

Peter: From Kosher to Non-Kosher

Acts 10:9-48 – April 18, 2010 – Evening Service

James 4:4

I Corinthians 5:9-10

Matthew 9:10-13

Luke 9:5

Matthew 5:44

➤ **The Setting – Caesarea by the Sea**

Acts 10:1-8

➤ **Physical Hunger on a _____**

Acts 10:9-23

The unclean animals represent _____

The ceremonially clean animals represent _____

The sheet represents the _____

Concerning the dietary laws ...

➤ **Spiritual Hunger in a _____**

Acts 10:24-35

- They all had a sense of God's _____
- They were all present for the _____ reason
- They all had an _____
for the message

The message of the gospel

God is interested in _____

God never did nor ever will justify _____
who lives a life of disobedience – including a Jew!

God never did nor ever will reject a repentant _____

➤ **Hunger _____ in the Soul**

Acts 10:36-48

Four elements of Peter's message

1ST – Jesus _____

2ND – Jesus _____

3RD – Jesus is _____

I Corinthians 15:3-4

4TH – Jesus _____

What We Learn

The only good listener is an _____ listener

Acts 10:33

Peter: From Kosher to Non-Kosher

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Intro: Overcoming prejudice and bias is one of the most challenging things for the vast majority of people even Christians. God throughout the centuries has worked to break down the walls of prejudice.

The wall of prejudice between Jews and Gentiles was the most important wall to be removed for the sake of the gospel and the spread of the gospel. And it was a huge wall. One of the reasons it was huge – Jews thought they were at a peak of spirituality by their attitude towards Gentiles and separation from Gentiles.

Parallel

It takes discernment and wisdom for the believer in every generation to be separate from the world but not cut off from the world

Observe the need for discernment ...

James 4:4

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

“friendship with the world” ... accepting their values, tolerating “in the name of Christ” that which we know is sin.

I Corinthians 5:9-10

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;
5:10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.

“immoral people” – disassociating with those who claim to be born-again Christians – but living a lifestyle that clearly is non-Christian.

Matthew 9:10-13

Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.
9:11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?”
9:12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.
9:13 “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Jesus associated with sinners so they could see Him as living differently, living holy, living in such a way that they would listen to His message about repentance and come to Him for salvation. He did not associate with them so they’d be comfortable in their sin.

Christ’s associating with sinners was **DOCTOR/PATIENT** in design – not **BUDDY/BUDDY** in design.

An interesting question ...

How long do you associate with unbelievers before you come to the point and say – *enough!*

Luke 9:5

“And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

However you personally decide the case on this ... don't forget ...

Matthew 5:44

“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Transition: Some of the hardest people to move out of prejudice were the disciples. They associated their spirituality to their separation from Gentiles. That perception had to change. And the Lord in His all-wise manner and gracious workings did just this in Acts 10.

➤ **The Setting – Caesarea by the Sea**

Acts 10:1-8

Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,

10:2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

10:3 About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, “Cornelius!”

10:4 And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

10:5 “Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter;

10:6 he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.”

10:7 When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants,

10:8 and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

I love the story of Cornelius. Maybe it is because it doesn't fit precisely in my theology.

Romans 3:10

as it is written, “There is none righteous, not even one;

3:11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;

3:12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one.”

Here is a Gentile who does not have any righteousness before God ... but a Gentile who is called “*a devout man and one who feared God*”

Transition: But let's talk about this later. For Cornelius needs someone to share the gospel with he and his friends and family. An angel will not be God's ambassador for salvation.

What is so wonderful to imagine ... and what clearly is going on ... is the excitement and anticipation of Cornelius for what he is going to hear from a messenger. He's not sending his servants to get a news report so he can be up to date on what is happening in the world. He's sending his servants to get someone who can give him news about the needs of his soul. I love that! And this is all before the gospel is even given. He's excited to hear what he hasn't even heard yet.

My friends, there are people in the world who have the same spiritual yearning. I will grant that most of those who will be saved are disinterested until they hear the gospel ... but there are also those in every generation and all over the world today ... who are interested in the gospel before they have even heard of the gospel.

Transition: But before Peter will accept an invitation by Gentiles ... he's got to overcome a huge mountain of prejudice. And God has a unique way of teaching him this.

➤ **Physical Hunger on a ROOF**

Acts 10:9-16

On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

10:10 But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;

10:11 and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,

10:12 and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.

10:13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"

10:14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

10:15 Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

10:16 This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

We may not think Jews associating with Gentiles is much of a problem ... but it certainly was then.

When is the best time to get someone's attention? When they are in need!

God used Peter's hunger to keep him focused in a teaching moment.

Observe

The unclean animals represent **GENTILES**

The ceremonially clean animals represent **JEWS**

The sheet represents the **CHURCH**

God is saying that even the unclean things, i.e. the Gentiles, are still God's. They were not despised and rejected people. They were not out of God's care and favor because Jews were in God's favor.

Concerning the dietary laws ...

- Were given to protect the **HEALTH** of the Jews

- They were **TEMPORARY**
- They were originally given by God to be **EDUCATIONAL** in the future – this very time!
- They were designed for the **ENTRANCE** of Gentiles into God’s special favor

Observe

Peter is not given an option – he is given a command

“Peter, kill and eat!”

One of the ways to impress someone of the importance of something ...

TELL THEM THREE TIMES!

Compare: Wives and husbands ...

Wives ... you learned this principle with your husband.

- ✓ Men need to hear something repeated at least two times before they truly hear.
- ✓ I cannot hear ... so this principle doesn’t apply to me.

Research has shown that women audibly speak twice as many words as men ...

(Facebook Dialogue)

My daughter-in-law, recently wrote ... *“I figured out why women speak twice as much as men, we’re constantly having to repeat ourselves.”*

My son, responded:

“Don’t tell us the first time and then you won’t have to repeat yourself.”

My daughter-in-law’s friend Michelle responded ...

I have found that if I wait a minute after my husband hears and says huh, instead of repeating, his brain catches up and processes what I said and then he answers.

Her husband Sam then said ...

“Huh” is an automated response by men to filter out questions so that it will cause women to think about what was asked and rephrase the question in a way that actually makes sense.

My daughter Jaime chimed in ...

“I normally say Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, until I have his full attention. Then I don’t have to repeat myself because he hears me the first time. However, I do end up getting in my daily word allotment due to the constant name repeating.”

My son responded to his sister ...

“Jaime, if I was Bryan...I would probably change my name, and take you out at the knees”

The Lord made Peter experience the same vision three times ... so he’d listen and get it!

Peter, like you and I, liked to be an advisor to the Lord of the universe.

Acts 10:14

“... By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.”

What we observe about Peter

He's a changed man ... but just like you and me ... God has more changes to work in his life.

Notice a paradox

In one breath he acknowledges that God is Lord ...

And in the next he refuses to obey – *“by no means, Lord.”*

Parallel in our lives

When God's commands are understood ... there is something in our rebellious hearts at times that let us think we can call Jesus, Lord, and not obey Him!

Transition: God ordered these events perfectly so that the vision is immediately followed by the arrival of Gentile visitors at the home of a Jew.

Acts 10:17-19

Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate;

10:18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.

10:19 While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you.

To remove Peter's stubbornness ...

The Spirit of God said to him ...

Acts 10:20

“But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself.”

The Lord is clear ... He has sent them!

He's behind this lesson.

God is initiating a change in Judaism ...

God's dietary laws were not designed to be permanent ... whereas others laws were.

God's moral law remains intact permanently

God's dietary laws were not

Acts 10:23

So he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Transition: Peter went willingly ... and additional Jews would come to give witness to what would follow. The physical hunger on the roof changes to ...

➤ **Spiritual Hunger in a HOME****Acts 10:24-27**

On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

10:25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.

10:26 But Peter raised him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am just a man.”

10:27 As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled.

What an amazing thing

Cornelius had all his relatives and friends at the house anticipating the arrival of someone he thought would be divine – someone to be worshipped.

There is great excitement and anxiety at this home.

There is clearly a spiritual hunger that longed to be satisfied.

Don't miss this

The credibility of Cornelius was so strong that his family and friends would drop everything – longing for whatever he longed for – desiring whatever he desired – hoping for whatever he hoped for. What a precious thing.

Here's a man of authority ... who just about everyone would stoop to and wait on ... bowing down to Peter. Something is going on in his heart ... and it is displayed in his action. But it's inappropriate for him to bow before a human being and Peter tells him ... “*stand up; I too am just a man.*”

- Peter clearly did not give any hint of being the Pope.
- He would not let anyone bow down to him.
- He did not claim papal authority

So he tells Peter tells them his story from the day before ...

Observe

Cornelius is still holding on to some remnants of his pagan religion – the worship of men. That's why he would bow down to Peter. He's got something to learn about the preeminence of Christ and Christ alone.

Peter's dialogue ... begins with an apology ...

Acts 10:28-29

And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

10:29 “That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me.”

In other words ...

He's candid about his prejudice ...

He tells them just a few days before ... he considered a Gentile house DIRTY – UNCLEAN (He didn't read the best seller – *HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE NEIGHBORS*)

And maybe this is an inaccurate perception ... but it looks to me like he then says ...
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?

In verses 30-32 ... Cornelius tells Peter his story ... and ends by saying ...

Acts 10:33

“So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

I love what Cornelius said

“we are all here present before God to hear ALL that you have been commended by the Lord”

He DOESN'T say ...

Tell us what we *want* to hear ...

Make sure it is only good news ... and delete the negative. Tells us the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

He DOES say ...

Tell us what we *need* to hear ... we want to hear everything we need know

Notice

- ✓ They all had a sense of God's **PRESENCE**
- ✓ They were all present for the **SAME** reason
- ✓ They all had an **OPEN HEART** for the message

THEY DID NOT WANT ANOTHER BELIEF SYSTEM TO ADD TO THEIR PREVIOUS BELIEF SYSTEM.

They wanted to KNOW the truth and how to RECEIVE the truth

A good picture of what it is involved in salvation

You do not come to salvation picking and choosing what you want to believe ... what you want to accept. You accept the gospel in total not in part!

Peter finally gets to the point ...

Acts 10:34-35

Opening his mouth, Peter said: “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,
10:35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him

The message of the gospel

- God is interested in **EVERYONE**

10:34 – “*God is not one to show partiality*”

- God never did nor ever will justify **ANYONE** who lives a life of disobedience – including a Jew!

Fearing God and doing what is right is part of salvation

10:35 – “*but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him*”

- God never did nor ever will reject a repentant **GENTILE**

Transition: Peter follows this with the gospel ...

➤ **Hunger SATISFIED in the Soul**

What Peter makes perfectly clear ... the gospel is centered on the Person of Christ!

Acts 10:36

“The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)

Four elements of Peter’s message

1ST – Jesus **LIVED**

Peter affirms and they cannot deny the absolute historical truth of Christ’s existence and life

“... *you know Jesus of Nazareth*”

He’s been news all over this nation for years! You can’t deny it.
There is no question about His special character

Acts 10:37

You yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.

Acts 10:38

You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

2ND – Jesus **DIED**

Acts 10:39

“We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.

3RD – Jesus is **ALIVE**

Acts 10:40

“God raised Him up on the third day ...

Observation:

Every single sermon in the Book of Acts includes mention of the resurrection. All this to say, unless the resurrection is preached – the gospel has not truly been declared.

If someone professes some kind of faith in Jesus ... thinking He is still dead ... salvation has not occurred in their life.

Peter adds something else about Jesus ...

Acts 10:42

“... has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

What we just heard is precisely what the Apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 15

I Corinthians 15:3-4

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, **that Christ died** for our sins according to the Scriptures,
15:4 and **that He was buried**, and **that He was raised** on the third day according to the Scriptures

Transition: Peter climaxes his message with verse 43 ...

4TH – Jesus **SAVES**

Acts 10:43

“Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

“... that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins”

What I don't see here ...

Is a command to repent ... why?

I believe it is because they had already recognized their sin ...

They were longing for a Savior because they knew their sin already.

Peter said that it was Jesus who provided forgiveness of sins ... and when he said that they didn't say ... *what is sin?*

They had already come to grips with their sin

They would have been the first to admit it if asked.

The convicting work of the Spirit of God had already taken place ... and made that apparent to each of them.

Peter was face to face with humble and contrite Gentiles ... Gentiles who were not trying to continue in their sin.

Nor do I find them offering a prayer ...

NOTICE ... PETER DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO GIVE AN ALTAR CALL ...

Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

10:45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

10:46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

10:47 “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?”

10:48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

What We Learn

The only good listener is an **OBEDIENT** listener

- ✓ That applied to Peter when it came to his prejudice
- ✓ And it applied to Cornelius who said ...

Acts 10:33

we are all here present before God to hear *all* that you have been commanded by the Lord."

Salvation comes to those who believe ALL of the gospel ...