

Amazing Adventures of Peter the Apostle: ACTS 10:1-48

Have you ever avoided someone because of your personal prejudices? God works to remove any of our cultural and personal prejudices that would prevent us from helping any person who is seeking God. Do you have any cultural or personal prejudices that are a barrier between you and someone different who is like this “God-fearing” Cornelius?

10:1-23a: Divine Appointment

God brought together Philip and the Ethiopian. Now the Holy Spirit brings together Peter and Cornelius. These are divine appointments. These are supernatural arrangements involving angels, visions, and the Holy Spirit. Expect supernatural guidance from the Holy Spirit. The HS does the same thing for me and you. It has now happened to me three times at High Point Fitness when I wasn't expecting to meet anyone.

What's happening to Peter? God is breaking his prejudices - his cultural and personal prejudices. God is breaking him free from the Jewish customs that separate him from “unclean” Gentiles. God is breaking Peter free so he can obey Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.

We see this happening in two incidents.

First, Peter is staying with Simon the tanner. Tanning is an “unclean” and putrid profession. That's why Simon the tanner lives by the sea to dispose of the byproducts of tanning animal skins.

**Picture of tanning pits – “It smells like 1000 dead goats!”*

Second, a vision that looks like the Wuhan Seafood Market with reptiles, bats, snakes, pangolins (armadillos), and pigs. “Rise, Peter, kill and eat.” Peter's problem was eating, not killing. So, Peter declined to kill and eat. God said, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” (The meaning of *common* is profane - dirty, unholy, unhealthy, unsanitary.) I felt like Peter the first time I saw chicken feet in HK.

Q: Why does God use “unclean” animals in the sheet and not people? Why does God show it to Peter 3X?

**You may find the pictures of eating bats repulsive and disgusting. That's how Peter felt when he was told to kill and eat unclean animals.*

The animal vision is extremely detestable and offensive to Peter! Therefore, by contrast, different people with different customs are much less offensive. “Unclean” people don’t look so bad when contrasted with detestable animals. 3X is just for emphasis so he won’t forget it.

10:23b-33: Interpreting the Vision

Have you ever awoken from a dream and said to yourself, “What does it mean?” Or you can only remember parts of the dream.

When the Holy Spirit gives a dream or vision sometimes the meaning is obvious and sometimes it needs careful interpretation or it awaits another event to make it clear; for example, servants from a Roman centurion to knock on your door (10:19-23). NOW Peter understood the animals represented people after the servants of the Roman centurion visited him.

*Maybe he was the same Roman centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant: Luke 7:1-10. It’s not likely there was more than one Roman centurion who loved Israel and Jewish people, gave alms, and helped build a synagogue.

10:34-48: The Message

Cornelius and his family were not saved by their good works (10:4). Doing good works and seeking to know God prepared the way for him to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who is God the Son.

The content of Peter’s message:

Peter said Cornelius already heard about Jesus Christ from the beginning of His ministry in Galilee. Jesus was anointed with the HS and power and healed people and freed people from demonic possession. He was crucified and raised from death on the third day and appeared to witnesses. The OT prophets give witness to Christ. Believe in Christ and receive forgiveness of sins.

It’s a simple message. There’s no complex theology or theory of the atonement. (That will come later in the epistles of Peter and Paul.)

This is really all you need to know and believe (believe = personal commitment) to be baptized in water and the Holy Spirit.

They believe Peter’s message about Jesus. The HS responded to their faith and they were baptized in the HS with evidence of speaking in tongues.

Then they are baptized in water. (No waiting. No baptism class.) This order is not normative. It's exceptional because God wanted to show Peter He accepted their faith in Christ so it had to happen the same way it happened for him at Pentecost (Acts 2).

The GR *βαπτίζω* refers to immersion in water. (Comes from a verb "to dip" in water.) Being baptized in the HS is immersion in the HS. It is an internal, not external immersion - an infilling. HS baptism is an infilling experience that takes place when we open our lives to God without reservation, and we ask Him to baptize (immerse-fill) us with His HS.

I ask for this infilling every morning. I pray, "HS fill me with the fruit of your character – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and empower me to do the works Jesus did for the glory of Father God." (This is praying scripture: Galatians 5:22-23 & John 14:12-14.)

Concluding Lesson:

God works to remove any of our cultural and personal prejudices that would prevent us from helping any person who is seeking God. Do you have any cultural or personal prejudices that are a barrier between you and someone different who is like this "God-fearing" Cornelius?

Black Fist - White Knuckles @ Life Church. We may have cultural and personal prejudices that keep us from treating other people as made in the image of God and sharing the Gospel with them.