

Restore Small Group Questions - Acts (Week 18) — “Cast Your Nets” — 6/8/2025**Scripture (NIV) -**

Acts 10:23-48 - 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?” 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 happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. 39 “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”* 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues^[b] and praising God. Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48 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.

Matthew 17:4-5 - Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

Luke 22:60-61 - Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.”

KEY POINTS - Even if you have all the greatest fly fishing equipment and know how to use it, it’s only useful if you put the fly in the water. Peter had great preparation, walked with Jesus for 3 years, preached to his own Jewish people, saw the sheet coming down from heaven yet it wasn’t time to expand his vision into Gentile waters until he had an encounter with Cornelius (Roman Centurion) that God orchestrated.

- I. **PETER AND CORNELIUS INTRODUCED** - Several steps were necessary for Peter and Cornelius to understand what God had orchestrated in bringing the two of them together. **Step #1** was when Peter invited the Gentile men that Cornelius sent to retrieve Peter into Peter's house to be his guests. **Step #2** was when Peter followed the men to Joppa to meet Cornelius without raising any objections. Neither Peter nor Cornelius understood why this meeting was taking place nor what to say to each other. **Step #3** was when Peter and Cornelius both allowed God to lead them into a cross cultural and spiritual experience that neither had previously experienced. [We too need to learn and unlearn some things that enable us to follow God’s path]
- II. **CORNELIUS INTRODUCED TO JESUS** - Peter finally understood that God accepts ANY God fearing person...no matter where they are from, so he began preaching Jesus Gospel. First, he told Cornelius and his family/guests about what they already knew about Jesus who is Lord of all and about how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power to heal and deliver people from the devil. Next Peter introduced them to person of Jesus...the one with authority over sickness, Satan, the living and the dead. He told them about Jesus death and resurrection and His authority to forgive sins. And then, through Peter’s preaching of the Gospel, the power encounter ensues with the living God through the manifestations of the Holy Spirit.
- III. **HOLY SPIRIT INTRODUCES HIMSELF** - While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. They were astonished, spoke in tongues and praised God. Nothing could stand in the way for them to be baptized. Peter proclaimed they had received the Holy Spirit and that they should be baptized. This event was the ‘flashpoint’ when God welcomed the Gentiles (all) into the Kingdom of God through the unification of the Holy Spirit. God provided witnesses that needed to see what happened to believe...and what was required was faith-filled action and for God to do His part. God interrupted Peter’s sermon just like He interrupted him on the mountain with Elijah and Jesus (Matthew 17:4-5) and when he denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:60-61). God illustrates that He is the centerpiece of the Gospel message and He can say what He wants, when He wants, and how He wants. God was waiting for Peter’s willingness to cast his nets to the other side of the boat (to the Gentiles) who had been off-limits his whole life. **LESSON** - God often waits until we step into uncharted waters...before He acts.

IMPORTANT POINT - God doesn’t wait for Cornelius to come forward and confess his contrite and repentant heart to land on, and indwell Cornelius and his family and friends. Yes, repentance still does precede salvation but, salvation can only be complete when

you know Jesus and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Notions of 'the second chance'; a clean slate; come as you are and receive the redemption of Christ -THEY ARE ALL TRUE; however, they are only true in light of coming to Him with a repentant heart. Jesus is not 'fire insurance' or a 'life hack' to get into heaven while we do life our way. Jesus is the the main attraction, the star of the show, who has the authority to interrupt us at any moment.

CONCLUSION -

- Do you need to surrender, repent and follow Jesus? Do you need to be baptized and allow the Holy Spirit to indwell your life? Do you believe the Gospel of Jesus is the highest priority? What are you waiting for?
- Assuming you have surrendered, repented, been baptized, and received the Holy Spirit, where is your fishing hole? Are you throwing your line in the water? Are you casting your nets in the lake? Are you wearing cool fishing gear....and doing nothing else? Step out in faith and seek ways to serve your living God.
- You may sit and watch the bobber and never get a bite....**but God is at work!!!**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS -

1. Are you casting your nets? Are you content with where you are and what you are doing?
2. Why was the conversion of Cornelius important concerning the issue of receiving Gentiles into Christ?
3. Was what happened at the house of Cornelius considered to be a normal Christian experience? What did God's preparation have to do with the experience?
4. Discuss the importance of 'receiving the Holy Spirit' in our salvation experience. What happened to Cornelius and his family/friends when indwelt with the Holy Spirit?
5. Review Peter's speech (verses 34-43). What elements of Peter's speech are relevant to and are the heart of Christianity then and today?
6. Discuss the reasons why God interrupted Peter on numerous occasions. Have you ever experienced God interrupting you?
7. Discuss why God didn't wait for Cornelius to come forward and express his contrite and repentant heart before the Holy Spirit indwelt him, his family and friends. Does repentance still precede salvation? Is salvation complete without repentance?
8. Why do you think God often waits until we step into uncharted (uncomfortable) waters...before He acts?