

"Peter's Ministry"

Part 5

Acts 10

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we stopped on Acts 10:9. The scene is one of God working in the lives of several people to orchestrate a meeting that would prove to be very significant. It is a meeting between Peter and a Roman Centurion named Cornelius. The two men were about 34 miles apart but God was working in each man's life in preparation for this meeting. This meeting that will take place is especially important because this will be when the door is opened to the Gentiles to be members of the body of Jesus Christ. What happens in this chapter is what Paul wrote about in his letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:12-14

¹² That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Ephesians 3:6

⁶ That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Last week we looked at an application in what we see as God works in lives of Peter and Cornelius and that lesson was that God works on both ends when He is planning a meeting between two people. This evening we are going to continue from where we stopped to see how God is going to prepare Peter for what is about to happen.

➤ **The Gentiles and the Body of Christ**
Part 3

Notice Acts 10:9-12

As Peter is on the roof praying, he falls into a trance in which he was shown a vision of a sheet/sail that had all kinds of animals on it. Some believe the animals were all unclean and some believe there were both clean and unclean on the sheet. Notice Vine's definition of a trance:

"a condition in which ordinary consciousness and the perception of natural circumstances were withheld, and the soul was susceptible only to the vision imparted by God."

God put Peter in this trance because He wanted to be sure Peter would understand the lesson in all of this. Peter was shocked by what he saw on the sheet. In Leviticus 11 there is a list of clean and unclean animals and Peter was fully aware of the list. He knew what the Law said.

Notice Acts 10:13-16

Peter was commanded to kill and eat but he refused because he knew what the Law said in Leviticus 11. The word "common" here means "defiled." Under the Law certain animals were considered unclean and defiled. God was showing Peter that those things which were once considered unclean and undefiled were now cleansed.

There is a question that comes into my mind here, "Why were the Jews forbidden to eat certain animals?" The Law was given to set Israel apart from the Gentile world. They were God's people and so they were to be seen as different.

Leviticus 11:44-47

⁴⁴ For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

⁴⁵ For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

⁴⁶ This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth:

⁴⁷ To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.

This is why it was not permitted for the Jew to dine with a Gentile.

Matthew 9:10-11

10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

Now let us understand that the taking off the restrictions of the food here in Acts 10 was an allowance to associate with the Gentiles. There would no longer be a need to stay separated from them. This is the very point God was communicating to Peter. In the body of Jesus Christ, we are all one.

Ephesians 2:13-19

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

This is the Truth God was giving to Peter but at the time of the vision Peter did not grasp this Truth but he would soon. For a moment I want to consider Peter's response to the command to kill and eat.

Notice Acts 10:14 again.

Peter is a man that gives to each of us great encouragement. This would prove to be the third time Peter pushed back against the Lord. Let us notice the other two times.

Matthew 16:21-23

²¹ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

²² Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

²³ But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Peter attempted to stand between Jesus and the cross. Our Lord was quick to rebuke Peter because He loved him and Peter needed to hear the Truth.

John 13:6-9

⁶ Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

⁷ Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

⁸ Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

⁹ Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Peter pushed back against the Lord when Jesus wanted to wash the disciple's feet. Then we come to Acts 10 and we see Peter refusing to be obedient to the Lord's command. What Peter says is completely wrong. He says, "Not so, LORD." This statement contradicts itself because if Jesus was his Lord, then his response should have been, "Let it be according to your will LORD." Based upon the other two times that Peter pushed back we might expect to hear Jesus say, "Peter I have had enough of your resistance." But our Savior is very patient and longsuffering.

Application:

How encouraging this is for us because we too are so much like Peter. We have never done everything that the Lord has commanded us to do. We often put Him off until later, or we just flat out refuse to walk in obedience. We often walk in our will and not His. We are all guilty of living for the moment because we do not fully understand that God is working in our lives for something greater. But He never leaves us and He is longsuffering with us and continues to work in our lives.

Philippians 1:6

⁶ Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Notice Acts 10:17-20

Peter did not yet understand what God was doing. His responsibility at this time was not to understand what was about to happen but his responsibility was to simply walk in obedience, exercise faith in God, and not doubt.

Application:

Many people who have made a significant difference for God have been called to do as Peter did. They were called to walk by faith, not doubt, trust God with what He was doing, and they had no idea how it was all going to work out. Let us notice a few examples:

➤ **Noah**

Genesis 6:13-18

¹³ And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

¹⁴ Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

¹⁵ And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

¹⁶ A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

¹⁷ And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

¹⁸ But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

➤ **Abraham**

Genesis 12:1-5

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, *Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:*

² *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

³ *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

⁴ *So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

⁵ *And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

➤ **Peter and Andrew**

Matthew 4:18-20

¹⁸ *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.*

¹⁹ *And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

²⁰ *And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

➤ **Matthew**

Matthew 9:9

⁹ *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.*

Conclusion:

We too are called of God to walk by faith and be obedient. Ours is not to question how or why, but just to put one foot in front of another and do what God gives us to do.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*