

# 11

## GOD SHOWS NO FAVORITISM

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ACTS 9:32-10:48



Racism. Tribalism. Sexism. Cultural snobbery. Various types of discrimination have a great hold on the church and great power to destroy the unity of the body of Christ. This was as true of the early church as it is today. Through the conversion of a centurion, God demonstrated irrevocably that he does not make distinctions in his kingdom. Therefore, we have *no right* to make distinctions either. The fact that we do not practice complete equality as members of the church of Christ grossly misunderstands the gospel and insults the One who established it. For, *God does not show favoritism*.

### ONE HEALED, ANOTHER RAISED (9:32-43)

1. Read Acts 9:32-43. How was the power of God demonstrated in this passage? What was the result of the demonstration of this power?

### A VISION OF A NEW HUMANITY (10:1-23)

The Roman Empire was built on relentless military power. Cornelius was a centurion, a middle-ranking Roman military officer with a hundred men under him. He was posted at Caesarea, a key port in a key strategic zone. But this man was not your average officer.

2. Read Acts 10:1-23. According to verse 2, what evidence was there in the character of Cornelius that the Holy Spirit was working in him?

3. What do you learn about God's character from his response to Cornelius through the angel?
4. How did God prep Peter for Cornelius? What would the command in verse 15 have meant to Peter?

## PETER'S SERMON TO THE GENTILES (10:24-48)

The differences between Saul and Cornelius were considerable. In race Saul was a Jew, Cornelius a Gentile; in culture Saul was a scholar, Cornelius a soldier; in religion Saul was a bigot, Cornelius a seeker. Yet both were converted by the gracious initiative of God; both received forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit; both were baptized and welcomed into the Christian family on equal terms. This fact is a signal testimony to the power and impartiality of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. According to verses 24-26, what evidence is there that Cornelius expected God to work?
6. What would have been the consequence if Peter or Cornelius had not obeyed God?
7. What is the message that God has for Cornelius (vv. 33-43)?
8. How do you see unity between people from different cultures and races lived out in our church? Describe the challenges to preserving that unity?