for making the first move toward you.

DAY 05

## LUKE 15:25-32

Jealousy can be a beast. Maybe you've been jealous of a sibling because they got more attention. Or maybe you felt jealous of someone on your team. Jealousy leads to bitterness; it blinds us. When the lost son returned home, the older son (the one who had remained faithful) struggled to celebrate. He was bitter over the attention his brother received and refused to even attend his brother's welcome party. But the father met him as well, explaining the need to celebrate the lost being found. Jealousy clouded the older son's vision, causing him to miss the gift of his brother returning home.

WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED WITH FEELING LIKE THE OLDER SON?

HOW COULD JEALOUSY AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO CELEBRATE WHEN OTHERS COME TO CHRIST OR DO GOOD THINGS FOR CHRIST?

**Pray:** Repent of any jealousy in your heart. Ask God to help you celebrate with the Father when the lost are found.