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The Problem With Pride and Prejudice

Acts 10

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Then the time had come for the Gospel to be proclaimed to people outside of these areas. It was time for the Gospel to be offered to the Gentiles.

Even though Paul, was commissioned by the Lord to be the apostle to the Gentiles, it was actually Peter who broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile.

This lesson pertains to Chapter 10 of Acts and records events that occurred around A.D. 40. We find Peter in Joppa at the home of Simon the tanner. While there, a Roman centurion by the name of Cornelius, who lives up the coast in Caesarea, is visited by an angel of the Lord in a vision and instructs him to send some of his men to Joppa and bring Peter back with them.

Meanwhile, Peter, who is praying on the rooftop of Simon's home, has a vision of a large sheet descending from heaven filled with a number of unclean animals. He is instructed by a heavenly voice to kill and eat, but Peter resists. The voice explains that what God has cleansed is no longer to be considered unclean and then instantly the sheet ascends into the sky. It is at this point that Peter has to deal with his pride and prejudice!

God is not partial! The message of the Cross not only reconciles humans to God but provides the basis for all people of every race to become one in Christ. The task of every Christian is first: glory God, second: love their neighbor and third: proclaim the Gospel. Jesus demonstrated that all personal relationships were to be based on love.

Scripture does not contain any clear definition of race; rather it refers to nations, tribes, tongues, and peoples. Yet racial prejudices have continued throughout the centuries...up to today. We must avoid any thought that God approves prejudice of anyone based on their race.

In Acts 1-7, the Christian church was born and established in Jerusalem. Shortly thereafter, opposition to the Gospel arose and persecution scattered the believers in Judea and Samaria.



“About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray”

EXAMINE His Word (Observation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in these passages.

Read Acts 10 (NIV)

¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

¹⁴ "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are

looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along.

²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea.

Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has

10. How did Peter relate the vision that he received in Joppa to Cornelius? (Verses 27-35)

11. Peter's sermon in (Vs 34-43), is the first sermon in Acts given exclusively to Gentiles. List the key points.

12. What event happened to the listeners that helped them understand Peter's sermon? (Verse 44)

13. Having received the Holy Spirit, what act of testimony did Peter recommend? (Verse 47)

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application)

Why does this MATTER to me?

14. In what ways has God revealed His purpose and plan for your life?

15. How willing are you to share the Gospel with those who come from different cultures?

16. (Personal) List the names of family members and friends that the Lord has laid on your heart to hear about Christ. Will you obey?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

SERMON NOTES