

A *rise* Ω

impacting our culture

LIFE
GROUPS

WEEK 22 • JULY 13



NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

Have you ever seen two people who came together as friends that were the least likely to do so? What was the situation?

BACKGROUND

Two men, living about 27 miles from each other, were the least likely to be friends, but it was to the glory of God that they came together. The first man was Cornelius, a Gentile (considered unclean by the Jews) and centurion (a captain over a hundred men) in the Roman army. He was a sincere, generous man who prayed to the one true God, unlike other centurions who were cruel and prayed to the Roman gods. The second man was Peter, an apostle of Christ since His early ministry, who ministered to the Jews by spreading the Gospel of Christ. Peter understood that the Jews were God's chosen people, and assumed they were more important to God than the Gentiles.

Both men received visions from God that guided them towards one another. Answering Cornelius's prayer, God gave him a vision of an angel telling him to send for a man named Peter, in Joppa. The next day, God gave Peter a vision that prepared his heart and mind to share the message of Christ with Cornelius. The vision included the following – a sheet from heaven filled with animals that are known to be unclean with a voice saying, *Rise Peter; kill and eat* (Acts 10:13). Initially, Peter was appalled and stated he had never eaten anything unclean. *And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common"* (v. 15). God had to show Peter this vision three times to put Peter at ease. As Peter's vision concluded, Cornelius's men showed up at Peter's residence, inquiring of him. Knowing that Peter may have been fearful, the spirit encouraged him to receive the men and invite them in. This is when Peter hears of Cornelius's vision and his desire to hear from him.

The next day, Peter went with the men to Cornelius's home and entered it. In that moment, Peter walked in the truth of God that no one is unclean or impure, which was the exact opposite of Jewish tradition to not associate with Gentiles. Peter stated that *"Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him"* (vv. 34-35). He continued to share his history with Christ and the forgiveness of sins through His name. Upon hearing Peter's message, all the Gentiles in attendance began speaking in tongues as the Holy Spirit poured out on them. This was further affirmation that even Gentiles could be saved.

Peter stayed with them for a while but then traveled to Jerusalem where others had heard of this occurrence. It was there that Peter shared the full occurrence and encouraged his fellow believers that God had granted repentance for Gentiles as well.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Acts 10:15b

“What God has made clean, do not call common.”

READ: Acts 10:1-11:18



HEAD LEVEL: *What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.*

1. Who are we introduced to in Acts 10:1? What was his spiritual state?
2. How did Cornelius and Peter respond to their visions?
3. What did Peter say, in Acts 10:34-35, that sweeps away centuries of racial prejudice on the part of the Jews?
4. How did Peter respond to others' criticism in Acts 11:4-17?

DEEPER DISCOVERY

- What do we learn about Jewish dietary restrictions from Leviticus 11:43-47
- What did Jesus teach about Jewish dietary laws in Mark 7:17-23?



HEART LEVEL: *What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.*

1. Regarding Peter's heritage and upbringing, what was the significance of Peter's interaction with Cornelius?
2. Why do you believe it was important that Peter shared with Cornelius about Christ's ministry (before he died on the cross) in Acts 10:36-38?
3. Why do you think Peter took six people with him to Cornelius's house (Acts 11:12)?



 **HANDS LEVEL:** *What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.*

1. God prepared the hearts of both Cornelius and Peter – Cornelius to receive Peter’s message, and Peter to give Cornelius the message.
 - Do you have confidence that God will –
 - Lead you to those who need to hear?
 - Prepare their hearts to hear the message?
 - How does this thought change your attitude toward ‘witnessing’ for Him?
2. Peter did not go alone to Cornelius’ house. How have you seen the benefit of ministering with other believers instead of doing it alone? Who can you be ministering with?

 **MEMORY VERSE:** Acts 10:34-35
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.

PRAYER REQUESTS

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)