

Acts 9:32-10:33: “Gentiles Hear the Good News”

Walking Through Acts; 11:15AM Class

December 13, 2020 – Outline & Scripture

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 9:32-10:33.

2. Review Acts 9:1-31.

3. Discuss Miracles Through Peter: Acts 9:32-43

- Lydda (Judean city): Peter heals Aeneas to great evangelistic effect
- Joppa (coastal): since Peter’s close by, they urge him to see Dorcas
- With Prayer, Dorcas was revived; many believed in the Lord
- Simon, a tanner: tanning hides = unclean profession in Jewish law
- What gifts of the Spirit do you notice in this passage? What does this teach us about the importance of the body of believers?*
- Who is sick among you that you could offer prayer to this week?*
- Why do you think we see so often in Acts that the church grows through miracles and wonders? Why do you think we seem to see few such events now?*
- Peter stays with Simon the tanner, a Jewish man whose employment makes him ritually unclean. How do you explain Peter’s openness to such a man?*

4. Discuss Cornelius and his request for Peter: Acts 10:1-8

—Cornelius:

Roman (Italian)

centurion: over 100; stationed in Caesarea, north up the coast from Joppa
a “God-fearer,” a Gentile who seeks to worship the Jewish God

- Vision received in mid-afternoon about God’s grace and Peter’s location
- Cornelius sends messengers to Peter in Joppa
- Why Cornelius? Are there any reasons why this man would make a great choice for being the first Gentile to trust Jesus?*
- Cornelius isn’t the only Roman centurion responsive to the true God. Read Luke 7:1-10. Compare and contrast the two. What can we learn from them?*

5. Discuss the vision given to Peter, and his response: Acts 10:9-23a

- Peter’s vision given three times for emphasis: *Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean.* (v.15)
- Peter takes the next step of faith; he and 6 others (Acts 11:12) go to Caesarea
- Peter makes a connection between the vision and his visit to Cornelius
- It can be difficult for us to appreciate how strong the Jewish prejudices are against Gentiles. What other parallels can you think of that help us here?*

6. Discuss the meeting up of Cornelius and Peter: Acts 10:23b-33

- Perfect timing: Cornelius’ messengers arrive at conclusion of vision
- Cornelius waits for Peter (with his family and friends) and confirms what God is doing in his life.

—*Cornelius shows great faith. Who would you invite to hear a message from the Lord today? Who might be ‘impure’ or ‘unclean’ among you that you would include?*

—*How significant is this gathering in Christian history? What are the continuing effects of this opening? What does this event say to us about the priorities of the Christian faith?*

7. Discussion and Close

—*What stands out as worthy of more investigation/conversation?*

—*How can your gifts (of prayer, healing, hospitality, mercy, etc.) benefit the body of believers and unbelievers this week?*

—*Who have you deemed ‘impure’ or ‘unclean’ among you that God calls clean?*

The Scripture: Acts 9:32-10:38 (NLT)

Meanwhile, Peter traveled from place to place, and he came down to visit the believers in the town of Lydda. ³³ There he met a man named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. ³⁴ Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up, and roll up your sleeping mat!” And he was healed instantly. ³⁵ Then the whole population of Lydda and Sharon saw Aeneas walking around, and they turned to the Lord.

³⁶ There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor. ³⁷ About this time she became ill and died. Her body was washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room. ³⁸ But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, “Please come as soon as possible!”

³⁹ So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them. ⁴⁰ But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, “Get up, Tabitha.” And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up! ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive.

⁴² The news spread through the whole town, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ And Peter stayed a long time in Joppa, living with Simon, a tanner of hides.

10 In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer named Cornelius, who was a captain of the Italian Regiment. ² He was a devout, God-fearing man, as was everyone in his household. He gave generously to the poor and prayed regularly to God. ³ One afternoon about three o’clock, he had a vision in which he saw an angel of God coming toward him. “Cornelius!” the angel said.

⁴ Cornelius stared at him in terror. “What is it, sir?” he asked the angel.

And the angel replied, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have been received by God as an offering! ⁵ Now send some men to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore.”

⁷ As soon as the angel was gone, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier, one of his personal attendants. ⁸ He told them what had happened and sent them off to Joppa.

⁹ The next day as Cornelius's messengers were nearing the town, Peter went up on the flat roof to pray. It was about noon, ¹⁰ and he was hungry. But while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. ¹² In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. ¹³ Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat them."

¹⁴ "No, Lord," Peter declared. "I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean."

¹⁵ But the voice spoke again: "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean." ¹⁶ The same vision was repeated three times. Then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven.

¹⁷ Peter was very perplexed. What could the vision mean? Just then the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house. Standing outside the gate, ¹⁸ they asked if a man named Simon Peter was staying there.

¹⁹ Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Three men have come looking for you. ²⁰ Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I have sent them."

²¹ So Peter went down and said, "I'm the man you are looking for. Why have you come?"

²² They said, "We were sent by Cornelius, a Roman officer. He is a devout and God-fearing man, well respected by all the Jews. A holy angel instructed him to summon you to his house so that he can hear your message." ²³ So Peter invited the men to stay for the night. The next day he went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa.

²⁴ They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human being just like you!" ²⁷ So they talked together and went inside, where many others were assembled.

²⁸ Peter told them, "You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean. ²⁹ So I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me."

³⁰ Cornelius replied, "Four days ago I was praying in my house about this same time, three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, a man in dazzling clothes was standing in front of me. ³¹ He told me, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been noticed by God! ³² Now send messengers to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. He is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore.' ³³ So I sent for you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here, waiting before God to hear the message the Lord has given you."