

Long Story Short

January 21, 2018

I. Introduction

Acts 11:1 The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

Acts 11:2-3 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

- It is easy to be critical of what you do not understand.

II. People are God's priority.

Acts 11:4-10 Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

- You may have to give God your attention for God to get your attention.
- In order to think like Jesus, you may have to stop thinking like you.

Acts 11:11-12 "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house.

Acts 10:19-20 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

A. God is working behind the scenes.

- Be careful not to mistake the hand of God for coincidence.

Acts 9:32 As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda.

Acts 9:38 Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

Acts 11:9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'

- If you want to hear the voice of God, start by responding to the needs of people.

B. God desires to speak to everyone.

Acts 11:13-14 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

Acts 10:1-8 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 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!" 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. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." 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. He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Psalms 141:2 May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Acts 10:30-31 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 and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor.

- Consistent spirituality leads to divine opportunity.

Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- God's hand is often at the end of a human arm.

C. God desires to give to every believer the experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:15-18 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?” When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Acts 10:44-48 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

- The pattern of the book of Acts is that when a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit, it is accompanied by Spirit-inspired speech.

D. God does not show favoritism...and neither should we.

Acts 10:28-29 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. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

Acts 10:34-35 Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

Acts 11:17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?

- Who are you to think that you could stand in God's way?